

**MINUTES OF MEETING
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
MARCH 20, 2017
1:30 P.M.**

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

Present: John E. "Jack" Peter, Chair
Jay Morris, BCC Representative
Irving Kass, District 1
Scott M. Bartosch, District 3
Bill Hughes, District 4
Fred E. Cozby, District 4
Bonnie A. Putman, Deputy Clerk

Also present: Tera Meeks, TDC Executive Director; Traci Anderson, TDC Accounting Technician

Absent: Nancy Shaver, Mayor, City of St. Augustine Representative; Todd Hickey, District 4; Rich O'Brien, Mayor, St. Augustine Beach Representative

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:30 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Peter called the meeting to order.

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:35 p.m.)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Hughes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:35p.m.)

3. ROLL CALL

Masters called the roll: All Council members were present, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent.

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:36p.m.)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Peter, seconded by Bartosch, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to approve the Agenda, as amended.

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:37 p.m.)

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

(03/20/17 - 1 - 1:37p.m.)

6. PRESENTATION

SPORTS COMMISSIONS IN FLORIDA- JOHN WEBB SPORTS FOUNDATION

(1:38 p.m.) John Webb, President, Florida Sports Foundation, highlighted the Florida sports industry, the grant programs, and the sports commissions in Florida, referring to the informational packet, *Exhibit A*.

(1:46 p.m.) Discussion ensued on next steps, which included evaluating the County's assets; being completely unique and not competing with neighbors. Webb suggested multi-purpose fields and indoor facilities, including the recommended size.

(1:48 p.m.) Cozby questioned the benefits of being within close proximity of the Jacksonville Sports and Entertainment Commission. Webb suggested contacting the Jacksonville Sports and Entertainment Commission, but stated that any event in Jacksonville would benefit St. Augustine, as well.

(03/20/17 - 2 - 1:51p.m.)

7a. ADMINISTRATION AND SPECIAL USES

Meeks explained that this item was to review the proposed modifications of the ACH Grant Guidelines, specifically for the Resource Development Grant, to include an in-kind match.

- Visitor Experience Grant 50% in-kind match
- Annual and Special Events Grant 100% match: 75% cash and 25% in-kind
- Resource Development Grant 50% cash match
- Marketing Support Grant 100% cash match

(1:53 p.m.) Discussion ensued on an in-kind match for the grants versus a cash match, including the definition of the different grants with examples.

(2:00 p.m.) Andy Witt, Executive Director of the St. Johns Cultural Council, spoke on eligible in-kind matches, which does not include staff match. Discussion ensued on eligible in-kind matches, which included hourly volunteer time, donations of goods and services, and the definition of the Resource Development Grant.

(2:07 p.m.) Peter suggested modifying the guideline for the Resource Development Grant to a 25% cash match and a 25% in-kind match. Witt suggested the language read, "up to 25%".

(2:08 p.m.) Irving questioned how this would affect the Board of County Commission meeting.

Public Comment-

(2:10 p.m.) Conrad Matt, 3505 Lone Wolf Trail, spoke in opposition to the change in Category Two funding requirements, without input from stakeholders. Additionally, he spoke on proposed uses for the 10% annual increase in the bed tax.

Regina Ross, Deputy County Attorney, entered the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

(2:13 p.m.) Ellen Leroy-Reed, Executive Director of the Friends of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTMR), requested clarification on the eligibility of volunteer hours under the Resource Development Grant.

(2:15 p.m.) Motion by Peter, seconded by Morris, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to revise the qualifying criteria for the Resource Development Grant, where the applicant must provide a 25% cash match and up to a 25% in-kind match.

(03/20/17 - 3 - 2:15 p.m.)

7b. TDC MEMBER VACANCIES

Meeks directed the Council members to the summary table of the applicants and stated the vacancies, one accommodation member, one non-accommodation member, and the two elected official seats.

(2:17 p.m.) Motion by Peter, seconded by Irving, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to re-appoint Todd Hickey.

Ross recommended allowing for public comment.

Public Comment-

(2:17 p.m.) Albert Syeles, 83 Bridge Street, President of Romanza St. Augustine, spoke on his own behalf, in nomination for the open position and thanked Bartosch for his service. He suggested he was the best candidate to fill the position, specifically in the arts sector.

(2:20 p.m.) Morris provided a personal recommendation for Kevin Giddens.

(2:20 p.m.) Bartosch provided a personal recommendation for Janice Jones.

(2:21 p.m.) Irving questioned the definition of non-accommodation. Discussion ensued on Kevin Giddens' eligibility and qualifications.

(2:22 p.m.) Motion by Morris, seconded by Cozby, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to appoint Kevin Giddens to the Tourist Development Council, pending approval from the Legal Department.

(03/20/17 - 3 - 2:23 p.m.)

7c. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

Dr. Herbert Marlowe, Analytica Consulting Co., spoke on the Tourist Development Council's Strategic Plan, including the four priorities: sports tourism, business/leisure, market analysis, and facility development and maintenance policy.

Public Comment-

(2:32 p.m.) Albert Syeles, 83 Bridge Street, President of Romanza St. Augustine, spoke on the strategy of advertising and not investing in the product. He suggested spending a greater amount of money on the product, in order to encourage repeat visitors.

(2:33 p.m.) Discussion ensued on sports tourism, specifically The Players Championship and other possibilities, including beach volleyball.

(2:36 p.m.) Motion by Bartosch, seconded by Hughes, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to approve the strategic plan, as submitted.

(03/20/17 - 3 - 2:37 p.m.)

7d. SPORTS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENTS- NEXT STEPS

Meeks provided a history of Parks and Recreation's Master Plan, for Phase One and moving in to Phase 2, with Barth and Associates, on how to expand the existing Parks and Recreation facilities, for enhanced use by residents. She suggested utilizing Barth and Associates and creating a Phase 2a, to look at how to expand the existing inventory to meet the needs of growing tourism. Discussion ensued on the creation of a draft scope for review, coordination with Florida Sports Foundation, funding from FY 2017 Category 4 funds, and allocations for future expenses.

(2:42 p.m.) Wil Smith, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) had been completed on Barth and Associates; agreed with collaborating with the Florida Sports Foundation; and commented that the Phase One findings would be heard at the BCC meeting scheduled March 21, 2017. He spoke on the rapid growth, capital improvements to facilities, the County's niche in sports marketing, beach tourism, public/private partnerships, the need for a Sports Commission and resources, and the ability to maximize the dollars spent.

(2:51 p.m.) *There was consensus by the Council directing Meeks to provide a draft scope for review.*

(03/20/17 - 4 - 2:51 p.m.)

7e. TDC 2016 ANNUAL REPORT REVIEW

Meeks provided the State of Florida and St. Johns County tourism trends in 2016; the results from the St. Johns Branding Study; and the marketing direction for Fiscal Year 2018.

(03/20/17 - 4 - 3:05 p.m.)

7f. FY18 BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Meeks spoke on budget projections and expenditures, displaying local option Tourist Development Tax Revenue comparison and projection FY2013-FY2018 line graph.

(3:08 p.m.) Kass mentioned *The Miami Herald's* headline story regarding Airbnb. Meeks responded that the County legal department was currently working with Airbnb on an agreement and assumed that with Airbnb paying the taxes it would positively affect the County, but unsure by how much. She stated the Council would be reviewing ordinances that regulate TDC and there may be opportunities for changes in allowances, etc.

(3:11 p.m.) Morris stated his opinion on the 5% growth rate. Meeks spoke on the growth rates, with removing the October dates, due to Hurricane Matthew. Kass spoke on other cities, including Boston and Chicago, that have had severe over supply and stated that supply would soon pass demand, which would cause pressure on rate, with more hotel rooms coming online, which would have a huge impact on the top line.

(3:16 p.m.) Motion by Bartosch, seconded Morris, carried 6/0, with Hickey, Shaver, and O'Brien absent, to approve the 5% growth rate.

(03/20/17 - 4 - 3:16 p.m.)

8. MONTHLY REPORTS PROVIDED IN PACKETS

There were no questions and/or comments.

(03/20/17 - 4 - 3:17p.m.)

9. MEMBER COMMENTS

Peter, on behalf of the TDC and the County, thanked Bartosch for his service.

(03/20/17 - 4 - 3:17p.m.)

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

Meeks noted that the next TDC meeting was scheduled for June 19, 2017.

(03/20/17 - 5 - 3:17 p.m.)

11. ADJOURN


With there being no further business to come before the Council, Peter adjourned the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

Approved June 19, 2017

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: 
John E. Peter, Chair

ATTEST: HUNTER S. CONRAD, CLERK

By: 
Deputy Clerk

