

**MINUTES OF MEETING
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
AUGUST 22, 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: Scott M. Bartosch, District 3
 J. Ken Bryan, BCC Representative
 Joseph Boles, City of St. Augustine Representative
 Richard O'Brien, City of St. Augustine Beach Representative
 Jeffrey Mayers, District 4
 Fred E. Cozby, District 4
 Bill Hughes, District 4
 Pam Halterman, Deputy Clerk

Absent: Jack Peter and John Yanni

Also present: Glenn Hastings, Dena Masters, Carrie Horn, and Regina Ross, Assistant County Attorney

(08/22/11 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Scott Bartosch called the meeting to order.

(08/22/11 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

O'Brien led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(08/22/11 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

3. ROLL CALL

Dena Masters called the roll and stated that Jack Peter and John Yanni would not be in attendance.

(08/22/11 - 1 - 1:34 p.m.)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Mayers, seconded by Bryan, carried 7/0, with Peter and Yanni absent, to approve the Agenda.

(08/22/11 - 1 - 1:34 p.m.)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Bryan, seconded by Boles, carried 7/0, with Peter and Yanni absent, to approve the minutes for the July 18, 2011, meeting.

(08/22/11 - 2 - 1:34 p.m.)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

(08/22/11 - 2 - 1:35 p.m.)

7. DESTINATION & MARKETING CATEGORY

a. VCB Monthly Report - Richard Goldman

Richard Goldman voiced that an exciting week was ahead of them and then reviewed the June 2011 Bed Tax revenue; however, he stated that the YTD was down due to the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. He offered the following points for the Board:

- YTD collections were up 23% with the 4th penny, and 4.8% with the 4th penny removed from the figures
- Hoteliers started to raise their average daily rate which cost in occupancy but calendar YTD was up 3.3%
- RevPAR was up nearly 3% and remained close to 7% for the year
- Occupancy figures showed a slight decline of -.8% and YTD up 4.2%
- Revenue was up 3% and calendar YTD up 7.5%
- July 2011 figures showed up in every measure indicating stability continuing
- Compared to competitive set with June being somewhat disappointing with a ranking of 9 out of 12, and YTD was ranked 6 out of 12, placing the county in the middle
- Website dashboard YTD figures were down approximately 9% but actions were being taken to offset the decline
- Sales measures were 23% ahead in telemarketing efforts, on-goal with total leads distributed, and 1% ahead on the lead room nights
- 124% up in total impressions, advertising equivalent value was up 26%, and on target with the VCB initiated stories

Goldman reviewed several upcoming activities to be held in the County:

- Working with Florida's First Coast of Golf and Michelob Ultra Golf promotion
- Launch second annual Flavors of Florida Historic Coasts culinary promotion in September 2011
- Participating in development and promotion of Florida Humanities Council Viva Florida conference
- Developed a Florida's Historic Coast weather and storm information micro-website
- Conducting workshops on receptive tour operators and quincenas
- Conducting redesign of the FloridasHistoricCoast.com website
- Preparing for a Bridal and Life Event Expo in November 2011

Goldman showed the hurricane storm information website, including an interactive map, to the Board which he said would provide important accurate weather information for visitors and local citizens. He explained that they were linked with the website Visit Florida, who managed the availability of rooms and the communication of the conditions of various locations in Florida; thereby, allowing citizens and visitors in Florida to obtain accurate weather throughout the State. He noted that, approximately one year ago, they had developed a television show that included local destinations as part of their programming. He pointed out that they had found a local producer, with the help of their advertising agency, and became aware of an opportunity, pitched the story, and were successful in generating an important and large half-hour television show which would begin showing in October 2011, with multiple rebroadcasts. He provided a snip-it of the ½ hour show to the Board and those in the audience. He stated

that sponsors were paying in excess of \$100,000.00 for the benefits they had received. He added that more shows would be available in the fall of 2011. In response to an inquiry from Boles, he affirmed that they were only supplying assistance to the producers and not funding.

(08/22/11 - 3 - 1:54 p.m.)

8. ARTS & CULTURAL CATEGORY

a. St. Johns Cultural Council Update - Bill Coleman

Bill Coleman offered information regarding the Executive Director position which had a deadline for submissions of August 12, 2011. He advised that they had received eighty applications for the position. He noted that interviews would begin during the next week that involved the top twenty-five finalists. He pointed out that the Executive Directors' job description had been included in the Board's packet. In response to an inquiry from Bryan, Coleman noted that applications came from all over the United States and mostly through the website.

(08/22/11 - 3 - 1:55 p.m.)

9. LEISURE & RECREATION CATEGORY

a. Funding request - Miami Tri Events, LLC - St. Augustine Marathon

Troy Blevins, Parks and Recreation Director, explained that he had three sports marketing grants for the Board's review and recommendation. He reviewed that the St. Augustine Marathon event would be held for three days in November and noted that they had requested \$20,000.00. He said they expected participation to be around 3,000 people the first year, and the event included a 5k and 10k race, and a half and full size marathons. He pointed out that the race was a qualifier for the Boston Marathon. He noted that mostly local and regional media would provide coverage for the event.

(2:01 p.m.) **Motion by Mayers, seconded by Bryan, carried 7/0, with Peter and Yann absent, to approve \$20,000.00 in funding for the St. Augustine Marathon event held by Miami Tri Events, LLC.**

b. Funding request - St. Augustine Amateur, Inc. - St. Augustine Amateur

Blevins noted that the St. Augustine Amateur event had been held for eight years at the local county golf course and was included as a "points" event. He said they would provide \$5,000.00 for their marketing and promotion side of the event. In reply to an inquiry from Hughes, Blevins stated that staff had really turned the course condition around during the current year. He pointed out that the Superintendent had resigned over the summer and nine holes had been closed earlier in the year as well; however, compared to the last three years, they were currently ahead of the game. Hughes congratulated Blevins on a good job.

(2:04 p.m.) **Motion by Mayers, seconded by Hughes, carried 7/0, with Peter and Yann absent, to approve \$5,000.00 in funding for the St. Augustine Amateur event held by the St. Augustine Amateur, Inc.**

c. Funding request - Children's Museum of St. Johns, Inc. - "Just Tri It"
A Kids Triathlon

Blevins explained that the St. Augustine Amateur, Inc., event was a two-day event for children and was sponsored by the Children's Museum. He noted that they had requested \$2,500.00 to fund part of the marketing and promotions because the funds needed to be used outside the County's geographical area. He added that it was the fourth year for the event. He explained that the Museum had provided zip code data to

staff; however, he said he would like to see more participation outside the ninety-mile rule boundary to ensure more "heads in beds".

(2:08 p.m.) Motion by Hughes, seconded by Cozby, carried 7/0, with Peter and Gianni absent, to approve \$2,500.00 in funds for the "Just Tri It" event held by the Children's Museum of St. Johns, Inc.

Blevins noted that they were working with Triple Crown on a three-year contract for a reduced two-weekend event instead of the usual four-weekend event because they had struggled with meeting the criteria which reduced the sports marketing dollars. Hughes asked whether the close course was being maintained or left to overgrow. Blevins noted that the irrigation was still in place and the ground was mowed when necessary. He added that they would like to have been able to recycle the sod but the bug infestation was too severe. He affirmed that they had 19 active holes open on the course which included #9 hole being retained for a pitching green. In response to an inquiry from Hughes, Blevins stated that staff was investigating whether to contract outside for the maintenance of the greens. Hughes offered that they would be willing to help with the greens at any time Blevins felt it necessary because it involved and would benefit the entire community. Blevins noted that he was in favor of retaining staff because they had completed an excellent job when the Superintendent resigned. He said, financially, the golf course had lost between \$125,000.00 and \$150,000.00 by attempting to retain the 27 holes on the course. Bryan asked if any volleyball events or tournaments would be hosted in the future in the County. Blevins noted that team sports generated more people than individual sports and did not help the County financially.

(08/22/11 - 4 - 2:16 p.m.)

10. ADMIN & SPECIAL USES CATEGORY

• Executive Director's Update

Glen Hastings explained that several items would be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners and presented to them in September 2011. He noted that a new ordinance which would amend the Tourist Development Plan, according to what the TDC had discussed during the previous meeting, would be presented to the BCC on September 6, 2011. He added that the BCC would need to make a declaration of appropriate use for the North Florida Land Trust Conservation Center in Ponte Vedra for the requested funding of \$250,000.00. He voiced that the TDC would be handling the quincentenary and the 450th Anniversary of the City of St. Augustine events. He reviewed numerous changes involved with the Tourist Development Plan. He directed attention to paragraph C which specified that any revenue generated from the 3rd percentage tax remaining after expenditures for specific purposes or projects listed in Section 2(a) and 2(b) shall be allocated among the categories, and under section D, paragraph two, specified that the previous year fiscal category use appropriation of any actual residual of funds shall remain within the use category for its stated purpose. He noted that it was not true for all categories because the funds from administration were redistributed. He reiterated that the words "except for the funds described in Section 2(c) above" would be added language. In response to an inquiry, Ross explained that she understood the verbiage concept and the final document would have the correct language. Hastings explained that "Maximus" was the name of the company that handled the "indirect allocation fee study" for the County. He stated that only items that were traceable to specific categories would be paid through those specific category funds.

(2:24 p.m.) Motion by Cozby, seconded by Hughes, carried 7/0, with Peter and Gianni absent, to approve a change to language in the Tourist Development Plan, Section 2(c) as suggested and after review by the County Attorney.

(08/22/11 - 5 - 2:25 p.m.)

11. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

- ✦ Local Option Tourist Development Tax YTD
- ✦ Cash Flow
- ✦ Departmental YTD Expenditures
- ✦ Visitor Related Expenditures

Bartosch inquired that it was agreed that the TDC would provide the North Florida Land Trust money request in two years or less time. Hastings noted that a two year term had been agreed upon. Bartosch said he was concerned because the budget was very tight, and he recalled that the agreed timeframe involved three years. Hastings affirmed that Bartosch was correct in regards to the timeframe. Bryan asked whether the item would return annually to the BCC for approval and the availability of funds. Ross advised that Bryan was correct that the item would go before the Board of County Commissioners for their approval annually. Mayers pointed out that the three year term had been noted in the previous month's minutes which were in the Board's agenda packet. Ross summarized that the recommendation for approval would also be subject to the provision that the Trust would be able to raise the remainder of the money; therefore, the County would only obligate to the extent that the Land Trust could raise the balance of the funds.

(2:27 p.m.) Cozby asked to review page one concerning the NFLT and asked if the 450th St. Augustine anniversary celebration funds had been approved by the TDC. Hastings affirmed that to be correct and said that the funding had been approved approximately one year earlier and would be taken from the Admin & Special Uses category.

(2:28 p.m.) Hastings pointed out that the financial reports were in the Boards' packet and he noted that they were 75% through their budget year and had generated 75.2% of their budget amount and were on track for the year. He stated that the visitor related expenditures were up and represented 17.5% of all sales in the County for the month of June. He added that restaurants were up almost 4%, admissions/attractions were down slightly, and hotel and condos were up 13.2%. He suggested that June 2011 numbers looked fairly positive.

(2:31 p.m.) O'Brien questioned whether Hastings remained active in the Amphitheatre operation. Hastings affirmed that he provided oversight for the Cultural Events Division. O'Brien asked whether Hastings' job description had been presented to the Board along with the break down of pay and any dissatisfaction in the job. He voiced that the inquiry was not related to any dissatisfaction with Hastings job performance but rather to provide clarification to the Council. Hastings communicated that the description had not; however, Bartosch asked that the item was added to their September agenda.

(2:32 p.m.) Hughes asked for a report on the Amphitheatre. Hastings noted that they had several good shows which generated revenue, as well as ticket sales. He said a retreat had been scheduled for the following week that would include review of the business plan and annual marketing plan of the Amphitheatre. He expanded that they would be surveying the Commissioners for their opinions and expectations of cultural events for the Concert Hall and Amphitheatre, as well as special events. In response to an inquiry from Hughes, Hastings said he was unsure if the facility would financially break even during the upcoming year; however, their goal was to break even on the operating expense. He disclosed that fundraisers were being planned in order to raise additional revenue. Hughes voiced that the Amphitheatre was one of the nicest amenities that the county had thus far and suggested that it was critical to optimize the asset. Bartosch asked whether Hastings would be handling the Amphitheatre. Hastings pointed out that his role was more of mentoring than the day-to-day operation of the venue. He described that the Amphitheatre had a great staff with much energy

who handled the daily operations. Bryan stated that County Administrator Wanchick could address the amphitheatre matter for the Board during their September meeting.

(08/22/11 - 6 - 2:40 p.m.)

12. COMMENTS BY MEMBERS

None.

(08/22/11 - 6 - 2:40p.m.)

13. ADJOURN

Motion by O'Brien, seconded by Bryan, carried 7/0, with Peter and Yanni absent, to adjourn the meeting.

With there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Approved September 19th, 2011

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Jack Peter
Jack Peter, Chair

ATTEST: CHERYL STRICKLAND, CLERK

By: Ram Halterman
Deputy Clerk

