



TDC MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2019

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Council members in attendance: Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Tony Lapi, Fran Myers, Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass, Bill Waichulis and Rob Wells. John Carioscia, Brian Kramer and Holly D. Smith were excused.

Dr. Nicole King-Smith, VCB Tourism & Hospitality Training Manager, recognized 30 new certified guest service professionals (CGSP), bringing the total number of CGSP graduates in Lee County to 739.

Fran Myers made a motion to approve the Jan. 10, 2019, TDC meeting minutes. Pam Cronin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Jack Carver, Florida RV Trade Association, reported that they had a great turnout at the 34th annual RV Show. 10,500 patrons visited. The next RV show is scheduled for Apr. 24 at the Lee County Sports Complex.

Municipalities to be heard

Judith Zimomra, city manager of Sanibel, announced that they have two apps (Android & iPhone) for traffic conditions on the island. The Android & iPhone apps include five intersections and 12 cameras. She also announced that Sanibel was awarded Gold status for their bike system, and is one of only two municipalities in Florida with this recognition.

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott introduced Sorena Vargas as the new communications intern for the VCB. In her role as intern, Vargas will support the communications team with press trips, site visits, press releases, databases and assisting with the planning of Island Hopper Songwriter Fest. She is a junior at Florida Gulf Coast University majoring in communications with a minor in digital media design and interdisciplinary studies.

Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for December 2018 was \$3,537,771, a 0.5 percent increase over December 2017 preliminary collections of \$3,518,946. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$7,853,438, a decrease of 7.92 percent year-over-year.

December 2018, the STR Report shows occupancy down 8.9 percent and ADR down 0.3 percent for a total RevPAR decrease of 9.2 percent.

During December 2018, 958,717 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent an increase of 9.8 percent compared to December 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 6 percent from the same period last year.

Bob Domine, DPA, reported on the fall season 2018 highlights. Visitation among visitors staying in paid accommodations decreased by 5.2 percent, while total expenditures decreased 3.3 percent, coming in at \$684 million. Eight in 10 fall 2018 visitors staying in paid accommodations reside within the U.S. The majority of international visitors staying in paid accommodations came from Germany and Canada, with 4 percent each.

Report of the Sports Development Executive Director

Jeff Mielke, Sports Development director, reported 2018 year-end highlights including an increased number of annual events from 144 to 158 that resulted in a record-breaking 163,546 room nights sold, and direct visitor spending in excess of \$72 million. Mielke thanked the Sports Development team, sports organizing committee and Lee County Parks & Recreation for a record-breaking year and for being customer service champions in our community.

Commissioner Pendergrass also thanked Mielke's team for making a difference in the community.

Special Presentations

Bob Domine, DPA, gave a review of the 2018 Spring Training Impact study. Lee County Sports Development shows fans spend \$68.9 million annually and plan return trips to the destination. Of that amount, \$56.7 million was spent outside the ballpark. Lee County hosts two teams, the Boston Red Sox at JetBlue Park and the Minnesota Twins at CenturyLink Sports Complex.

Stewart Colovin, MMGY Global executive vice president and chief creative officer, presented plans to develop a unified brand for the VCB, Economic Development and Sports Development. Plan highlights include interviewing stakeholders, local residents and visitors. The branding effort is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Bill Waichulis made a motion to move forward with the Lee County branding collaboration of the VCB, Sports Development & EDO in the amount of \$300,000. Fran Myers seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

TDC Member Items

- John Talmage shared he was excited to be on board as the new executive director for Economic Development (EDO).
- Glen Salyer announced Pamela Johnson as the deputy director for VCB, Sports Development and EDO and welcomed her back.
- Tony Lapi stated he was excited for great weather on the way.
- Rob Wells wished everyone a great season and a Happy Valentine's Day.
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- Colleen DePasquale announced Chrysalis Awards dates have changed to June 14 at Sanibel Harbour Marriott. There are 42 tradeshow tables available. Colleen mentioned the next FL Restaurant and Lodging Association meeting is on February 20 and Carol Dover, FRLA President & CEO, will be the speaker. She will discuss state and local issues affecting our hospitality industry. It will be held at the Holiday Inn Fort Myers Airport at Town Center.
- Fran Myers gave everyone the air service and remodeling update for RSW. She also asked that the board discuss the status of Matanzas preserve at a future TDC meeting.
- Commissioner Pendergrass welcomed John Talmage. Talmage said the airport is getting a new face-lift, expanding the back of the airport with new gates, restrooms and relocating all security checkpoints to one central location of the airport.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Friday, March 15, 2019, at the Lee County Administration East building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. For more information, contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.