



TDC Meeting Minutes

June 13, 2024

Vice Chair, Jay Johnson called the Lee County Tourist Development Council meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Council members in attendance

Pamela Cronin, Larry Fiesel, Robert Wells III, Jay Johnson, Bill Steinke and Bill Waichulis.

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Dan Allers, Nigel Fullick, Brian Kramer, Liston Bochette, Holly Smith, Tony Lapi and Fran Myers were excused.

Public to be heard

Lisa Wilson, Edison & Ford Winter Estates, thanked the TDC for the continued funding they have received. She also shared that they will be hosting a Farmer's Market Monday-Friday from 9am-1pm.

Municipalities to be heard

Sharon Woodberry, economic development manager, City of Cape Coral, shared some upcoming events. Flag Day is June 14th and there will be a celebration at 1pm in the Club Square Parking lot. The City of Cape Coral and the YMCA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on June 5th and will be partnering to bring Cape Coral its first YMCA. The facility will be located at Lake Meade in Northeast Cape Coral. It will have park facilities such as a playground, splash pad, sports courts, fields and pavilions. The YMCA facility will include a gym, fitness center, community space and outdoor competition-sized swimming pool. June 15th City of Cape Coral will host a Hurricane Preparedness Expo from 11am-3pm. Tickets are on sale now for the City of Cape Coral's Red, White & Boom 4th of July event featuring Parmalee as the headliner; adults \$40 and kids \$20. The Cape Coral Quest 2.0 mobile app developed in partnership with the VCB has been refreshed, and the new challenge began Dec. 1, 2023. To date, there have been 1,512 sign ups, 4,299 locations checked, 272 prizes claimed, 111 coupons redeemed, 103 people entered to win a 2-night stay at the Westin contest, and 42 people have completed the entire scavenger hunt and have been entered to win a Sunsplash Season Pass. Lake Kennedy Racquetball Center will open in late June/early July, and they will host the Florida State Championship for United Pickleball Labor Day weekend. The Tourism Spotlight is on Wicked Dolphin Distillery. They opened in 2012 using only local, natural ingredients, known as "Florida's Rum." Guests are able to visit the distillery for tours, tastings and how the rum is made. The City of Cape Coral Business & Industry Roundtables coming up are June 21st for Retail, July 26th for Lenders/Financing, August TBD for Restaurants and September TBD for Construction/Building Trade. She also gave an update on the Yacht Club's master plan.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported the preliminary resort tax collected for April 2024 was \$3,591,315, an 20.8% increase over April 2023 preliminary collections of \$2,974,092. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$31,156,735 an increase of 23.2% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average hotel occupancy rate for April 2024 was 68.1%, which is down 8.2% from April 2023. The average daily rate for April 2024 was \$174.19, increase of 3.1% from April 2023 and RevPAR for April 2024 was \$118.69, down 5.4% from April 2023.

For vacation rentals, the average occupancy rate for April 2024 was 38%, which is up 31.8% from April 2023. The average daily rate for April 2024 was \$253, up 18.4% from April 2023 and RevPAR for April 2024 was \$96, up 56.5% from April 2023.

During April 2024, 1,133,256 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport, an increase of 15.5% compared to April 2023. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 22.9% from the same period last year.

Marketing update

Brian Ososky, VCB Marketing Director, presented the first portion of the marketing report that included updates on the neighborhood mural program and Savor the Shore summer advocacy effort (June 24-Aug 11), as well as a preview of the 10th anniversary of Island Hopper Songwriter Fest (Sept. 20-29). Lesley-Ann Thompson, VCB Manager of Brand Strategy & Campaigns, then presented highlights from the destination's summer marketing effort, including participation in Expedia's "No Days Left Behind" brand campaign and VISIT FLORIDA'S "One Fun Day" YouTube series. All totaled, paid media for summer will yield just under 200 million impressions.

TDC member items

- Bill Steinke thanked the VCB for the mural in Cape Coral on the CRA building. Excited for the new Racquetball Center that will be hosting the Florida State Championship for pickleball Labor Day weekend. Tamara Pigott thanked Councilman Steinke for adding the lights for the mural.
- Jay Johnson thanked Minnesota Twins Manager of Florida Business Operations, Mark Weber for everything he has done for this community and Spring training. He will retire on June 28th, and this is his last TDC meeting with us.
- Larry Fiesel shared that the Florida Everblades held a Celebration at Hertz Arena on Wednesday for fans after winning the Kelly Cup third time in a row. The turnout was amazing and was nationally recognized.
- Rob Wells shared that additional power poles have been painted decoratively in Pine Island.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

There is no TDC meeting next month. The next TDC meeting will be held at **9 a.m. Thursday, August 8, 2024**, 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.