



TDC MEETING MINUTES

December 13, 2018

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

Commissioner Pendergrass announced that he will continue as TDC Chairman in 2019.

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

Holly D. Smith made a motion to approve the Nov. 15, 2018, TDC meeting minutes. Tony Lapi seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Lisa Sbuttoni, River District Alliance director, thanked the TDC for the events marketing grant. The grant was used to kick-off the holiday season with the tree lighting at Sidney Berne Davis Art Center with over 7,000 in attendance. Sbuttoni also announced some events coming to the downtown area including Rocking Holidays at Music Walk, Friday, Dec. 21, New Year's Eve and the first Fort Myers Seafood and Music Festival on Jan 4-6, 2019 in partnership with Paragon Fine Arts festivals. Sbuttoni also reminded everyone of the tenth anniversary of the Chrysalis awards will be May 10. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Beth Oliver, director of sales & marketing, Offshore Sailing School reported that they will be celebrating their 55th anniversary in 2019 along with expanding their fleet at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village with a 40-foot leopard sailing catamaran. They will be hosting their 19th annual Performance Race Week at South Seas Island Resort April 28-May 4. The top Leukemia Cup Regatta fundraisers in the nation will gather for the annual Fantasy Sail Celebration, which will be held at the Pink Shell Beach Resort, Dec. 6-8, 2019.

Municipalities to be heard

Michelle Dean, Cape Coral parks and recreation director, and Kristen Bean, Cape Coral special events coordinator, thanked the TDC for the events marketing grant that helped fund radio marketing in the Tampa area for the Coconut festival. More than 30,000 people attended. The Tour De Cape returns Jan. 19-20 for the 28th year of the bicycling event. Dean added that they are excited about the \$60 million bond that will assist in renovating and expanding over 20 parks in Cape Coral.

Alison Giesen, executive director, Mound House, thanked the TDC for all their support. The Mound House will have a Christmas Market from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, December 15, admission is free.

Report of the Executive Director

Tamara Pigott reported that the preliminary resort tax collected for October 2018 was \$1,743,173, a 21.3 percent decrease over October 2017 preliminary collections of \$2,214,571. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$1,820,431 a decrease of 21.4 percent year-over-year.

October 2018, the STR Report shows occupancy down 24.4 percent and ADR down 5.9 percent for a total RevPAR decrease of 28.9 percent.

During October 2018, 569,553 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW). Figures represent a decrease of 2.0 percent compared to October 2017. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 5.6 percent from the same period last year.

Marketing Report

VCB marketing director Brian Ososky reviewed post-red tide marketing efforts, including a social and digital campaign with *The New York Times* and TV spots in several Northeast and Midwest markets. Additionally, numerous FY 2018-2019 initiatives were highlighted, including integrated media placements with *Garden & Gun*, TripAdvisor and Travelzoo, to name a few.

Sports Development Report

Jeff Mielke, director, Lee County Sports Development, reported that 40,243 room nights were sold in the third quarter of 2018 with direct visitor spending of more than \$18 million. Following a successful inaugural Fort Myers Tip-Off basketball tournament, Mielke was pleased to announce the 2019 team line-up includes Kansas State, Northwestern, Pitt and Bradley.

New Business

- Tony Lapi made a motion to select Rob Wells to serve as vice chairman for 2019. Colleen DePasquale seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Fran Myers made a motion to approve 2019 TDC meeting dates. Holly D. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. They are as follows:

2019 TDC Meeting Dates

Jan. 10	April 11	July – no meeting	Oct. 10
Feb. 14	May 9	Aug. 8	Nov. 14
March 15	June 13	Sept. – no meeting	Dec. 12

- Fran Myers made a motion to approve 2018-19 Sales & Marketing Plan. Holly D. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Fran Myers made a motion to approve the out-of-cycle beach & shoreline-funding request for the Cayo Costa Tram. Rob Wells seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The TDC recommended the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) consider a \$30,960 funding request from the Barrier Island Park Society for a replacement visitor tram for Cayo Costa State Park. The BoCC will consider this item at the Dec. 18 board meeting.

TDC Member Items

- Tony Lapi thanked everyone for a great Island Hopper. The event has really lined up to being a signature event. Looking forward to next year. Happy Holidays everyone.
- Rob Wells wished everyone Happy Holidays.

- Colleen DePasquale announced that Chrysalis nominations are now being accepted and the event will be May 10, at Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort & Spa. Island Hopper Songwriter Fest followed Hurricane Irma last year and red tide this year, and the music event was very helpful. She wished everyone a great holiday.
- Bill Waichulus reported that Boykin hotels in FL call volumes are strong and on par with last year. Guests are staying longer and paying higher rates.
- Tamara Pigott encouraged the Council to review the article included in their packet on Brightline high speed rail that will potentially be coming to Tampa soon, and could enhance international travel.
- Glen Salyer wished everyone Happy Holidays.
- Fran Myers mentioned that American Airlines will be coming twice daily from Miami starting Dec 19.
- Holly D. Smith announced that the Sanibel Captiva Chamber visitor center has opened and has great touchscreens. Smith also announced that Sanibel has been awarded Gold Status for their bike-friendly island. They are one of two cities in FL that has received this award. Sanibel has 26 miles of bike trails. She wished everyone Happy Holidays and congratulations to Cecil on another year of serving as TDC chairman. She looks forward to working with Pendergrass.
- John Carioscia announced that the 47th Terrace project in the City of Cape Coral is almost done, and should be complete the first week of January. They had a huge turnout for bike night.
- Pendergrass congratulated Cape Coral on the 47th Terrace project being done and the bond being approved. He wished everyone Happy Holidays!

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next TDC meeting will be held on Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 9 a.m. 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. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.