



TDC Meeting Minutes
Aug. 12, 2021

Commissioner Brian Hamman, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Brian Hamman, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Tony Lapi and Robert Wells III.

Brian Kramer, Darla Bonk, Fran Myers, Holly Smith and Bill Waichulis were excused.

Wells made a motion to approve the June 10, 2021 meeting minutes. Cronin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

Jay Johnson, Bubba's Roadhouse & Saloon owner and Greater Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce board member, distributed a flyer for SWFL Craft Beer Week (Sept. 2-6) and announced the VIP party on Sept. 2 at HeadPinz has tickets available.

Sam Ankersen, Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum director, announced its 25th anniversary was in 2020 and the museum will be opening a new exhibit in early 2022 regarding water quality. The museum is also currently featuring its rotating temporary exhibits.

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported preliminary resort tax collected for June 2021 was \$4,830,490, a 106.65% increase over June 2020 preliminary collections of \$2,337,503. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$42,890,319, an increase of 35.8% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average hotel occupancy rate in June 2021 was 72.2%, which is up 71.6% from June 2020 (42.1%). The average daily rate for June 2021 was \$165.61, up 21.8% from June 2020 (\$136.02) and RevPAR for June 2021 was \$119.60, up 109% from June 2020 (\$57.24).

For vacation rentals, the average occupancy rate June 2021 was 72%, which is up 84.6% from June 2020 (39%). The average daily rate for June 2021 was \$221, which is up 12.1% from June 2020 (\$197) and RevPAR for June 2021 was \$160, which is up 110.5% from June 2020 (\$76).

During June 2021, 839,377 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), an increase of 253.1% in passenger traffic compared to June 2020. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is up 49% from the same period last year.

Pigott welcomed Benecia Toyloy to the VCB as its new Visitor Services coordinator and reminded the TDC that the E Awards will be held on Aug. 26 at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center. She also

announced that there will be no TDC meeting in September as the VCB will be producing the Island Hopper Songwriter Fest Sept. 17-26. Additionally, Pigott said that the Lee County Cooperative Advertising Program will roll out virtually at 9 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 18.

Sales report

Jill Vance, VCB sales director, reported that her team has either attained or is ahead of pace to achieve six of the seven sales goals for fiscal year 2020-21. She reported that in June 2021, the group sales team had sourced the most RFPs in one month on record in the VCB CRM. She shared highlights of third quarter group media and sales activities, travel trade and weddings markets, including hosting several successful in-person meeting planner and travel advisor FAMs and site tours. Vance also presented upcoming sales activities for August and September, comprised of in-person meeting planner appointment shows along with travel advisor trade shows and sales calls.

Visitor Services report

Simone Behr, VCB visitor services director, reported that the Tourism Ambassador volunteers assisted 54,376 visitors during the third quarter of FY 2020/21. In June, VCB volunteers celebrated National Seashell Day at RSW by handing out shell necklaces to travelers. On June 24, Visitor Services held a successful Team Tourism workshop, The Business of Accessible Travel, Opportunities and Benefits. This year's Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service awards will be held on Aug. 26 at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center. Registration is open at EAwards.com.

Communications report

Jackie Parker, VCB communications manager, presented an overview of the PR team's third quarter activities, including overall impressions, and top-tier and local coverage. A recent FAM put the spotlight on noted local outdoorsman Norm Zeigler and fly fishing in the destination. In addition to anticipated coverage from the journalist, fly fishing will also be featured in the News-Press Go Coastal column on Aug. 19 and a Shellcast podcast episode. She also reported on upcoming activities, including Songs from the Sand, Aug. 19; Fall 2021 Midwest Travel Journalists Association Conference, Oct. 18-21; and Gift from the Sea Writers Retreat & Community Celebration, Dec. 3-6.

2nd quarter research report

Joseph St. Germain, DSG, presented an overview of April-June visitor research. Direct visitor spending has exceeded 2019 by 36.9% and the vacation planning window is back to pre-pandemic levels. He added that three in five visitors flew in through RSW and that the Midwest was the biggest feeder market with visitors from Minneapolis, Chicago and Columbus. He reported that half our visitors were families and 30% were first time visitors. Canada accounted for 2% of visitation. Guest satisfaction remains high at 97%. Find the full report [here](#).

New business

April Bonetz, VCB fiscal director, presented the FY22 proposed budget. Wells made a motion to approve the FY21-22 proposed budget report for the VCB and Sports Development. DePasquale seconded and it passed unanimously.

Bonetz presented the 3rd quarter FY21 budget reports. Lapi made a motion to approve the third quarter FY20-21 budget reports for the VCB, Sports Development and Beach and Shoreline. Wells seconded and it passed unanimously.

Nancy MacPhee, VCB product development manager, presented an overview of FY21-22 Events Marketing requests. Wells made a motion to formalize recommendations for BoCC approval of FY2021-

22 Events Marketing funding, for eight events totaling \$136,200. Cronin seconded and it passed unanimously. View the list of allocations at LeeVCB.com.

MacPhee presented an overview of FY21-22 Attractions Marketing requests. Lapi made a motion to formalize recommendations for BoCC approval of FY 2021-22 Attractions Marketing funding, in the amount of \$445,341 for 33 organizations. Cronin seconded and it passed unanimously. View the list of allocations at LeeVCB.com.

Player Development Complex reallocation

Jesse Lavender, Parks & Recreation director, presented a proposed reallocation of Player Development Complex funds to fund design for the Larry Kiker Preserve. This would include an interpretive center, hiking trails and a campground with programming.

Lapi made a motion to propose reallocation of \$6 million in Player Development Complex funds to the design of the Larry Kiker Preserve. Motion carried. One TDC member, Wells, opposed.

TDC member items

DePasquale promoted SWFL Craft Beer Week taking place Sept. 2-6.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Next TDC meeting

There will be no TDC meeting in September. The next regularly scheduled TDC meeting will be held at 9 a.m., Thursday, Oct. 14, 2021, 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.