



Tourist Development Council (TDC) Meeting Minutes  
Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau  
February 22, 2024 9:30 am

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Ramola Motwani, Andreas Ioannou, Tim Petrillo, Seth Fellman, Commissioner Melissa Dunn, Lisa Lutloff-Perlo, Mayor Dean Trantalis

**NOT PRESENT:** Mayor Josh Levy, Camasha Cevieux, Mayor Nan Rich

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Tim Petrillo called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.  
Attendance was taken and a quorum was established.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*A motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of the TDC on November 16, 2023, was made by Mayor Trantalis and seconded by Commissioner Melissa Dunn. The minutes were approved without objection.*

**3. TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX REPORT | Randall Luechauer, Manager Tourist Development Tax Section**

The GFLCVB portion of the December 2023 reporting period collections totaled \$7,564,750.60 a decrease of 0.4% (\$32,323.03) when compared to collections for the same month in FY 2023. The GFLCVB portion of FY 2024 revenue collected through the December 2023 reporting period totaled \$19,302,473.80, a decrease of 3.4% (\$683,876.72) when compared to collections for the same period last year.

The top ten hotel December 2023 revenue increased an average of 1.3% when compared to the same month last year and represented 17.1% of total revenue collected during the month.

Revenue from all hotels totaled \$8,261,194.04 and represented 72.8% of total revenue collected during the month. Non-hotel revenue totaled \$3,083,512.20 and represented 27.2% of total revenue collected during the month.

FY 2024 hotel revenue collected through the December 2023 reporting period totaled \$21,138,008.44 and represented 73.0% of total revenue collected. Non-hotel revenue collected through the December 2023 reporting period totaled \$7,812,390.13 and represented 27.0% of total revenue collected.

The collection expense for December 2023 was \$77,258.47. The GFLCVB's portion was \$49,340.14 which represents 0.7% of the GFLCVB's monthly reporting period revenue. To date in FY 2024, GFLCVB expenses total \$115,365.57 which represents 0.6% of the GFLCVB reporting period revenue collected through January 31, 2024.

#### **4. VICE CHAIR'S REPORT | Tim Petrillo**

Tim Petrillo introduced new TDC member Lisa Lutoff- Perlo. She informed the TDC that she has been a member of the Broward County community since 1989. Ms Lutoff- Perlo has worked for the Royal Caribbean group for 39 years, most recently as the President and CEO of Celebrity Cruise Lines. She will be leaving there at the end of April and make an announcement concerning her next venture.

Mr. Petrillo commented that 145 colleges will be coming here for Spring Break in a three week span. Fort Lauderdale Fire and Police departments have an extensive plan for Spring Break.

Mr. Petrillo commented that "Dry January" has caused a significant decrease in restaurant revenue that may also affect hotel revenue. Andreas Ioannou indicated that hotels are reporting low bookings during Tortuga Festival. President Ritter is meeting with Chris Stacy with Tortuga Festival to discuss this.

Vice Chair Petrillo informed the TDC that Visit Lauderdale has put a dashboard together. Ted Botimer, VP of Research, Strategy, & Revenue Management presented the dashboard and how to access this information on the Visit Lauderdale.com website. The dashboard has statistical information on hotel occupancy, average daily rate, RevPar and TDT Revenue. Discussion ensued.

#### **5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT | Stacy Ritter, CDME, President/CEO, Visit Lauderdale**

President Ritter announced that VL is working on ways to provide information to the industry. There will be a monthly newsletter to the TDC, MAC and our partners and an internal one as well that will come out at the end of the month. Visit Lauderdale is launching a new campaign in May for the summer. It is an extension of "Everyone under the Sun" tagline but the specific campaign is "Come Be You".

President Ritter looked into tourism from the Middle East as El Al will now be flying to FLL . Mayor Trantalis wants to see what visitation from there would be like. Currently visitation is 275,000 seats on an aircraft to South Florida from the Middle East with 45% of these passengers connecting in MIA. They then go someplace else. The State of Florida gets 163,000 visitors from the Middle East on an annual basis. President Ritter questioned how much of an investment we want to make in a destination so far away. She stated if the TDC decides to spend money in the Middle East we will. Discussion ensued.

President Ritter disclosed that VL purchases some data from Longwoods International. Here are some of the statistics from the travel sentiment study:

1. Only 14% of American travelers in the last 6 months said they used Chatgpt for travel, 22% of those travelers said they had no idea what it is.
2. The main motivation for travel is rest and relaxation which is at 21%, up 4% from back in September.

3. 93% said they will be traveling in the next six months.
4. Only 5% are cancelling due to finances.

American travelers are choosing destinations closer to home, driving as opposed to flying, reducing the amount spent on food and beverages, but are still finding ways to travel. Visit Lauderdale Group Sales exceeded ytd group bookings by 41% from last year. Discussion ensued.

## **6. TOURISM SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS**

### **a) Cricket World Cup- Gonzalo Rubio, Sales Manager Sports and Entertainment**

T20 World Cup USA Inc has requested \$350,000 for their event T20 World Cup 2024, from June 11, 14-16. Mr. Rubio reported that Visit Lauderdale's internal review group recommends awarding \$200,000. The T20 World Cup is holding 4 matches in Florida including 1 match featuring host nation USA and two of the most followed teams in World Cricket, India & Pakistan. Discussion ensued.

*Mayor Dean Trantalis made a motion to recommend a \$200,000 sponsorship. Seth Fellman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **b) Hollywood Salsa Fest- Neki Mohan, VP Multi-Cultural Business & Community Engagement**

Hollywood Salsa Fest has requested \$5,000 for their event taking place on April 13, 2024. Salsa Fest International started in 2014 working under Almodovar Music LLC, in 2022 Salsa Festival International LLC was created. It's been nine years creating and producing this Festival in the City of Hollywood with a record crowd in 2022 of 12,000 attendees. Ms. Mohan reported that Visit Lauderdale's internal review group recommends awarding \$5,000. Discussion ensued.

*Mayor Trantalis made a motion to recommend a \$5,000 sponsorship. Ramola Motwani seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **7. Council Member comments and Discussion of Non-Agenda Items**

Ramola Motwani offered to help with the upcoming Cricket World Cup with connecting to locals or the consulate general.

## **8. Public Comments**

## **9. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mayor Trantalis and was seconded by Ramola Motwani. The meeting was adjourned with no objection at 10:50am.*