



TDC Meeting Minutes

Dec. 8, 2021

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Fran Myers, Holly Smith, Bill Waichulis and Robert Wells III.

Darla Bonk, Brian Kramer and Tony Lapi were excused.

Smith made a motion to approve the Nov. 9, 2021 meeting minutes. Cronin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Marcia Turner, United Way donor engagement director, thanked the council for its support and said anyone in need of support can dial 2-1-1 for assistance. She also said that United Way has a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program that can assist with free tax preparations.

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported preliminary resort tax collected for October 2021 was \$3,275,154, a 51.1% increase over October 2020 preliminary collections of \$2,167,203. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$3,354,584, an increase of 52.2% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average hotel occupancy rate for October 2021 was 62.8%, which is up 25.6% from October 2020 (50.0%). The average daily rate for October 2021 was \$138.47, up 18.9% from October 2020 (\$116.41) and RevPAR for October 2021 was \$86.91, up 49.4% from October 2020 (\$58.18).

For vacation rentals, the average occupancy rate for October 2021 was 37%, which is up 15.6% from October 2020 (32%). The average daily rate for October 2021 was \$184, up 21.9% from October 2020 (\$151) and RevPAR for October 2021 was \$69, up 43.8% from October 2020 (\$48).

During October 2021, 769,524 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 84.4% compared to October 2020. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 70.8% from the same period last year.

Marketing report

Brian Ososky, VCB marketing director, presented the core pillars of the FY21-22 marketing plan and presented a selection of high-impact, integrated media partnerships. These included Condé Nast, Outside Magazine, The New York Times, USA Today, VRBO and SXM Stitcher Podcast. He also shared components of the new “It’s a Good Day” brand campaign launching in January, and provided updates on the new consumer website, VisitFortMyers.com, and [visitor guide](#).

Sports Development report

Jeff Mielke, sports development director, reported that 57,852 room nights sold in the months of July through September 2021 with direct visitor spending of more than \$19.3 million.

New business

Cronin made a motion to nominate Robert Wells III to serve as vice chairman for 2022. DePasquale seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Myers made a motion to approve the [2022 meeting dates](#). Smith seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Myers made a motion to formalize nominations/appointments for the FY22-23 Attractions & Events Marketing Subcommittee. Council members Pam Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Tony Lapi, Holly Smith and Bill Waichulis volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Smith seconded the motion.

TDC member items

Wells wished the TDC and meeting attendees a happy holiday season.

Waichulis said that he sees 2022 being another record year based on current forecasts.

DePasquale said there is a Senate bill prepared to extend the sunset clause for VISIT FLORIDA. Tam will be the guest speaker at the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce’s Jan. 27 luncheon at Embassy Suites to present the new brand.

Myers wished the council happy holidays. Looking for bikes for Spirit of the Holidays charity event on Fort Myers Beach.

Smith said the VCB’s Tourism Outlook event and Pigott’s presentation to the Horizon Council were great. Additionally, this year’s Luminary Stroll was the best she has seen and retail sales were very good. New city manager, Dana Souza started Nov. 15 and retired city manager, Judie Zimomra will be a professor at Ohio State University.

Cronin wished the council a Merry Christmas and congratulated DePasquale and the Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce on a great holiday party. She added that she staycated at the Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina and at Tarpon Lodge and recommended that everyone takes a staycation to enjoy our area’s accommodations and attractions.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is at **9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 13, 2022** at the Lee County Admin East Building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.