



MEETING MINUTES November 15, 2023

GFLCVB Marketing Advisory Committee (MAC)

10:00 AM – 11:06 AM

***Greater Fort Lauderdale / Broward County Convention Center
1950 Eisenhower Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316***

Members Present: Bobby Rodriguez, Chris Bielski, Elaine Fitzgerald, Ina Lee, James Pancallo, Melissa Milroy, Meredith McCleary, Michael Cook, Raelin Storey, Ron Drew, Tim Petrillo, Von Freeman

Members Absent: Arianne Glassman, Christine Soverns, Jenni Morejon, Joellyn Fellmeth, Keith Blackburn, Matthew McNeil, Robert Kessler

Remote Members: David Muir, Kara Lundgren, Marie McKenzie, Thomas Parke

Intro: Tim Petrillo called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Roll call was conducted by Tammy Moye. With no quorum, approval of previous meeting minutes did not take place.

Overview:

- Ina Lee discussed attendance at the quarterly meetings, and how important it is to increase attendance. Stacy Ritter advised that, according to County rules, if one misses two consecutive meetings they can be removed from a committee. Ina agreed to provide members with a copy of the attendance policy, review with the members their attendance record to date, and then will provide results back to the MAC during the next meeting.
- Camila introduced the new Greater Fort Lauderdale anthem, Alexander Star's song, "Laudy Dayo." A sneak peak of the song was played for the Committee, and a description of Alexander Star and his accomplishments was provided. Camila informed the Committee that the song will be performed at the Riptide Music Festival, Winterfest, and Dec. 23 Florida Panther's game, and at the Rose Parade on the Visit Lauderdale float.
- Visit Lauderdale's participation in the upcoming 135th Rose Parade was discussed, and the rendering of the float was shared with the Committee. Participating partners who will be aboard the float were discussed, including Alexander Star performing our new anthem; a representative from the Seminole Tribe of Florida; the Florida Panthers' mascot, Stanley; LGBT+ Political Rights Activist, Stuart Milk; and Broward County's Principle of the Year from Piper High School, Marie Hautigan.

- Provided details about the winter package of the Business Participation Program, running between January and March 2024. This program provides the opportunity to co-promote their business with Visit Lauderdale and maximize their exposure through our media buys.
- Presented awards and recognition received for Visit Lauderdale's launch of the Everyone Under the Sun Campaign: several Flagler Awards from Visit Florida, U.S. Travel ESTO Awards' Destiny Award, Convention South's Reader's Choice Award, recognition in Conde Nast Traveler's Bright Ideas in Travel 2023, and Sportstravel Awards' Best Renovated Sports Venue (for our newly completed Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center).
- Camila introduced new Marketing & Communications staff members Chanel Campbell, Lisa Barber-Hannaway, and Ebony Tyre. Ina Lee suggested that we prepare a directory of the team so that everyone knows who to contact, when needed. Camila advised that Chanel is preparing a Marketing & Communications organizational chart. (see attached)
- Upcoming events with Visit Lauderdale participation include the Riptide Music Festival, Florida Beach Bowl, Winterfest Boat Parade, and the Visit Lauderdale Food & Wine Festival.
- Dine Out had its most successful year to date with 120 participating restaurants, yielding impressive earned media results that includes a 1.1 billion reach and \$11 million estimated ad value.
- Camila announced that the Marketing Luncheon will take place on January 24, 2024.

INDUSTRY UPDATE:

- Ina Lee noted that the hotels and restaurants had a challenging summer, more so than in previous years. Tim Petrillo also noted that the downtown restaurants did not take as much of a sales dip as 17th Street and the beach corridor. He has asked the hoteliers on the Committee to provide insight and forecasts to better understand how we can react.
- Michael Cook, Margaritaville Hollywood Beach reported that it was a tough summer, and that hotel occupancy has been down. He's never seen the Boardwalk so empty with so few people, which may be due to an incident that happened on Hollywood Beach. Tim Petrillo interjected asking if we are not the value-driven destination to visit and asked about the perception of the travelers. Ina followed up asking about the difference between group and transient business right now. Michael continued, indicating that the hotel was down for Q4, but doing very well for Q1 2024, occupancy wise. They would like to utilize available assets to promote the destination to improve upon the summer next year.
- Von Freeman, Audacy Media reported that ticket sales for the Riptide Music Festival were down from last year and sales have been slower than usual. Rebranding (going from the Audacy Beach Festival back to the Riptide Music Festival) may have contributed to sales. VIP is sold out, and lower ticket sales may also be due to the impact of weather on people's decision making. They were a little late getting the promotion going, but the good news is that Fort Lauderdale Beach and Broward County received close to ½ billion media impressions. They also had a Country music show at the Hard Rock on November 7th, which was a fundraising campaign for the Wounded Warriors. It didn't sell out (there were 1,000 tickets left, which was very odd), but a lot of money was raised through this project for veterans in need.
- Chris Bielski, Marriott Harbor Beach Resort reported that the year has turned out to be very good, although leisure bookings are down due to a combination of Florida fatigue and Europe now being fully open. A lot of people are choosing to vacation to Europe, instead. There is a

substantial amount of meeting space that provided them with very good group sales. Q1 is very good with group sales, but ADR for leisure had to be adjusted to be more competitive. The holidays are slower than last year, but they're filling up. There will be a major renovation going on in 2024, including to the rooms and meeting space, and the restaurant is getting a facelift. This will put several rooms out of commission and cause compression for other nearby hotels.

- Ron Drew, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance reported that it has been slow, with companies putting decision making on hold (projected to be primarily due to the rise in interest rates, which raises questions on the affordability of a business to move or expand). By the end of the summer, companies started making decision again and we saw a \$125 million in capital investments announced. There's a publication coming out naming Miami/Fort Lauderdale as the best location for business in the country (#4 out of 383 metro areas / #2 out of the top 50 MSA's). Thanks to Visit Lauderdale, we have had a lot of site consulting company events take place in our destination, including Ocean Exchange. We hosted 24 companies here competing for awards at the Riverside. The Area Development Consultants Forum will take place in early December here in Fort Lauderdale. Florida Chamber has announced that their Prosperity Summit for May 2024 will be in Fort Lauderdale. National Publication was here about two weeks ago and they plan to return for their next year's Consulting Forum.
- Melissa Milroy, The Galleria at Fort Lauderdale mirrored the hotels' position that they also had a more difficult summer. She reported that there was an uptick in traffic and restaurant sales when the Boat Show hit town. Corporate travelers are coming in two weeks, and it was noted that the mid-week ADR is exorbitant. This may be why people are choosing other destinations if one doesn't want to spend, for example, \$500 on a Wednesday night stay.
- Meredith McCleary, Ebony Heritage Travel commented on booking airfare being difficult and working more closely with the airlines for pre- and post- cruise to get people in and out. With more ships coming in, hopefully this will bring additional overnight stays. She thinks this is what's selling Europe over destinations like ours – airline accessibility, transfers to and from hotels, and partnerships that streamline the travel experience. Further, affiliations between airline and hotels may bring in lower/better pricing in Europe.
- Elaine Fitzgerald, Beach Vacation Rentals Pompano Beach noticed a drop in summer business. There were a couple of mitigating factors that helped during the summer, including the completion of the Fishing Village which is crowded most of the time. A Monday night Happy Hour there has no parking, and lines are out the doors for restaurants. A year ago, a 10-year plan was completed for the city for tourism, and the primary part of it is to increase significant events. Pompano Beach is looking to create signature events to draw more people to the beach. They now have a ratings system to evaluate events proposed to them, and this will help determine with which events they will participate.
- Raelin Storey, City of Hollywood Beach reported a similar slowdown due to the European draw, where people probably wanted to experience something new that they didn't get during COVID. There is more security presence on the Boardwalk due to an incident that took place. There is a significant 14-million-dollar investment in downtown Hollywood on a new streetscape to widen the sidewalk café area, replace all pavers, and put in new landscaping and lighting. The project is about halfway done and should complete by the second quarter of next year. The city is working to assist businesses impacted by the project. Big signature events coming up include the Candy Cane Parade on the Boardwalk in the first weekend in December, as well as three Rhythm

Foundation concerts in Arts Park between January and April 2024. They are also looking at a drone show which will require city commission approval.

- Jim Pancallo, Lago Mar Resort indicated that they are down in leisure, but up in groups. Short-term reservations were happening for Thanksgiving. Their rates have stayed the same; they didn't lower their rates. The holidays are looking very good, with a lot of repeat business and they are almost sold out for Christmas week. They rely on publicity and noted that Trip Advisor has provided them with a lot of publicity. He mentioned that they are the number one hotel on Trip Advisor for reviews, and they were named the top family friendly resort in the Country. Fort Lauderdale has a lot going for it – we are in a great destination, the new Convention Center is going up, we have all the major sports, we have great restaurants, we have an airport 10-15 minutes away from the beach, and we have one of the best ports. People will come back time and time again and we will shift back to what it used to be.
- Bobby Rodriguez, Bobby Rodriguez Productions reported that festivals nationwide are having record numbers, and this past Renaissance Festival had a banner year. For the upcoming Renaissance Festival, ticket sales went up earlier than normal and they are hoping to see another great year.
- Thomas Parke, Hilton Fort Lauderdale Beach Resort reported that the summer of 2023 was not normal. With adjustments in the market, the customer changed. Most of his repeat group sales seem to be going away. Groups may have outgrown the Hilton; that doesn't mean that they're not coming back to Fort Lauderdale, but rather are going to larger properties. Q1 2024 is doing very well, and they are bracing for new customers. They anticipate a difficult Q3. They are seeing a slight increase in ADR, web traffic has been flat, but F&B had a strong 2023 and they are forecasting a strong 2024.
- David Muir, Island Syndicate commented on Ina's discussion regarding attendance. He would like to be part of any future discussions regarding this topic. He noted how wonderful it is to be out in the community and see Visit Lauderdale staff at the activities that are happening in Broward. He talked about the Jamaican Jerk Festival in Miramar and the thousands of attendees.
- Ina Lee, TravelHost shared comments from luxury properties in the industry. She had lunch with the GM of the Ritz Carlton, and they are at 97% occupancy, but expressed being disappointed with the Boat Show. She's hearing mixed reviews regarding the Boat Show and would like to see final numbers. She would also like to see representation from the luxury hotel industry on the MAC to convey some of their input in the future. She also noted that there is a huge amount of construction on Fort Lauderdale beach, most of which should be completed before the end of the year. Moving up and down the beach isn't easy right now.
- A discussion ensued regarding Visit Lauderdale's marketing and the fact that the MAC Committee does not know specifics as to where we are advertising. Stacy explained that we can only advertise outside the market, so that may be why they do not directly see our advertising efforts. Both Stacy and Camila advised that we are "always on," noting that our advertising has not stopped at any point. Camila agreed to send out a copy of our media plan to the Committee.

Tim Petrillo made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Ina Lee.

Meeting Adjourned AT 11:08AM