

**PASCO COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**APRIL 15, 2015**

**PREPARED IN THE OFFICE OF  
PAULA S. O'NEIL, CLERK & COMPTROLLER**

**THE MINUTES WERE PREPARED  
IN AGENDA ORDER AS  
PUBLISHED AND NOT IN THE  
ORDER THE ITEMS WERE HEARD**

**10:00 A.M.**

**WEST PASCO GOVERNMENT CENTER, BOARD ROOM  
8731 CITIZENS DRIVE, NEW PORT RICHEY, FL**

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**Tourist Development Council Members**

**The Honorable Kathryn Starkey**  
Board of County Commissioners

**The Honorable Camille Hernandez**  
Vice-Chairman, Mayor, City of Dade City

**The Honorable Chopper Davis**  
City of New Port Richey

**Kyle Von Kohorn**  
Fairfield Inn & Suites

**Gail Cushman**  
Days Inn & Suites

**Toby Caroline**  
Paradise Lakes Resort

**Jack Phethean**  
Little Everglades Ranch

**Pat Ciaccio**  
Saddlebrook Resort

**Piyush Mulji**  
Hampton Inn

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**1. CALL TO ORDER – 10:00 A.M. – Chairman**

Chairman Starkey called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

## **2. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance**

Ms. Donalee Schmidt, Deputy Clerk, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

## **3. Roll Call**

Ms. Schmidt called the roll. Mr. Jack Phethean arrived to the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

## **4. Public Comment**

No one spoke.

## **5. Minutes and Treasurers Report**

- a. TDC Minutes February 18, 2015**
- b. Quarterly Treasurers Report**

Chairman Starkey requested a motion to approve the February 18, 2015 meeting minutes and the Treasurer's Report.

**MAYOR HERNANDEZ MOVED** approval of the February 18, 2015 minutes and the Treasurer's Report; **COUNCILMAN DAVIS SECONDED.**

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

## **6. New BUSINESS**

- a. Event Sponsorship Agreement – All Sports Arena, Matt Garry TD15-032**

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, introduced Mr. Matt Garry who would provide a presentation regarding the Sunshine Shoot-Out.

Mr. Matt Garry, All Sports Arena, spoke regarding the event's history, TDC funding requests, that the event was sold out, and that teams were coming from several different countries.

The Council Members, Staff, and Mr. Garry held discussion regarding specific marketing efforts; that copies of the marketing material had not been submitted to the TDC; that the event was sold out; and the post event reports.

Mr. Garry indicated he could provide the marketing materials to the Council.

Mr. Caum spoke regarding the need for the post event report to be submitted to Staff, that there needed to be better accountability for the funds, Mr. Garry was aware that he needed to do a better job certifying the room nights, and that the information would need to be submitted in a timely manner. Staff recommended a performance based contract be drafted.

Mr. Caccio asked if the event numbers were projected and if last year's numbers were verified.

Mr. Caum said the numbers were somewhat verified, but were overinflated when the post event report was submitted.

Ms. Cushman stated she had worked with Mr. Garry several times and that every tournament brought in a lot of people to the area.

Mr. Phethean arrived to the meeting at 10:06 a.m.

Discussion continued regarding the people coming to the area; the length of the hotel stays varied; participants were over 21 years old; 32 teams had registered for the event; the tournament structure; opportunities for the participants to do other things in the area; the event location and the need to make the area more attractive; tourism venues; and the need to put their best foot forward.

**COUNCILMAN DAVIS MOVED** approval of Staff's recommendation for a performance based contract with \$10.00 per certified room night; **MR. CACCIO SECONDED.**

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant Count Attorney, asked if there would be a minimum spending amount required for advertising.

Councilman Davis felt the certified rooms were needed most.

Mr. Caccio stated the event was sold out. He felt the marketing was important, but he was unable to accept any more teams.

Ms. Roni Lloyd, Sports Marketing Coordinator, felt that since the event was sold out that it would be important for brand integration and to see how he used the County's logo through social media efforts to build the spectator base. At this point, that was all that could be done. They needed to see the economic impact through the spectators.

**COUNCILMAN DAVIS AMENDED THE MOTION** to request to see Mr. Garry's efforts;  
**MS. CUSHMAN SECONDED.**

Chairman Starkey called on the amendment to the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Chairman Starkey clarified that Mr. Garry would provide the information and stated that for next year it should be part of the presentation.

Mr. Garry stated he would provide the information.

Mr. Caum stated Staff would also assist with his marketing efforts and had offered to provide advice to Mr. Garry.

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**b. Event Sponsorship Agreement – Dances With Dirt  
TD15-040**

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, explained the event had already happened. He explained further that the event representatives had not submitted the post event report last year. Staff had met their contract obligations for their event last year. Staff had requested a post event report multiple times and none was submitted. He noted they had also had several conversations with the representatives. He explained further that Staff appreciated the event, but if they were not going to meet the requirements he felt they could not continue to fund them. Staff recommended the TDC not recommend approval of their funding request in the amount of \$6,000.00.

**MR. CACCIO MOVED** approval of Staff's recommendation to not forward the request to the BCC; **MR. VON KOHORN SECONDED.**

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

**c. Adoption of the 2015-2020 Tourism Strategic Plan  
TD15-041**

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, stated Staff was still working on the plan verbiage. He recommended permission to continue to work with the County Attorney's Office and to bring the item back to the May meeting. He asked if any of the Council Members had any comments regarding the plan.

Councilman Davis led discussion regarding their partnership with the PEDC, a possible Sports Development Committee, and the arts.

Mr. Caum explained they were moving into a collaborative branding initiative. The PEDC would work with Staff on a new branding for the County, not just for tourism. There would be no additional funding required. He noted an in-house economic team had also been created. The intent that came out of the joint BCC/TDC meeting was that Staff reach out to the Tampa Bay Sports Commission to determine what could be jointly shared. They had not yet received clear direction on what would be the requirements. He noted there were different arts councils, but no "roof" over all of the councils.

Ms. Roni Lloyd, Sports Marketing Coordinator, explained originally the Sports Facilities Advisory Committee had told them they needed a sports commission. After speaking with the Florida Sports Foundation, which had 27 sports commissions in Florida, she was told in the development stages they should discuss sports commissions, but they would really need Sports Development Council. They should not be going after the Olympics, but rather a council that would help build their program locally with a vested interest in the area.

Mayor Hernandez spoke regarding arts in the area and noted everyone was protective of their own group.

Mr. Caum spoke regarding the grants program which addressed the festivals and events. He noted that umbrella was used to help stimulate the arts and spoke regarding the funding cycle. He explained they were looking at ways to move into arts and culture but currently there were no additional revenues. The item was included in the Strategic Plan.

Chairman Starkey spoke regarding a publication by the Florida Tax Watch on how counties compared. She spoke regarding per capita total county and municipal culture and recreation expenditures and noted that of 2009 Pasco was listed as 63 out of 67.

Extensive discussion followed among the Council Members regarding the information presented by Chairman Starkey; a recognition of the need; public education; the County's per income capita; the need to improve the Pasco economy; they could not tax themselves out of this hole; the growth of the County since 2009; they had a long way to go but there had been improvement; a feeling that it was dangerous to throw out six year old statistics; the need for a Strategic Plan; throwing money at a problem was not an answer; past cuts to the Parks and Recreation budgets; it would not make sound fiscal policy to change something based upon six year old numbers; a more aggressive effort would be needed; all governments were flat because of the recession; large scale capital needs in the County; and that recreation brought in tourists.

The item was moved to the next meeting.

**d. Presentation PBA 50 Overview – Gary Beck**

Mr. Gary Beck noted the name of the event was changed to the Pasco County Florida Open. He gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed pictures from the event, the number of likes on the PBA Facebook page the morning after the event were thirteen hundred, increased amount of equipment used for bowling events which included the average person bringing fourteen bowling balls with them to an event, the live score boards, the participants were coming from various countries, suggested changes from last year's event were implemented, the Pasco County logo was displayed on the masking units which hid the pin setting machines, a full report would be submitted to the Council within two days, the event was streamed live all three days, there were ten hours of competition, an on-air Pasco County promotion piece, the players appreciated the support given by the TDC and were very cooperative, a charity pro-am was held and a corporate pro-am would be held on April 9, 2016 at 1:00 p.m., for the Joshua House Foundation, an economic impact survey was created with the assistance of Staff and it had a one hundred percent compliance rating, the average number of hotel nights were five, and a spreadsheet of the data would be sent to Staff within one week.

The Council was very happy with the information provided and the number of room nights associated with the event.

Chairman Starkey asked what percentage of room nights stayed in Pasco County versus surrounding counties.

Mr. Beck stated there were six motor homes parked at the bowling facility, one group rented a home, a few players had family in the County, and that about eighty-five percent of the players stayed in Pasco County hotels. He spoke regarding heads in beds, the branding and live streaming of the event, the use of the PBA resources to bring attention to Pasco County was critical, the 2016 event had a handshake agreement with the PBA and Lane Glow Bowl, Lane Glow Bowl was investing five to six thousand dollars in facility renovations, funding for the event, event history warranted a partial payment prior to the event to start promotions, interest in Pasco County hosting a super senior event for bowlers sixty years of age and over, having a super senior event would increase the event from four to eight days, the cost to the PBA for super senior event would be an additional ten thousand dollars with a three to four thousand dollar investment from Mr. Beck, and the plan was for the event to run April 5, 2016 through April 12, 2016 with the same amount of funding from the TDC. He requested that the TDC provide possible connections with other corporate businesses that would benefit from event exposure.

Chairman Starkey was in favor of authorizing advanced funding for Mr. Beck's event.

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, spoke regarding the 2016 event being under the next fiscal year's funding, bringing a memorandum and event sponsorship request to the TDC, and that Staff would draft the request so that funding could be released sooner.

He asked if Mr. Beck could present his information via a telephone conference to avoid additional travel expenditures.

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant Count Attorney, stated that Staff would present an Agenda item regarding the advanced funding.

Mayor Hernandez stated she was in favor of advancing funds. She spoke regarding similar situations and not wanting to set expectations for other event coordinators to ask for advanced funding.

Mr. Caum stated that the Dick's Sporting Goods Tournament and the Savage Race received advanced funding for marketing and event set-up.

Ms. Caroline spoke regarding specific guidelines for advance funding.

Mr. Caum spoke regarding the responsibilities of the TDC prior to making recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

The item was for information only.

**e. Presentation Tourism Tax Overview – CAO, Elizabeth Blair**

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant Count Attorney, provided a presentation regarding the use of Tourism Tax funding. She spoke regarding requirements of Florida Statute Chapter 125.01.04, the definition of event promotion which included marketing or advertising designed to increase tourist related business activities, the definition of a tourist which included a person who participates in trade or recreation activities outside the County of his/her permanent residence or someone who rented or leased transient accommodations, the Pasco County Tourism Tax was collected by the Florida Department of Revenue for a three percent administrative fee, the Tax Collector had expressed interest in collecting the Tourism Tax for the County, potential businesses that were not registered with the State and therefore were not paying taxes, and reaching out to management companies that were in charge of vacation rentals throughout the County.

Ms. Caroline stated there was a hotelier who discovered sixty resort owners who were not reporting collected taxes to the State. The hotelier composed a letter to the resort owners offering her assistance in getting their hotel license and sales tax; however, if they did not comply within sixty days of receiving the letter she would report them to the Department of Revenue. She spoke regarding a committee ran by the Department of Revenue that was able to get ninety percent of renters to become compliant.

Ms. Blair stated it was important to investigate and follow through in order to have increased tourism taxes and a level of fairness, the County's vacation rental Ordinance, registering with the State for the collection of taxes, and that non-compliance would be handled by Code Enforcement and a Statute violations.

The Council Members and Staff held discussion regarding the definition of a vacation rental which included anything less than six months and camping was not included; hotel travel; rentals available in Pasco County via Home Away, VRBO, and Air B&B; potentially hiring an enforcement officer if taxes were collected in house; the Tax Collector's willingness to collect Tourism taxes; other Counties found that collecting the taxes in-house more than paid for the salary of a full time employee to handle the collection process; and that the solution was for violators to get the necessary licenses.

Ms. Blair continued with her presentation which reviewed the collection of tourism taxes, the tourism plan requirements, a Statute that outlined how the funds could be legally spent and a list of authorized uses, how to promote tourism, administration costs for the Tourism Office, beaches and lake restoration, the plan needed to show how the County wanted to use tourism tax funding, the new plan would contain priorities that the County wanted to see, the oversight of tourism tax expenditures, the new tourism plan would have to be approved by a super majority vote of the Board of County Commissioners, the TDC was responsible for continuously reviewing the expenditures of revenues within the Tourist Development Trust Fund, the TDC should receive expenditure reports at least every quarter, unauthorized expenditures should be reported to the County's governing board and the Department of Revenue, the Department of Revenue would review the TDC's finding and take appropriate action to ensure compliance, previous audits conducted by the Department of Revenue, and the code of Ordinances that oversaw the tourism plan and the TDC.

Chairman Starkey read into the record a section of the code regarding beach park facility financing, beach improvements and maintenance, re-nourishment restoration and erosion control including shoreline protection, enhancement cleanup or restoration of inland lakes and rivers to which there was public access, and fees associated with those areas.

Ms. Blair stated there may have been some AGO opinions regarding fees; however, the entire idea behind Tourism taxes was to promote an area that the County wanted visitors to come to not somewhere like a conservation lake where no one was allowed to fish. She wasn't sure if the cost had been considered in any of the Attorney General opinions. She spoke regarding specific uses under the section that was read by Chairman Starkey, Section 5.A.3 regarding the promotion and advertising of a tourism service venue or event, the County could spend money on a particular asset as long as there was a tourism link, the Tourism Development Tax Ordinance which was adopted in 1990 and codified in the Pasco County Code of Ordinances Section 102, the tax being levied, the code needing to be amended if the County ever changed the percentages, penalties and liens reiterating the Statute regarding registering and paying taxes in order to rent out a room, tourist funding requirements, if the County choose to

use the Tax Collector to collect the tourism taxes that section of the code would need to be amended, establishment of the TDC, the Statutes reflected the Ordinance regarding the municipalities hoteliers and those interested in tourism, Section 102-90 which referenced the adopted plan and was attached to the Ordinance to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners, and that the Code could be amended easily with one public hearing.

Chairman Starkey asked about short term rentals. She requested that a copy of the vacation rental section be sent to the members of the TDC.

Ms. Blair read several sections of the code into the record.

The item was for information only.

## **7. Old BUSINESS**

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, spoke regarding the new Tourism Office and offered tours to the Council Members after the meeting. He introduced the new Senior Secretary, Ms. Consuelo Sanchez. He spoke regarding Ms. Sanchez's experience.

Ms. Consuelo Sanchez, Senior Secretary, thanked the TDC for the opportunity.

Mr. Caum noted that Ms. Marla Chancey was no longer with the County. He stated interviews were conducted and scheduled to fill the Public Communications Specialist/Marketing position. He spoke regarding a new tourism marketing position that he was waiting to be approved by the Human Resources Department.

The item was for information only.

## **8. Tourism Manager's Report TD15-042**

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, explained the the County was in festival season which would decrease in August and September. He gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed festival dates in various cities, the Paddlepalooza event to be held Saturday and Sunday, the Shark Bite event in Pinellas County where Pasco County collateral marketing materials were distributed, event marketing through Facebook, the promotion of the Dragon Boat races, and that seventeen hundred people viewed a thirty second video of the Dragon Boat Races that he took with a go-pro camera.

Chopper Davis stated the best way to view Paddlepalooza was by using a kayak.

The item was for information only.

## 9. Board Member Comments

Mr. Phethean noted that Mr. Bob Blanchard had expressed to him his appreciation for the TDC's support of the Savage Race. He spoke regarding the seven or eight thousand people who attended the race, a children's race event, and an email from Ms. Sharon Blanchard requesting support from the TDC for Gould Road to be paved.

The Council Members and Staff held discussion regarding a paving assessment for Gould Road which was a non-County maintained road and would require the partners along the road to buy in with the County offsetting the cost; the potential for more events on the Blanchard's property; the economic impact of the Savage Race was similar to the Dick's Sporting Goods Tournament; the Savage Race post event reporting was weak but they listened to Staff and they used social media to promote the event; the Blanchard's had two events per year; the Savage Race process; the success of the Grand Fondo; that some event planners were asking for TDC funding as part of their operating expenses; limiting the number of times an event planner could ask the TDC for sponsorship; the loss of local festivals and events due to no TDC funding; the TDC's flat budget; a conscience decision to support new groups as much as possible; continued support of existing groups with decreased funding; that this meeting was the first time Staff had recommended denial of funding; performance based contracts as a way to hold event planners accountable; some event planners were listening to Staff's advice and others felt entitled; Staff was there to assist versus handling the entire event; international visitors; the responsibility of the TDC was to grow tourism; grants given by the City of Dade City; how to get new events such as the EcoFest and Paddlepalooza to come to Pasco County; marketing requirements with clear direction; an article regarding the Florida Antique Trail; city partnerships for multi-use trails; the growth coming to central Pasco County which included the addition of a Lowes and a new restaurant; the improvements to softball fields off of US Highway 41; the Tough Mudder race and other obstacle races that produced comradery among the participants; the importance of having a strategic plan; and project ideas that were marketed to tourists.

Mr. VonKohorn expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the TDC. He noted that he would be moving to Vero Beach to pursue a real estate career. He spoke regarding his last scheduled day at the Fairfield Inn and Suites and that he enjoyed working with the TDC.

Mr. Caum thanked Mr. VonKohorn for his service.

Chairman Starkey requested that the Council Members create a list of potential Capital Improvement projects that would benefit the County. She spoke regarding paving a road that led to Little Everglades and adding shoulders to some of Dade City's roads.

Mr. Caum stated having a list of potential Capital Improvement projects would enable Staff to apply the test of the Statute which would give them an idea of what areas they should focus on.

Chairman Starkey advised the Council Members to think outside the box. She noted that the Council Members represented tourism which was why she wanted their ideas. She spoke regarding bathrooms needed on the Suncoast Trail, Department of Transportation funding, the Coast-to-Coast trail, that a sidewalk was needed on Leonard Road, bed and breakfast travelers, and a discussion held with Mr. Will Weatherford regarding the fifteen million dollar budget for the cultural center.

Mr. Caum stated he would take the items discussed and create a list for the TDC to add to and return to Staff.

The item was for information only.

## **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

(SEAL)

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
APRIL 15, 2015

*Office of Paula S. O'Neil, Clerk & Comptroller*

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tammy Glisson, Records Clerk  
Board Records Department