

VCB Board of Director's Meeting Minutes
St. Augustine Government House, St. Augustine, Florida
March 18, 2010 – 1:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order by Charles Cox at 1:30 p.m.

Charles Cox welcomed all members and ex-officios to the board.

Roll Call: Jay Humphreys called roll.

Present: Charles Cox, Kathy Fleming, John Fraser, Irving Kass, Bob O'Neill, Tina Puckett, Virginia Whetstone, David Mariotti, County Commissioner Cyndi Stephenson and Errol Jones, St. Augustine Commissioner.

Staff Present: Richard Goldman, Evelyn Vazquez, Jay Humphreys, Rick Hensler

Others: Elaine Fraser, Brud Helhoski, Mayor St. Augustine Beach, Mary Altman, Phil McDaniel, Lee Capitano, Peter Yesawich, Joe Finnegan, Rob Deluke, John Johnson, Chris Davidson, Barry Lott, David Reese

Approval of Minutes: Irving Kass made a motion to approve as presented the minutes from the Board of Director's meeting held on February 3, 2010. Motion was seconded by David Mariotti **Approved unanimously.**

Treasurer's Report: Bob O'Neill reported that the January VCB balance is \$35,264.27. The increase to the St. Johns County Bed Tax will take place on April 1.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: John Fraser made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Irving Kass. **Approved unanimously.**

Y Partnership Presentation

Peter Yesawich and the Y Partnership team presented new branding destination concepts to the Board. The Y Partnership will be taking the concept to four focus groups, two in Atlanta and two in Orlando. The presentation included campaigns targeting consumer travel and group meetings travel. It was communicated that print advertising is a small part of the campaign, and that electronic outlets will be a strong component of the campaign vehicle.

A report from the focus groups will allow Y Partnership to pursue an appropriate media buy plan. St. Augustine Beach Mayor Helhoski expressed a perception that representatives from St. Augustine Beach believe the beaches areas are under represented in the VCB's marketing and Advertising efforts. Y Partnership representatives made note of his concerns. Richard and Jay will meet with St. Augustine Beach representatives to review all past marketing efforts.

A report and video from the focus group interviews will be made available to the Board.

Executive Committee Report:

New Partners

Charles Cox presented partners for approval that included The Yum Yum Shop, Ramada Historic Hotel, Historic Inn, Avenida Inn, Augustine.com, Peace and Plenty Inn, St. Augustine Wild Reserve, Casa de Suenos Bed and Breakfast, Kingfish Grill and Adrenaline Alligator Adventures.

All partners were approved unanimously.

The VCB Executive committee had also reviewed the new accounting process which is making accurate reporting much clearer.

Director's Report:

Richard Goldman reported the preliminary reports indicate that the January 2010 net County Bed Tax collections were \$287,482. Year to date collections are \$1.099 Million. The breakdown of collections and how they are reported was discussed.

The STR Report indicated that the market has slowed down while December occupancy was back up to last year's occupancy. January has slowed down, as well as ADR and REV-PAR. However, there was an increase in rooms available. Richard asked that the STR competitive set be changed. The relevance of the destinations we are being compared to are seasonally skewed.

It was requested that the set include Destin, SanDestin, Amelia Island, St. Pete/Clearwater and Myrtle Beach so that the reports are compared with seasonality and like destinations.

Action: Irving Kass made a motion to approve the competitive set destinations in the TTR report. Motion was seconded by John Fraser. **Approved unanimously.**

VCB Department Reports

Richard Goldman reported the inquiries in response to advertising for January provided 53,200 requests, 60% down from last year. Previous advertising was geared to direct response to call center. The drastic drop of inquiries may be affected by the fact that the latest campaigns offer direct links to specials on website and links to partners as opposed to directing inquiries to the fulfillment call center.

The Sales Department has generated 135 distributed leads. In January and February, the Sales department participated in a show in Sun City Center and

providing quality leads. The sales department also attended Florida Huddle, Receptive Services Association of America Summit, and Destination Showcase.

Richard also reported on the website visitation, there is some improvement on the bounce rate and time spent. He reported that while content has improved with direct control by staff, there are some challenges with the effectiveness of the website and continues to be evaluated.

The Communications Department reported that the year to date media impressions exceed 740 million and the value exceeds \$1.2 million. There were a total of 191 stories in place as a direct result of the VCB efforts. Impressions for the first four months of the year are almost the same as the entire previous year. Jay Humphreys reported the Communications Department's most recent projects included a great deal of broadcast media. They included a project working with a producer with a big-budget production about megalodon sharks to air on History channel in Canada and Sy-Fy channel.

Also, there was a production for the UK Travel Channel. The staff has participated in several travel radio programs.

Richard reported on the Romance Lives Here campaign. Next month we will be reporting the final impact of the campaign. So far there have been 2,700 visits to www.RomanceLivesHere.com that were actual typed-in URL accesses, indicating that those hits are coming from print advertising, where the others are click-through visits coming from electronic banner ads and other online resources.

Bob O'Neill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by John Fraser. **The motion was approved unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Barbara Golden