



**MEETING MINUTES August 14, 2024**

***GFLCVB Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC)***

***10:00 AM – 11:33 AM***

***Greater Fort Lauderdale/ Broward County Convention Center***

***1950 Eisenhower Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316***

**Members Present:** Bobby Rodriguez, Chris Bielski, David Muir, Elaine Fitzgerald, James Pancallo, Jenni Morejon, Matthew McNeil, Melissa Milroy, Michael Cook, Robert Kessler, Ron Drew, Tim Petrillo, Von Freeman, Jenna Borreggine, Katherine Beja-McLennan, Ari Glassman

**Members Absent:** Christine Soverns, Joellyn Fellmeth, Kara Lundgren, Keith Blackburn, Marie McKenzie

**Members Remote:** Ina Lee

**Call to Order:** Mr. Tim Petrillo called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was conducted by Ms. Tammy Moye, and a quorum was confirmed by Ms. Camila Clark. The minutes from the previous meeting were approved, with two changes made by Ms. Elaine Fitzgerald.

**Opening Remarks:** Mr. Tim Petrillo introduced Mr. Ted Botimer.

**Data & Research:** Mr. Ted Botimer presented Hotel Metrics from January 1<sup>st</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>, TDT Revenue Collections, FLL Passenger Volume and Cruise Passenger Volume. In addition, Mr. Botimer presented the impact from the Florida Panther's Stanley Cup Win. Games Economic Impact was \$25M, and the Parade Impact was \$4M. Incremental Room Night impact was 20K.

**Advertising Agency Update:** Mr. Tony Cordo asked Ms. Camila Clark to temporarily leave the meeting while we discussed the Advertising Agency Update. Our new advertising agency contract will go before the Board of County Commissioners. The new agency being proposed is Spark, out of Tampa. When approved, the new agency personnel will attend the next MAC Meeting. With the transition taking place between Aqua and Spark we could not put together a specific Strategic Plan. Mr. Cordo also reported that there should not be any large gaps in the current Marketing and what will take place in 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter.

A question was asked as to whether or not we would be keeping Everyone Under the Sun. Mr. Petrillo responded by stating that we would not be doing anything to cloud our current branding. IPW is coming to town, consisting of the leading travel people in the world, and with the of opening

a new Convention Center, it is crucial to keep our Everyone Under the Sun branding intact. We will remain intently focused on the issues at hand and will not be changing the messaging. Ms. Camila Clark was then asked to return to the meeting.

**Marketing Plan:** Ms. Camila Clark presented the Marketing Plan, and re-iterated that we do want to stick with the Brand – Everyone Under the Sun. We reviewed Campaign Evolution and Amplification, Storytelling & Narrative Development, Content Creation & Distribution, Experiential Marketing Initiatives, Community Engagement & Advocacy, Innovative Technology and Measurement & Optimization. We will be launching our Chat Bot, Sandy. Ms. Clark also reported that our Paid Media Budget is \$10,000,000 and broke down how the money is being spent. Mr. Tony Cordo requested a Motion to make this recommendation to the Tourism Development Council. Mr. Tim Petrillo asked the Committee to make the Motion and the Motion was seconded. A show of hands was conducted and there was no opposition.

### **Industry Updates:**

**The Restaurant People:** Mr. Tim Petrillo reported that it's Summer, and there is very little foot traffic and patios are empty. The good news is that it is Summer and hot everywhere. Business is where it is as predicted, but still better than pre-Covid. Holidays are looking good and holiday parties are booking early.

**Hyatt Centric:** Ms. Katherine Beja-McLennan reported that they have had a positive Summer, hosting media for the Stanley Cup Playoffs. They are seeing an uptick in group bookings, which is a positive. Bookings for food & beverage and the Speakeasy are also good.

**Fort Lauderdale Marriott Harbor Beach:** Mr. Chris Bielski stated that they are knee-deep in renovations. They are up to the seventh floor in guest rooms. Repair work is being done in the 3030 Restaurant, as well as repairing areas in the lobby as well. Meeting room renovation has also begun and will go through the end of September. The Sea Level Restaurant is under renovations with a new kitchen being installed and the guest seating area is also under renovation. They are keeping pace with budget, and for 2025 they are behind as are most large convention meeting hotels.

**Four Seasons:** Ms. Jenna Borreggine reported an incredible summer with group and sports. The next FAM coming up will be focused on weddings. Q4 initiatives will focus on the FLIBS. In creative asset mode with Monopoly. Will also focus on Christmas and New Year.

**Margaritaville:** Mr. Michael Cook reported that they watched July picking up, and then it just stopped. They missed the July forecast. August was very similar to July. Local catering is up. Group bookings are key. Landshark is under renovation. 2025 group bookings are up. Jimmy Buffett Memorial Weekend coming up. Bands will be there all weekend.

**Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance:** Mr. Ron Drew reported seeing good success in Company announcements, mostly from Aviation and Manufacturing. The unemployment rate in Fort Lauderdale is low but is expected to go up. Retail is one of the occupations where we're seeing these numbers impacting, having lost approximately 6,000 jobs in the retail field. Banking unemployment is also high, and there is concern in the office environment will be affected. Focusing on new Company attraction, but we're also in retention mode.

**Beach Vacation Rentals:** Ms. Elaine Fitzgerald reported that a lot of people in Pompano Beach are looking forward to the Independent Hotel Show at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Pompano Beach is focused on local quality events such as The Annual Drone Show and the January Jazz Concert on the Beach. There's a boom of cultural arts in Pompano Beach.

**Audacy:** Mr. Von Freeman has a big event on November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Hard Rock called Stars and Strings, to benefit veterans. Audacy also has a big sweepstakes, with 24.1 Million Impressions for Visit Lauderdale.

**City of Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation:** Ms. Ari Glassman reviewed three things that are coming up to Las Olas Oceanside Park – Fleet Week returning for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Navy, working on a Grand Prix event with a group from Canada which will turn out to be a three-day event at Las Olas Oceanside Park and then Tortuga Music Festival. DC Alexander Park is ready to open within the next couple of weeks and will provide another green space on our beach.

**Gallery One:** Mr. Robert Keesler wanted to give hats off to Visit Lauderdale. Our tourism community is inclusive, open and filled with information. Mr. Keesler wanted to say thank you. Mr. Petrillo echoed that however we still have a huge opportunity of showing up and talking to the Commissioners. The CVB is an agency within the County and cannot advocate, therefore it is the job of the MAC Committee to do so.

**Broward Center for the Performing Arts:** Mr. Matthew McNeil wanted to say that he is proud to be in the room and glad that he gets to sit at the table and be able to discuss and impact the marketing decisions. The theatre drives a lot of people from both inside and outside of the community. Mr. McNeil would like to bring back to the table some of the economic impacts. The Broward Center just finished a study with the Broadway League. It's about where they go, where they stay, what they're eating and what they're drinking. Broward pulls a lot of people from Miami and Palm Beach. The artists are looking for more of an experience in Fort Lauderdale.

**The Galleria:** Ms. Melissa Milroy reported that July was not terrible, and the heat and the rain are better for them. Just signed two good extensions, and the Mall has not been sold. They are moving forward.

**Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority:** Ms. Jenni Morejon reported that a few years ago they started tracking Downtown's economic impact and pleased to note that downtown represents 35.7 Billion dollar impact. This could be a result due to the proximity of the Airport and Cruise Port. There's been a lot of reports of restaurants shutting down. Foot traffic is up 10% year after year, perhaps the concepts just didn't work. Bright spot in the jobs report is that Fort Lauderdale is up 5% increase in jobs.

**Island Syndicate:** Mr. David Muir reported Island Space Caribbean Museum in the Broward Mall is the home of 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reggae Genealogy and that they are bringing back the Taste of the Islands Food Festival. The Bob Marley exhibition will open in September and there will be a lot of excitement around it. They are also getting a lot of school tours. Mr. Muir also suggested that we start to work on combo packages for Broward Center tickets and the hotels.

**Lago Mar Resort:** Mr. Jim Pancallo reported a slow summer. Groups seem to be picking up. Getting a lot of cruise business and Disney overflow. As a beachfront hotel they have about 20

turtle nests which attract a lot of people to the resort. Our destination always continues to grow. Lago Mar never had a lot of business during the summer and now they do. Always got the East Coast visitors and never Midwest. Now the Midwest and Texas are coming here and the flights are key. When hurricanes are being reported it keeps people from coming. Mr. Pancallo stressed the need to have a mall as an attraction and Mr. Petrillo reported that Fort Lauderdale is not a great retail destination, as it should be.

**Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort:** Mr. Tom Parke reported that the hotel will now be Beach House Fort Lauderdale, a Hilton Resort. Much like Harbor Beach they are under construction and have had successes such as Nube, but the renovation will give a whole different guest experience. The main change is the branding with the change taking place in October. They've brought the rate down some, but the occupancy has been consistent. 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2025 is huge. IPW is a huge win for this destination. Mr. Petrillo commented on IPW, stating how huge it is for our destination and his concern is that the hospitality community doesn't understand what it is and what the impact will be.

**Renaissance Festival:** Mr. Bobby Rodriguez stated that the opening date of the Renaissance Festival will be February 1<sup>st</sup> for eight consecutive weekends. Once again it was brought up how important it is to get in front of the Commissioners and Mr. Petrillo stressed that it this Committee's job to do so.

**Travel Host:** Ms. Ina Lee commented that this was the best Marketing Advisory Committee meeting yet. We are discussing the needs in our community that will raise the needle here. The Commission needs to understand the importance and impact of IPW.

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:33 a.m.**