

TDC MEETING MINUTES

May 11, 2017

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Council members in attendance: Vice Chairman René Affourtit, Anita Cereceda, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Mike Gibson, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, Fran Myers, Bill Waichulis and Rob Wells.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin to approve the April 13, 2017, TDC meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Public to be Heard

-Jack Carver of the Florida RV Trade Association (FRVTA) said that they had a very successful RV season.

-Judie Zimomra, Sanibel City Manager, gave project updates on Mobi-Mats and the Living Shoreline both of which have received TDC funding. Calling Mobi-Mats a “game changer,” Zimomra said that by enhancing the accessibility to our public facilities, including the grant funded “Mobi-Mat,” makes it possible for people using wheelchairs and walkers to enjoy shoreline access. Zimomra said over the last several years there has been a continued erosion problem near Lighthouse Beach. With the lighthouse being the No. 1 photographed icon of Lee County, the erosion has blocked off access to the lighthouse in the last few summers. The Living Shoreline Project near Lighthouse Beach is a combination oysters, minimal concrete and rock and living vegetation to help establish a reef system. Two-thirds of that project funding is from the TDC. The plants are native they are compatible and are salt-resistant. The wild oysters are bagged put in cages in the water. They improve the water quality because they act as a filter system.

Water Quality Update

Roland Ottolini, Lee County Natural Resources director, updated the TDC on the county’s water quality measures including capital improvements, source control and conservation land to improve its waterways and preserve its natural systems. He outlined the county’s action plan and shared that there are additional activities at the federal, state and local levels that will benefit our area.

TDC Meeting change of date

The November TDC Meeting will be held **Nov. 13** instead of Nov. 9. Fran Myers made a motion, seconded by Tony Lapi to approve the meeting date change.

VCB Executive Director’s Report

Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for March 2017 was \$7,924,789, a 1.6 percent decrease over March 2016 preliminary collections of \$8,052,654. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$24,306,247, a decrease of 2.8 percent year-over-year.

The STR Report shows occupancy down 2.7 percent, ADR down 2.5 percent for a total Rev/PAR decrease of 5.2 percent.

During March 2017, 1,252,124 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent a decrease of 1.4 percent compared to March 2016. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is down 2.8 percent from the same period last year.

Bob Domine, DPA president, reported on the winter 2017 season. Between January and March, visitation in paid accommodations remained steady while expenditures dipped slightly. Canada continued to deliver the largest share of international visitors for the winter season.

Sports Development Executive Director's Report

Jeff Mielke, Sports Development Executive Director, reported that 22,770 room nights sold in the first quarter of 2017 with direct visitor spending of more than \$9.5 million.

New Business

Formalize FY 2017-18 Beach and Shoreline Funding

Legislative Findings were made on the following projects:

- **City of Sanibel, Beach & Shoreline Erosion Survey**
Make a legislative finding that this project relates to and primarily promotes tourism.
René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers.
- **City of Sanibel, Facility Beach Maintenance**
Make a legislative finding that upgrading facility signage is related to and primarily promotes tourism.
René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers.
- **Captiva Erosion Prevention District, Captiva Beach Park Maintenance**
Make a legislative finding that placing signage is related to and primarily promotes tourism.
Tony Lapi made a motion, seconded by Rob Wells.
- **Lee County Facilities C&M, Matanzas Pass Bdwk. Replacement**
Make a legislative finding that this project – used by tourists to observe wildlife, native plants and access a paddle craft landing – satisfies the statutory requirement that constitutes a remodeling or improvement of a nature center.
Anita Cereceda made a motion, seconded by Mike Gibson.
- **Gasparilla/Cayo Costa State Park, Polaris 6x6 Maintenance Vehicle**
Make a legislative finding that the Polaris Ranger 6x6 serves the purpose of beach

improvement, maintenance, renourishment, restoration or erosion control.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers.

- **Barrier Island Parks Society, Inc., Gasparilla Island Visitor Transportation**

Make a legislative finding that this project is related to tourism and primarily promotes that purpose.

Brian Kramer made a motion, seconded by Anita Cereceda.

- **Town of Fort Myers Beach, Beach Access Interpretive Signage**

Make a legislative finding that this project is related to tourism and primarily promotes that purpose. The determination must show a distinct and direct relationship between tax revenue expenditure and tourism promotion.

René Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Pamela Cronin.

After the necessary legislative findings were approved, the TDC recommended the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approve a total of 19 projects at a cost of \$8.4 million (list attached). *Rene Affourtit made a motion, seconded by Fran Myers.*

Second-quarter budget approval

Rob Wells made a motion to accept the budget, seconded by Anita Cereceda.

RSW Competitive Fares – Carol Obermeier, Lee County Port Authority’s director of air service development, shared some data on airfare cost from the Southwest Florida International Airport, showing decreasing costs over previous years; she also noted that despite a dip, March 2017 was its second-best March on record.

For Council Information

Brian Kramer – May 25 LCHA meeting at Hilton Garden Inn Fort Myers Airport. All feedback for Travel Rally was positive.

Colleen DePasquale – Congratulations to Chrysalis Award winners.

René Affourtit – Observation about occupancy in last quarter. It might just be a dip in overall economy that we have to ride out and nothing that we’re doing or not doing.

Anita Cereceda – First segment of Estero Boulevard is complete. It’s such a dramatic change in our town and greatly appreciated

Cecil Pendergrass – PGA Tour is looking for sponsorships to host a tournament in March 2018 in Lee County.

TDC Member Items

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday, June 8, 2017, at the Lee County Admin East building, first floor conference room 118, 2201 Second Street, Fort Myers, FL 33901.

To view a complete tax collections report, go to www.LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.