

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE

Tourism Development Council (TDC) Meeting Minutes
The Riverside Hotel
620 E Las Olas Blvd. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
Abeona Room, 8th Floor
TDC Meeting – February 27, 2020, 10am

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mayor Dale VC Holness, Camasha Cevieux, Cate Farmer, Casey Karl Koslowski, Mayor Josh Levy, Ramola Motwani, Tim Petrillo, Mayor Kenneth Thurston, Mayor Dean Trantalis. A quorum was established.

NOT PRESENT – Dan Atkins

1. Mayor Dale V.C. Holness called the meeting to order at 10:03am and introduced himself to the Council as this was his first meeting as Chair of the TDC.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes from November 7, 2019 meeting of the TDC was made by Mayor Kenneth Thurston and was seconded by Cate Farmer. The motion was unanimously approved.

Lizzy Liddell read a Form 8B – a Voting conflict of Interest Disclosure Form relating to the Air & Sea Show vote at the November 7, 2019.

4. MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Mayor asked the Council to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of past-TDC member, Heidi Dennis and CVB Employee/Mayor of Wilton Manors, Justin Flippen who both passed in the days prior to the meeting.

5. TOURIST DEVELOPMENT TAX REPORT – Randall Luechauer

Randall Luechauer, Manager, Tourist Development Tax Section presented the Tourist Development Tax Report for December 2019 reporting period. *(The numbers below were updated by Mr. Luechauer after the meeting as there was a typo in the original presentation.)*

The GFLCVB portion of the December 2019 reporting period revenue collected by our customers through January 31, 2020 totaled \$5,723,261.88, an increase of 8.0% (\$423,407.38) when compared to the same month last year.

The GFLCVB portion of FY 2020 revenue collected through January 31, 2020 totaled \$14,580,393.44, an increase of 7.6% (\$1,031,631.78) when compared to the same period last year.

The top ten hotel December 2019 revenues decreased an average of 0.9% when compared to the same period last year and represented 23.6% of the total revenues collected during the month.

Forty new accounts (619 units) were added in December 2019. To date in FY 2020, a total of 136 new accounts (902 units) were added.

The collection expense for December 2019 was \$42,309.29. The GFLCVB's portion was \$27,262.27 which represents 0.5% of the GFLCVB's monthly reporting period revenues. To date in FY 2020, GFLCVB expenses total \$79,869.80 which represents 0.5% of the GFLCVB reporting period revenues collected through January 31, 2020.

Mr. Luechauer noted that AirBNB tax funds are included in these numbers, though we do not have information as to how many units are being reported.

6. ANNUAL ETHICS REFRESHER & ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

Nathaniel A. Klitsberg, Broward County Attorney, presented an overview of County and State ethics regarding the receiving/accepting of gifts, conflicting employment and/or contractual conflicts of interest, voting conflicts Sunshine Laws and rules regarding Public Records. Explained the differences between personal and contractual relationships, what constitutes Family Relationships, Business Associates, etc. This presentation may be counted as required Ethics Hours if applicable.

Mr. Klitsberg also went over the authorized uses of TDT funds. The money must be used to promote and advertise GFL to state, domestic and/or international markets. If giving financial support for sponsorships – they must have a main purpose to engage *tourists* – individuals living outside of Broward County.

The responsibilities of the TDC were also discussed and all members were encouraged to read and familiarize themselves with the TDC by-laws. Mr. Klitsberg will provide links to the CVB for distribution.

The activities of the CVB were discussed and the considerations given to levels of support for groups, conventions, events, and place of interest sponsorships. (ex. Time of year, how many room nights it will generate, how it's promoted, whether it's a new event, etc.)

Guest attendee, Andy Ingram, from the National Association of Black Hotel Owners asked if the TDC had the authority to go to the County Commission to make recommendations to add entities not currently represented on the committee. Mr. Klitsberg explained the state requirements for the makeup of the TDC and that they are set forth by the County Commission.

7. TOURISM SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM REPORT – Candace Hartsell/Tony Cordo

Stacy Ritter noted that previously, there had been no formal internal review of requests for use of TDT funds for sponsorships. Candace Hartsell, Senior Business Intelligence Manager, and Tony Cordo, Senior Vice President, Administration, presented the proposed Tourism Sponsorship Program Internal Review Process.

Ms. Hartsell explained that the objective of a Tourism Event is to put “heads in beds”. She also explained how the request process had previously worked - where an event would request to get on the agenda, would ask the TDC for funds and recommend whether to give funds. Because the funds had not been budgeted for, money needed to be taken from other places within CVB’s budget, often cutting things that HAD been budgeted and planned for.

It was proposed the future practice work like this: Interested Event organizers will be given a Tourism Sponsorship Application Form. Once returned, the application will be reviewed by an internal work group made up of different departments within the CVB. (Marketing/Sales/Cultural/Creative Industry) The application will be “graded” per guidelines. And using this grade the work group can make a recommendation to the TDC on approval.

- Asks for projected room nights and an explanation of their projections
- Asks if the event is a reputation enhancer for the destination – does it align with the County’s mission.
- Ask for their marketing plan
- Ask about other tourism industry involvement – hotels, etc.
- How will you measure the success of the event to show ROI

Other criteria the work group looks at:

- Investment per attendee
- Investment per room night
- Group uses the EIC (Economic Impact Calculator) to determine the impact of the event.
- Has the group been funded before? Should we consider tier funding if so?
- What’s the location of the event?
- What are they basing their expected attendance on?
- Look at their experience.
- Look at timing and seasonality
- Note *where* they are marketing – Are they marketing outside of Florida or Broward County.

The workgroup created a One-sheet/Work sheet to “grade” the investment request. Samples were passed out the TDC for review.

Tim Petrillo asked for clarification on events funding and how many events pop up per year.

Ms. Hartsell noted that funding will only happen post-event and will only be funded if the events can prove certain criteria was met.

Mayor Levy asked what the tourism sponsorship budget was for the year (for the non-budgeted events) as opposed to the amount committed in the regular CVB budget?

Tony Cordo said he did not have the numbers with him but were at the office. Stacy Ritter clarified that the events are looked at ahead of time and are qualified in a similar way that Candace described.

Mayor Trentalis asked for clarification on whether there was a contingency fund for opportunities. Stacy Ritter explained that in the past any “contingency” monies needed for unbudgeted opportunities came out of other parts of the CVB budget. TDC can recommend contingencies at the time they are looking at the annual budget.

Andy Ingram (guest at meeting) asked if the President of the CVB can decide, at her discretion, in time-sensitive instances about an event. Tony Cordo said the administrative code states that events that were not included in the annual budget they MUST be brought forward in front of the TDC Board. Mr. Ingram stated he feels this is not good business practice as it does not allow for timely response in the business world. Mayor Holeness explained that a special meeting can always be called in the event it is needed.

10. Request for Funding

A. Afro-Carib Festival – Vice-Mayor Alexandra Davis

(Camasha Cevieux left room due to possible conflict of interest. Form 8B attached.)

Presented request for funds using a PowerPoint Presentation for the Afro-Carib Event in Miramar.

Evaluation forms by the CVB were passed out. Mayor Trantalis asked why the group was coming to the TDC days before their event and not sooner. The city said they were unaware of the process until recently. The CVB’s workgroup recommended a \$25,000 grant of funds.

A motion was made by Mayor Trentalis to recommend a grant of \$25,000 be given to the Afro-Carib Festival. Mayor Thurston seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

B. Las Olas Food & Wine Festival – Chrissy Cohen, Executive Director American Lung Assoc.

(Camasha Cevieux returned to the room. Tim Petrillo and Cate Farmer removed themselves from the room to avoid a possible conflict of interest. See 8B forms attached.)

Ms. Cohen is asking for marketing dollars so they can grow the tourism center to this event that sells out every year Ramola Motwani asked how many attendees come each year and how the event plans to grow if it sells out every year. The event would like to expand to a larger footprint.

Discussion ensued.

Mayor Levy made a motion to accept the CVBs recommendation to deny requested funds since this is already an established local event that does not offer anything new to the county. Mayor Trantalis seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by all members in the room.

C. Caribbean Village Festival – Lindell Douglas, President

(Tim Petrillo and Cate Farmer returned to the room, Camasha Cevieux removed herself from the room due to a possible conflict of interest. Form 8B attached.)

Mr. Douglas explained June is Caribbean Heritage Month. This three day Festival would like to grow to the size of the Caribbean Festival in Canada. The Festival is seeing interest from NY, Atlanta, and the Caribbean. 150 room nights have already been secured.

Mayor Thurston made a motion to accept the CVB's recommendation to fund \$10,000 to the event. Ramola Motwani seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

8. CHAIR'S REPORT – Mayor Holness

Mayor Holness expressed his goal to expand tourism beyond the beach to other Broward municipalities. He wants to bring the unemployment rate down in other zip codes by bringing more tourism to those areas. He spoke about Prosperity Broward - a program of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, and how he hopes we can all work together as a community to help the areas of Broward who have been left behind.

9. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Stacy Ritter

Ms. Ritter reported that the contract for the new ad agency, Aqua, would go before the Commission on March 10th. The contract calls for the agency to begin services on April 1, 2020. She thanked Starmark for their years of service and especially thanked them, along with the CVB's marketing team, for the great job they did on the Growth Plan Luncheon.

Ms. Ritter introduced Rita Wells, who will be taking over the recording of the minutes and coordinating the TDC minutes. She thanked Lizzy Liddell for her service to the TDC. Ms. Ritter also suggested that future TDC meetings are moved to 9am to accommodate

Mayors Levy and Trantalis' required attendance at Career Source meetings at noon.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Ramola Motwani shared her observations of the guest experience after her latest international travel experience on Emirates at FLL. She noted there was no lounge which is why Emirates only flies business and economy class flights to FLL. Ms. Motwani suggested bringing Mark Gale to the next TDC meeting to discuss. She also noted that customs capacity is 800 while often 2000 people are there at once. The passenger experience is not optimal and wants to know if there are plans to do something about this.

Mayor Holness explained the airport is aware of the lounge issue for VIPs and that he had dealt with an experience involving the President of Haiti. A reception room has been built downstairs in Terminal 3 that is a secure waiting area for VIP waiting in the interim. He noted that there is an item on the agenda for the next Commission meeting to select a company to build a VIP Lounge in Terminal 3 and suggested Ms. Motwani consider attending the meeting.

Mayor Holness shared that he too has experienced the frustration of clearing customs at FLL and that it is unfortunately, not something the county can control. TSA agents are being deployed to other areas – and though we've been allocated more agents than many other airports there are still not enough to adequately support the airport and sea port.

Tim Petrillo addressed the Marketing & PR teams about concerns over the Coronavirus and the Fort Lauderdale water crisis issues. He heard some groups have canceled due to the reports from Fox News and the possibility of a pandemic.

Stacy Ritter explained that the CVB has come up with talking points regarding the waterways. There is also a March 17th Industry Meeting which will be focusing on possible impacts of the Coronavirus. Ms. Ritter introduced JoNell Modys, PR for the CVB. Ms. Modys explained the CVB has created an informational water quality webpage on sunny.org, advising the water issues are not affecting our beaches, and the areas affected are neighborhoods in the Middle River area and do not affect most water activities.

Ms. Ritter addressed the fact that the Coronavirus information is changing daily and that the CVB will look to the County to make statements. Mayor Holness said the county is monitoring the situation and will activate the EOC if necessary. They will take their lead from the State.

Mr. Petrillo expressed concern over the fact that there was next to no major lift from this year's NFL Super Bowl LIV. Ms. Ritter explained that the deal made between NFL and Miami-Dade saw that Broward did not have receive any of the teams' room nights, nor the promised media hotel in Miramar. She said that we would not support giving funds in the future without guaranteeing proper deliverables in the contract. She did note that our ROI was better than Miami.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Cate Farmer. The motion was seconded by Mayor Thurston. The meeting was adjourned at 12:07.