



TDC Meeting Minutes

Feb. 10, 2022

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Darla Bonk, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, Holly Smith, Bill Waichulis and Robert Wells III.

Fran Myers was excused.

Smith made a motion to approve the Jan. 13, 2022 meeting minutes. Bonk seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

None to be heard.

Municipalities to be heard

Jennifer Nelson, Michelle Dean & Melissa Mickey, City of Cape Coral representatives, presented an update to the council. Cape Coral now has 201,554 residents, which is a 30% increase since 2011. The city has also recently created a new office of communications to present a more centralized messaging approach for residents. Sun Splash entered into a public/private partnership with ProParks Management and has a new logo. They added that Coral Oaks Golf Course will not outsource management and the city will continue to manage and maintain the course which will be undergoing renovations this spring. They also gave an update on the GO Bond projects at Del Prado Linear Park, Cultural Park, Gator Circle Park, Sands Park & Yacht Club Community Park. The city is looking to the community for input in naming the parks.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported the preliminary resort tax collected for December 2021 was \$5,320,349, a 43.5% increase over December 2020 preliminary collections of \$3,707,002. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$12,863,257, an increase of 53.1% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average hotel occupancy rate for December 2021 was 73%, which is up 42.2% from December 2020 (51.3%). The average daily rate for December 2021 was \$186.54, up 26.1% from December 2020 (\$147.95) and RevPAR for December 2021 was \$136.09, up 79.2% from December 2020 (\$75.93).

For vacation rentals, the average occupancy rate for December 2021 was 50%, which is up 13.6% from December 2020 (44%). The average daily rate for December 2021 was \$274, up 11.4% from December 2020 (\$246) and RevPAR for December 2021 was \$136, up 27.1% from December 2020 (\$107).

During December 2021, 1,085,569 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport, an increase of 67.5% compared to December 2020. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 72.7% from the same period last year.

Sports Development report

Jeff Mielke, sports development director, reported that 64,851 room nights sold in the months of October through December 2021 with direct visitor spending of more than \$30.2 million. For calendar year 2021, 181,079 room nights were sold and saw a total of \$72,545,752 in direct visitor spending.

Special presentations

Hannah Smith, STR senior consultant, presented a hotel market overview including national and county metrics. She reported the national ADR has exceeded 2019 levels for the second half of the year, however it was not enough to keep up with inflation. Lee County has recovered across all key performance indicators to 2019 levels even with inflation. The current hotel supply in Lee County is 153 hotels and 13,140 rooms. There are mostly limited service hotels in the pipeline with one new full service property (Margaritaville Resort Fort Myers Beach) slated to open in 2023. Lee County is one of four counties that have recovered to 2019 levels and is forecasted to continue to grow, then level off in 2023, which will still beat 2019's metrics.

Jennifer Nelson and Daniel Munt, Captiva Erosion Protection District, presented an overview of the recently completed 2021 Captiva Beach Nourishment Project.

New business

Pigott presented first quarter budget reports for the VCB and Sports Development for approval. Wells made a motion, Smith seconded, which passed unanimously.

Pigott presented an amendment to the current TDC bylaws that will add four nonvoting seats to the council, which passed unanimously. Smith made a motion to approve, Lapi seconded, which passed unanimously to go before the Board of County Commissioners.

TDC member items

Lapi thanked Pigott for speaking at a leadership program at 'Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa.

Smith was in Tallahassee for a legislative session. She presented information on a few bills that pertain to vacation rentals, smoking in public parks and SPB 2508 on water quality.

DePasquale thanked Pigott for speaking at the chamber's recent luncheon where she gave an update on the VCB's new brand.

Bonk announced that the City of Fort Myers has hired its new assistant city manager who will start March 7, and that the city will be hiring a new public works director.

Kramer updated the council that FRLA will be having three webinars in February, including topics on distribution challenges with Cheney Brothers, VISIT FLORIDA partnership benefits and the benefits of hiring returning citizens with the Department of Corrections.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting is at **9 a.m. Thursday, March 17, 2022**, at the Lee County Admin East Building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.