

**MINUTES OF MEETING
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
MARCH 21, 2011
(1:30 P.M.)**

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the Tourist Development Council of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present: Jack Peter, Chairman
Ken Bryan, BCC Representative
Scott M. Bartosch, District 3
Jeffrey Mayers, District 4
Fred E. Cozby, District 4
John B. Yanni, District 5
Regina Ross, Assistant County Attorney
Pam Halterman, Deputy Clerk

Absent: Joseph Boles, City of St. Augustine Representative
Richard O'Brien, City of St. Augustine Beach Representative
Bill Hughes, District 4

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:38 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Jack Peter called the meeting to order

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:38 p.m.)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:38 p.m.)

3. ROLL CALL

Dena Masters called the roll and stated that Boles, O'Brien and Hughes were absent.

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:39 p.m.)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Yanni, seconded by Bryan, carried 6/3 with Boles, O'Brien and Hughes absent, to approve the agenda.

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:39 p.m.)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Bryan, seconded by Bartosch, carried 6/3 with Boles, O'Brien and Hughes absent, to approve the minutes for the February 28, 2011, meeting.

(03/21/11 - 1 - 1:39 p.m.)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

(03/21/11 - 2 - 1:40 p.m.)

7. ARTS & CULTURAL CATEGORY

a. TDC/SJCCC Draft Contract Template - Glenn Hastings

Hastings spoke on the draft contract document submitted to the Board members and reviewed the procedures involved with handling the contract. He noted that the County Attorney's Office had reviewed and updated the proposed contract. In response to an inquiry, he advised that he, along with Bill Coleman and Tommy Bledsoe, had developed a draft scope of services for the Arts & Culture Category. Ross advised that several reiterations would occur prior to providing the finished contract product. She suggested that a performance measure be added to help the TDC evaluate submitted contracts.

(1:44 p.m.) Bryan questioned the lack of grant funding and marketing elements in the scope and said those elements were significant components of the function. Peter agreed with Bryan, in regards to the accountability matrix, and suggested that marketing was a key component to the contract. Bryan voiced that he would be more comfortable with the added language of performance measure in the scope of services. Cozby stated that the TDC would evaluate the contract; however, he suggested that constant evaluation might be difficult to handle. Yanni said designing guides for the grant application evaluations would be the responsibility of the Cultural Council and suggested a broader matrix for evaluation of the Cultural Council by the TDC. Bryan suggested that the TDC not micromanage, but allow the Executive Director to handle the evaluation; however, he said the function and scope of the work should be specified.

(1:49 p.m.) Hastings directed attention to the overhead screen that provided a scope of services which had been included in the RFP. Ross directed attention to items 5 & 6 of the scope of services, which were taken from the RFP, and said the goal for the TDC would be to oversee and evaluate the entire performance of the agreement and not get bogged down in the minutia of the Cultural Council. Mayers suggested that a marketing component should be included in the agreement as a performance measure. Bryan stated that members of the TDC and the Cultural Council were very successful in their own rights and would provide the oversight. He suggested that the Cultural Council would provide a level of comfort in regards to appropriate handling of the contracts. Hastings advised that the TDC's goals would change from year to year. He noted that the VCB's marketing plan offered specific goals for the current year and how that success should be measured. Yanni voiced that it would be very difficult to quantify a matrix to measure. Mayers suggested that the marketing and grant funding be highlighted in the scope of services. Peter suggested that the TDC should not micromanage, but, as a Board, evaluation activities twice each year should be appropriate. Bryan noted that the monthly reports would provide necessary information for the Board. Bartosch pointed out that both items, grant program and marketing, had been addressed on the document submitted to the Board. He suggested that the language for grants should be stronger than what had been proposed, and said he thought the Board should rewrite the grant program themselves. He said the Funding Panel was a completely separate issue, and its only function was to award funds to people who had submitted qualified applications. Peter and Yanni agreed with Bartosch. Peter affirmed that it was the job of the entity, which the TDC had contracted with, to write the guidelines, which would be a measurable activity to evaluate. Hastings noted that during the TDC and BCC joint meeting, discussion included talk of a task force to write guidelines for the grant program. Bartosch said the panel should consist of a diverse group of local individuals to create the best possible panel. He communicated that the Cultural Council was being paid to handle the research. Peter suggested that it was the responsibility of the Cultural Council to write the guidelines. Ross suggested that the Board give the Cultural Council a deadline to submit a draft document to the Board for their review and recommendation. Yanni said

one purpose of the initiative was to increase incremental bed nights; however, not to the detriment of enhancement activities which were important.

(2:04 p.m.) Initiative Identification: Hastings spoke briefly about the initiative identification under scope of services of the Arts & Cultural Category.

(2:05 p.m.) Programs to be included: Hastings asked if a five-year strategic plan should be added to the program. Yanni affirmed that a five-year plan should be included along with the marketing segment. Peter stated that the level of cooperation and collaboration with the VCB was very important. Hastings described portions of the program, which included marketing, research, and workshops. Bartosch said it appeared the language read that all marketing would be funded by the TDC for events held in the county. Hastings affirmed that they would work on the language.

(2:11 p.m.) Role of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Division Executive Director: Hastings spoke on the item and described the Executive Director's role. Ross explained that the only input the TDC would have concerning the Executive Director's role would involve what the TDC would review, such as attending meetings, handling business, etc, as outlined in the contract. Hastings suggested that the Cultural Council Executive Director and the VCB Executive Director be non-voting ad hoc members of the Category II Funding Panel. Ross said she would research the issue and bring it back to the Board. Yanni questioned why the issue of ad hoc members had to be codified. Bartosch voiced that he would like to have a funding panel with members that came from outside of St. Johns County, because the funding panel would be an independent body making a decision. Hastings noted that language included in the document specified that members were electors of the county. Yanni suggested that the funding panel be linked between the Board of County Commissioners and county voters. He said he could not support members of the panel being from outside the county. Ross advised that she would review the comments from the Board and return with a second reiteration of the contract.

Bryan left the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

(03/21/11 - 3 - 2:19 p.m.)

8. ADMINISTRATION & SPECIAL USES - Glenn Hastings
 - a. FY 2012 Preliminary Budget Worksheet with Line Items

Hastings explained the FY2012 budget worksheet to the Board members and reviewed the administration and special uses, and the indirect administration fee details. He directed attention to line #33, and explained the reserve funding. Mayers asked for the amount of reserves, whereas, Hastings affirmed that the fund was currently at \$2.1 million and would continue to grow. Dawn Cardenas explained the budget process and language involved with a budget. Yanni said the VCB had planned to place funds from their budget in reserve for advertising to overcome the impact of a natural disaster. Peter questioned whether the County had a reserve policy. Ross and Cardenas affirmed that the County did not have a policy on reserves but noted that approval from the BCC would be required. Hastings recommended that the issue be placed on the Boards' April agenda for a more in-depth discussion.

(2:32 p.m.) Troy Blevins pointed out that the hard reserve and projection numbers needed to remain separate from each other. Cardenas stated that the reserve fund was approximately \$7 million. Hastings noted that some of the numbers might change slightly. Hastings reviewed the Arts, Cultural & Heritage, and Leisure and Recreation budget worksheets. In response to an inquiry, Blevins noted that HCP was the Habitat Conservation Plan which was the permit that allowed the County to have beach driving. He clarified other elements of the budget for the Board.

(03/21/11 - 4 - 2:37 p.m.)

9. DESTINATION MARKETING - Richard Goldman

a. VCB Report

Richard Goldman, Visitors Convention Bureau, reviewed their quarterly report for the TDC. He spoke on the ADR, RevPAR, and revenue numbers provided in their packet. He stated that collections were up for January 2011, but entirely due to the additional fourth penny. He suggested that February 2011 numbers would be much better than January 2011. He said occupancy was up for the twelfth consecutive month, with an increase of 8.7% and up 7.8% for the running twelve months. He added that rooms sold were up 10% and had increased for twelve consecutive months. He noted that, in some areas, the county figures were ahead of Daytona and Myrtle Beach and just behind Hillsborough County. He pointed out that vacation rentals were not included in the report. He said time spent on the VCB website had increased to six minutes and thirty-six seconds; however, visits to the site were down over 40% between February 2010 and February 2011. In response to an inquiry from Mayers regarding search engines, Goldman explained how the website handled bookings. He continued with reviewing the report submitted to the Board, and said the VCB was working on new programs and was very excited about generating more visitors. He pointed out that the VCB had held a co-op workshop with their partners, conducted a straw poll of hoteliers and their perception of the next few months, and coordinated a reciprocal promotion effort with the PGA Tour and The Players. He articulated that the website was being redesigned and would be launched at the end of May. In response to a question from Peter, Goldman stated that they were in very good shape concerning the bed tax collections. Hastings pointed out that people were visiting, spending, and getting very good rates at local hotels. Goldman noted that the VCB was opposed to the Online Travel Companies SB376 and HB493 proposed legislation which would create a State sales tax and tourist development tax exemption. Peter asked for language to forward to the State which Goldman said he would provide to the Board.

(03/21/11 - 4 - 2:57p.m.)

10. LEISURE & RECREATION CATEGORY - Troy Blevins

Troy Blevins, Parks and Recreations Director, reported that the weekend beach visitors had set a record for attendance over the weekend, which surpassed the Memorial Day attendance. He noted that several free Jaguar events in the area would take place in the next month. Cozby asked what activities were involved in the "Team Teal" events. Blevins noted that the County had joined forces with other surrounding counties to promote the Jaguars Football season ticket packages. Even with the current football strike, Blevins said they were hoping for the same success as seen the previous year.

(03/21/11 - 4 - 3:00 p.m.)

11. FINANCIAL REPORTS

- YTD Bed Tax Collections
- YTD Cash Flow Worksheet
- Visitor Related Expenditures
- Monthly Detail Expenses by Department

Hastings noted that the reports were in the Board's packet for review at their leisure. He noted that, in the near future, the State would no longer provide funding for beach renourishment. He pointed out that the Industrial Development Authority, the Airport Authority, and County had two pages of advertorial in the Florida Trend Magazine. Peter asked if the dates for the British Night Watch had been resolved. Hastings noted that the dates would remain as they originally were, due to date complications with other events.

(03/21/11 - 5 - 3:05 p.m.)

12. COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

Bartosch thanked staff for the proposed Arts & Cultural contract document. Yanni commented that much needed to be fixed; however, after being at events and observing the data provided by the VCB from Smith Travel Research, the County seemed to be doing something right. He thanked everyone involved in the process.

(03/21/11 - 5 - 3:06 p.m.)

13. ADJOURN

Motion by Bartosch, seconded by Yanni, carried 6/3 with Boles, O'Brien, and Hughes absent, to adjourn.

With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.

Approved _____, 2011

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Jack Peter, Chair

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk