



Tourist Development Council (TDC) Meeting Minutes
Governmental Center, Room 430
March 17, 2021 9:30am

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Steve Geller, Camasha Cevieux, Andreas Ioannou, Casey Koslowski, Mayor Josh Levy, Ramola Motwani, Tim Petrillo, Mayor Dean Trantalis and Laurens Zieren. **ABSENT:** Dan Adkins

1. Mayor Steve Geller called the meeting to order at 9:32am. Attendance was taken and a quorum was established.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
A Motion to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2020 TDC meeting was made by Tim Petrillo and seconded by Mayor Trantalis.
The motion to approve the minutes was unanimous.
3. **COVID-19 UPDATE**
Mayor Geller gave an update on the progress of vaccine distribution in the County. He believes anyone wishing to be vaccinated will have been by early May. He will be presenting metrics, based on a call with Dr. Fauci, to the County Commission for recommendation on relaxation of emergency orders that are currently in place. The final phase will drop face mask restrictions but will only occur when the County is 65% vaccinated and reported COVID-19 cases are below 3% of the population.
4. **NEW MEMBER SELF-INTRODUCTIONS**
Andreas Ioannou, CEO of Orchestra Hotels and Laurens Zieren, General Manager of The Diplomat Beach Resort introduced themselves to the Committee.
5. **TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX REPORT—Randall Luechauer, Manager, Tourist Development Tax Section**

The GFLCVB portion of the January 2021 reporting period revenue collected by our customers through February 28, 2021 totaled \$3,962,094.25, a decrease of 44.8%

(\$3,210,853.16) when compared to the same month last year. The GFLCVB portion of FY 2021 revenue collected through February 28, 2021, totaled \$11,788,689.30, a decrease of 45.8% (\$9,964,651.55) when compared to collections for the same period last year.

The top ten hotel January 2021 revenues decreased an average of 64.8% when compared to the same period last year and represented 12.6% of the total revenues collected during the month.

Forty-five new accounts (56 units) were added in January 2021. To date in FY 2021, a total of 118 new accounts (881 units) were added.

The collection expense for January 2021 was \$54,580.93. The GFLCVB's portion was \$31,753.61 which represents 0.8% of the GFLCVB's monthly reporting period revenues. To date in FY 2021, GFLCVB expenses total \$114,836.35 which represents 1.0% of the GFLCVB reporting period revenue collected through February 28, 2021.

6. CHAIR'S REPORT – Mayor Steve Geller

Mayor Geller added to his previous comments that the first of the COVID-19 restrictions to be eliminated will be on outdoor events.

7. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Stacy Ritter, CDME, President/CEO GFLCVB

President Ritter reported that with the appointment of the two new TDC members, the committee now has only one vacancy. This vacancy is due to the resignation of Lauderhill's Mayor, Kenneth Thurston. The city of Lauderhill has not yet appointed a new representative.

President Ritter spoke about two bills in the State that relate to the use of Tourism Development Tax funds. The Florida Senate does not want to fund Visit Florida with general funds. They would prefer that it to be funded by either local CVBs, rental car revenues or an additional penny tax to the tourism tax. There was discussion among the committee, and all agreed that none of these options are acceptable. President Ritter explained that the CVB cannot officially take a stance on this until the County does.

President Ritter called upon Kara Franker, Senior VP of Marketing & Communications for a market update and to present the destination's new brand and tagline. "What makes this beach different? Everyone Under the Sun." Ms. Franker also presented the recovery plan for Summer months, utilizing LauderDeals. She reported that digital advertising efforts are being expanded with the help of recently acquired recovery funds. Using proprietary metrics available through our ad agency Aqua, we can specifically target primary and secondary markets where travelers have expressed interest and readiness to travel to Greater Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Franker announced the brand rollout will occur on May 5th with a special event. Mayor Trantalis expressed concern with the timing of the campaign as it falls at the beginning of summer. President Ritter explained that the brand is ripe, and needs be launched as soon

as possible to help our partners take advantage of what is predicted to be a busier than normal summer season due to pent up demand of travelers. Andreas Ioannou agreed with Ms. Ritter's comments on the need for moving full speed ahead with the new brand.

Ramola Motwani complimented the CVB team on their messaging and new branding. After a brief discussion, **a motion was made by Ramola Motwani that the TDC send a communication to the County Administrator recommending that the County Commission send a letter to the Florida Legislature adopting a resolution opposing [HB 1429](#) and [SB 2008](#) and also to include a communication to the Senate President to oppose the utilization of local TDT revenues to fund Visit Florida rather than the State of Florida funding Visit Florida from general revenue or Cares Act Funding. Camasha Cevieux seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.**

Laurens Zieren asked about the timing for the relaxation of group meetings. Mayor Geller commented that he will be making recommendations to the County Commission on the relaxation of certain events. Alan Cohen clarified that meetings in rooms with a food license can hold up to 100% capacity if social distancing is observed and masks are worn when not eating or drinking. Stacy Ritter will connect Laurens with Ed Simon after the meeting in the interest of time.

8. REVIEW OF THE MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPLICATIONS

County Attorney, Nathaniel Klitsberg gave a brief update on the responsibilities of the Marketing Advisory Council (MAC) and the need to re-appoint members properly to comply with County Admin Code. (Resumes of individuals interested in serving on the MAC had been previously distributed to members of the TDC for consideration.)

President Ritter distributed a list of individuals the GFLCVB recommended for appointment. The following individuals were appointed by the Council and Tim Petrillo was appointed the Chair of the MAC by Mayor Geller.

Mayor Steve Geller, Chair – David Muir
Dan Adkins – Absent
Camasha Cevieux – Marie McKenzie
Andreas Ioannou - Tom Parke
Casey Karl Koslowski – Elaine Fitzgerald
Mayor Josh Levy – Raelin Storey
Ramola Motwani – Amanda Cifu Burker
Tim Petrillo – Jenni Morejon
Mayor Dean Trantalis – Keith Blackburn
Laurens Zieren – Bob Keesler

The remaining MAC council members were nominated at large later in the meeting. After further discussion it was decided not to include government officials on the MAC roster but to invite them to meetings for updates and input. They would not be voting members.

Mayor Trantalis made a motion to accept the 17 members recommended by the CVB to

the Marketing Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Tim Petrillo. The motion was approved unanimously.

Those members include:

Bobby Rodriguez, Elaine Fitzgerald, Melissa Milroy, Ina Lee, Ron Drew, James Pancallo, Christine Soverns-Schwartzman, Raelin Storey, Meredith McCleary, Arianne Glassman, Susan Aichele-Sanders, Christopher Bielski, Joellyn Fellmeth, Michael Cook, Thomas Parke, Kara Lundgren and Von Freeman.

9. TOURISM SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS

Mike Sophia, VP of Sports Marketing and Entertainment, introduced himself to the group and explained that, though there is not currently a budget to sponsor events, the applications received were reviewed by the Tourism Sponsorship Evaluation Group. Based on their evaluations they recommended the following.

- A. Afro-Caribe Festival withdrew its application and will reapply next year.
- B. Brazilian Festival (Sept 18-19, 2021) requested a \$25,000 sponsorship. The internal review group recommended \$20,000.

There was discussion on how the number of room nights for this application was determined. The applicant, Luciano Sameli, answered some questions for members of the TDC via conference line regarding from where guests are expected to be coming and which performing acts have been booked. It was noted that any recommendations made will be conditional, based on whether the CVB can find the funds internally.

A motion was made by Camasha Cevieux to recommend a grant in the amount of \$20,000 be awarded to the 2021 Brazilian Festival and was seconded by Mayor Trantalis. The motion was approved by a vote of 8:1. Mayor Josh Levy opposed the recommendation.

- C. Fort Lauderdale Air Show (May 8-9, 2021) requested an investment of \$100,000. (Ramola Motwani recused herself from this presentation/vote due to a conflict of interest. See form 8B attached.) The GFLCVB's internal review group recommended a grant in the amount of \$75,000. After some discussion, Mayor Levy motioned to recommend an award of the requested \$100,000. Casey Koslowski seconded the motion. Upon further discussion noting that the CVB's recommendation was for only 75% of the full request due to a lack of budgeted funds, Mayor Levy amended his motion. **Mayor Levy motioned to recommend the full \$75,000 grant be awarded. Casey Koslowski seconded the motion. The amended motion was adopted unanimously.**
- D. 2021 Latin Music Festival (September 25, 2021) requested a tourism sponsorship grant in the amount of \$50,000. (Ramola Motwani returned to the room. Camasha Cevieux recused herself from the review of this application due to a conflict of interest. See form 8B attached.)
The CVB's internal review group did not recommend sponsorship of the event based on their review findings. There was no motion made to fund this event.
- E. 2021 Southeast Police Motorcycle Rodeo (dates TBA) requested a tourism sponsorship in the amount of \$25,000. (Camasha Cevieux returned to the room.) The CVB review

group recommended a \$10,000 sponsorship assuming the event happens in the County. The date and location are still up in the air.

Mayor Trantalis expressed his concern over hosting a motorcycle event in the County as there have been issues with motorcycles terrorizing the streets. Discussion ensued. No motion was made to fund this event.

10. OLD BUSINESS

(Mayor Trantalis excused himself from the meeting at 11:07 due to another commitment.) Stacy Ritter pointed out that moving forward in 2021, Greater Fort Lauderdale Revenue Reports will be markedly higher than the previous year. Moving forward she will also give historical numbers comparing to 2019.

There was a discussion about Cares Act funds for the hospitality industry and the CVB's plan to request PPP and funds from the American Rescue Plan.

President Ritter announced the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau has started referring to itself as Visit Lauderdale for the purposes of marketing the destination. The entity is still officially the GFLCVB as far as the county is concerned. Ms. Ritter also spoke of the marketing partnership with the Island of Bermuda that targets the yachting industry. Since the two destinations have opposite seasons, we can combine our efforts to maximize messaging to this market. Bermuda is paying the GFLCVB \$50,000 for this co-op partnership. The GFLCVB will continue to explore similar ways to generate non-TDT funds to help off-set our expenses.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

Craig Jungwirth from Beach Bear Weekend introduced himself via a conference line and commented on how much he liked Visit Lauderdale's new branding and tagline. He announced plans to create an, Every Bear Under the Sun LGBTQ Event. Mr. Jungwirth also spoke of plans for a Labor Day event called Bears Take Over Wilton and said he is looking forward to working with the Council.

12. Mayor Levy made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Tim Petrillo. The meeting was adjourned at 11:13am.