



Chairman Mark A. Myers called the **Regular Board of Commissioners** meeting to order on Tuesday, June 25, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. at the St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission, 68099 Highway 59, Mandeville, Louisiana. Mr. Myers welcomed new commissioner, Katherine Diemont to the board. Ms. Diemont is sales manager at the Homewood Suites in Covington and is representing the Northshore Lodging Association.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Katherine Diemont
Bonnie Eades
Patti Elish
Mark Myers
Marlaine Peachey

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

T. J. Smith, Jr.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

A quorum was present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION was made by Patti Elish, and seconded by Marlaine Peachey, to approve the May 1, 2019 Budget Public Hearing minutes and the May 1, 2019 Regular Board Meeting minutes. **The Motion** carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Bonnie Eades presented the Treasurer's Report for April 2019 and May 2019. Marlaine Peachey made **A MOTION** to file the Treasurer's Report for audit as presented. Patti Elish seconded, and **The Motion** carried.

STAFF REPORT

- Donna O'Daniels, President and CEO, Tanya Leader, Vice President of Sales, and Christina Cooper, Vice President of Communications, presented their departmental reports.

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATE ON FONTAINEBLEAU STATE PARK FEASIBILITY

► Donna O'Daniels said that the commissioners will recall that last year, Lt. Governor Nungesser indicated that he would like to see us move forward with a feasibility study for potential hotel development at Fontainebleau. After much conversation, we selected a group out of Memphis, Pinkowski and Company, which has 30 years of experience in doing hotel feasibility studies and have done some feasibility studies for other properties now existing in St. Tammany Parish. Most recently, they did one for the new Hilton which just opened at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The commissioners were given copies of the study, which was favorable, and she summarized the conclusions. She then introduced David Young, the Lt. Governor's Director of Public/Private Partnerships, who thanked the board for commissioning the study. He said he would be happy to answer any questions about the project. They are evaluating the amenities and services to be provided and want to offer a first-class facility. State revenue would go back into the park. For years, the Tourist Commission has heard from meeting planners that we do not have the right mix of meeting space, and in particular, with attached hotel accommodations. This facility would offer 15,000 square feet of meeting space and 150 guest rooms. Funding for the facility would come from the private sector. Mr. Young said a steering committee will be formed that will assess the project and the level of interest of developers. The Lt. Governor's office will then issue a request for proposals to select a developer.

NEW BUSINESS

► **AUXILIARY AGENDA**

- Donna said Chris Masingill, the CEO of St. Tammany Corp., asked to be added to the agenda to present a request

for funding, but the agenda had already been published. Mr. Masingill was present at the meeting. Commission Counsel Thomas Huval said the board would unanimously have to agree to allow discussion to take place. Patti Ellish made **A MOTION** to allow Mr. Masingill to present his request for funding a feasibility study for a multipurpose event facility. Mark Myers seconded and board members were individually polled. **The Motion** carried unanimously, with one member absent. Mr. Masingill said his organization was approached by a company based in Texas called Hat Trick Consultants about developing a 150,000 square foot facility that could accommodate up to 8,000 seats in Slidell. It would host large events such as graduation ceremonies, conventions, concerts and other sorts of entertainment, as well as professional sports events. The study will cost \$50,000, and his organization has committed \$25,000. CLECO has committed \$10,000, and they are asking the Tourist Commission to contribute \$10,000. Donna said there is room in the budget, under Research and Development, to fund the request. Following further discussion, the commission decided to postpone a vote on the matter until its next meeting in August, when it can be placed on the agenda. Donna asked Mr. Masingill if she had his assurance that if the Tourist Commission does commit these funds, the Harbor Center and the Castine Center will be included in the process. He said they would definitely be involved. There was discussion about the item not being on the agenda. Mark Myers asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to amend the agenda for discussion so that a vote could potentially be taken on the matter. Patti Ellish made **THE MOTION** and Mark Myers seconded. **The Motion** carried. Ms. Ellish then made **A MOTION** to fund the feasibility study at management's recommended \$10,000. There was no second and **The Motion** did not pass. Ms. Ellish then made **A MOTION** to place this item on the agenda of the next regular commission meeting. Marlaine Peachey seconded, and **The Motion** carried.

► **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

- Marlaine Peachey said she is excited about the Fontainebleau project and that there is a need for such a facility in St. Tammany Parish. The Mandeville Independence Day Celebration and fireworks will be held Saturday, June 29 at the Mandeville Lakefront.
- Patti Ellish said the Lt. Governor is holding a breakfast on Friday and some Tourist Commission staff is attending. She is not sure if he will address the Fontainebleau project but she will be interested in what he may have to say.
- Katie Diemont said thanks for having her on the Tourist Commission board and she looks forward to working with board members and continuing to work with staff.
- Mark Myers reminded everyone that there is a Lobby Lounge coming up on Thursday, June 27 and will feature a duo called "The Two's."

► **GUEST COMMENTS**

- Alex Corollo said the Slidell Heritage Festival is coming up on June 29. It will be from 4:00 to 11:00 pm with music, food and games and fireworks at 9:00. There is a News with a Twist Block Party happening on August 8 from 4:40 until 8:00 pm at the corner of First and Cousin Streets. It is free and everyone is invited.
- Valerie Waeltz said Friday, June 28 they are hosting the East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce breakfast with the Lt. Governor. In July, they have Showcase Comic Con on the 6th, and a gun and knife show on the 13th and 14th.
- Kathy Foley said the Big Easy Lacrosse Tournament which saw participants from Mississippi, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, Virginia, Maryland and Vermont, brought in 1,400 people each day. They have a new group ACRO, which is a regional acrobatics competition. They are going to alternate with the Alario Center every other year.
- Bill McHugh said Monday will be the inaugural edition representing the merger of the Times-Picayune and the New Orleans Advocate. He is not sure how they are planning to merge the two websites.
- Lacey Osborne thanked David Young for the update on the FSP project. She said the West St. Tammany Chamber is in conversation with the East St. Tammany Chamber about collaborating more closely with each other, and the West Chamber is co-hosting the Fan-Up Tailgate Pep Rally on August 22 at the Harbor Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Bonnie Eades made **A MOTION** to adjourn and Marlaine Peachey seconded. **The Motion** carried and the meeting

adjourned at 3:35 PM.

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 27, 2019 (*date was later changed to Monday, August 26*), at 2:00 PM, at the Harbor Center, 100 Harbor Center Boulevard, Slidell, Louisiana.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

S / Rae Shipley

Rae Shipley
Recording Secretary

S / Mark A. Myers

Mark A. Myers
Chairman