

**PASCO COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
HYBRID/VIRTUAL MEETING**

ANNOTATED MINUTES

NOVEMBER 18, 2020

**PREPARED IN THE OFFICE OF
NIKKI ALVAREZ-SOWLES, Esq., CLERK & COMPTROLLER**

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

9:30 A.M.

**HISTORIC PASCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE BOARD ROOM 2ND FLOOR
37918 MERIDIAN AVENUE, DADE CITY, FL 33525**

Tourist Development Council

The Honorable Mike Moore
Chairman, BCC

The Honorable Kenneth M. Burgess, Jr.
Council President, City of Zephyrhills

The Honorable Chopper Davis
Councilman, City of New Port Richey

Mike Kidd
Hilton Garden Inn, Lutz

Wendy Longman
Windsong Charters

Robert Riehle
Saddlebrook Resort

Greg Lenners – **ABSENT**
Shoppes at Wiregrass

Legal Staff:
Elizabeth Blair
Senior Assistant County Attorney

Mike Bishop
Director of Stakeholder Engagement
for the Pasco EDC

Staff:
Adam Thomas, DMO Director
Experience Florida's Sports Coast
Shelly Bandy, Project Coordinator III
Maria Gabriela LaJeunesse
Industry Relations Coordinator
Anthony Stinsman
Tourism Sales Manager

Consuelo Sanchez
Tourism Program Manager
Kolby Gayson
Communications Manager
Kayla Getz
Visitor Service Representative

TDC 11/18/2020

Page 1 of 10

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Moore called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Katie McCormick, Deputy Clerk, led the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call

Ms. McCormick called the roll. All members were present except Mr. Lenners.

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

Persons wishing to address the Council are requested to sign in and will be limited to three (3) minutes.

There was no public comment.

C. APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING

(Chairman Moore)

C-1. Approve September 16th TDC Minutes as presented

The Council approved the September 16, 2020 TDC minutes.

D. PRESENTATIONS / FUNDING REQUESTS

D-1. PRESENTATIONS

(Joseph St. Germain)

D-1.1. July – September Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Study

Mr. St. Germain, of Downs & St. Germain Research, used a Powerpoint to present the Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Study. The negative impact to the travel industry in Pasco County had been reduced from earlier in the year. Day trips did not require much planning and many people found Pasco County through friends and advertising on social media. Outdoor activities, along with relaxing and unwinding, were reasons for visiting. Most people drove instead of flying into the area with most visitors being from Florida. He spoke further describing the average visitor regarding age, party size, and income. He noted many visitors were “first-time” visitors but more often were loyal, returning visitors. He mentioned accommodations, spending habits, and visitor activities including dining, nature activities, parks, and water sports. Most visitors rated Pasco County high in post-trip evaluations and planned to return.

The item was for information only and no action was taken.

D-1.2. FY 2020 Visitor Profile and Economic Impact Study Report

Mr. St. Germain profiled the overall economic impact for the fiscal year from October 2019 through September 2020 when visitor spending generated over \$552,000.00 in economic impact, which was down 15.3% from FY2019. Other indicators including direct spending, number of visitors, and room nights, among others, had all seen a decrease for that time period due to COVID-19. Tourism supported nearly 6,800 jobs, 13% lower than last year, with almost \$150,000,000.00 paid in wages and salaries for FY2020. Every marketing dollar generated \$379.00 in visitor spending. He spoke further on how visitors supported Pasco County and concluded with how marketing spending affected the entire County.

The item was for information only and no action was taken.

D-2. FUNDING REQUESTS

(Consuelo Sanchez)

D-2.1. Florida Senior Games

Ms. Sanchez explained the games were originally scheduled in Fort Lauderdale but had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19 to various other areas in the State. Pasco County would be hosting six championships at three venues, some with maximum capacity. She expected over 700 room nights in Pasco County and requested \$6,000.00 in funding.

The Council approved Staff's recommendation.

D-2.2. Florida Premier Winter Cup

Ms. Sanchez explained the request from Florida Premier FC for \$3,000.00 which was to host a new soccer event in New Port Richey after the Spring Showcase event was cancelled due to COVID-19. This was a way to promote soccer in the area. She expected 270 room nights and said Staff recommended approval.

The Council approved Staff's recommendation.

D-2.3. SVB Championships

Ms. Sanchez explained the request from Premier Tennis Consulting for \$5,000.00 which was to host a tennis event in Pasco County to promote women athletes and the community. She expected 580 room nights and said Staff recommended approval.

The Council approved Staff's recommendation.

D-2.4. SVB Marketing Sponsorship Proposal

Ms. Sanchez explained the request to partner with the new SVB Tennis Center for marketing and advertisements. The SBV marketing proposal included a digital presence on their website and at every tennis court. SVB was already promoting Pasco County; this would make it an official contract. The total promotional value of this proposal was \$19,700.00 per year however the vendor was offering a special annual marketing sponsorship fee in the amount of \$10,000.00. Staff recommended approval.

Discussion followed regarding banners on all courts, exposure outside the local market, and televised events.

The Council approved Staff's recommendation.

D-2.5. Website Update Funding Request

(Kolby Gayson)

Ms. Gayson said the DMO had serious concerns about the Florida's Sports Coast website launched in 2019 designed by The Zimmerman Agency. The user experience was less than satisfactory with a high "bounce rate," low session times, and no further additional marketing funnels which all impacted the ROI of digital investment. Staff recommended hiring a company with tourism focused website development experience to research and look for solutions to improve the website. Funding in the amount of \$45,000.00 was available for this one-time expenditure. Since the website was still fairly new, she felt the quick fixes would enhance the user ability based on research instead of doing a complete overhaul which would be quite expensive and time consuming.

Ms. Longman, who owned a website design firm, recommended a complete overhaul. While her firm could not work on it due to a conflict of interest she could put forward several reputable firms for this type of work. She felt a few tweaks would enhance the website while the overhaul was underway.

Discussion followed regarding a \$45,000.00 investment for a quick minor fix or investing more money into a long-term overhaul. The Board mentioned trying to schedule the work while the usage was lighter because of the pandemic. Other options and topics included timing of the overhaul; the idea of an RFQ or RFP for other ideas; the timing of the procurement process; other social media ideas; using very minor tweaks, not

\$45,000.00 worth of tweaks, until a full overhaul could be accomplished; the continuing shifts of the digital media, websites and other social media platforms; the sprint being a slower evolution to guide consumers to the website; and the ultimate goal of the website experience.

Mr. Thomas clarified the TDC was directing the DMO to go through the procurement process to obtain agency to overhaul the website. The lead agency after the RFP would make a presentation to the TDC for final approval. An overhaul would take time and the current website would be maintained while the overhaul was underway and would need to redirect to the other platform once it was completed.

Chairman Moore noted that the neither the Board or Staff had to accept any of the proposals if they did not fit the DMO's needs.

Ms. Gayson reminded the Board the sole point of all of this was to meet consumer needs and to get them to Pasco County as a visitor, a meeting place, or an event.

Chairman Moore reminded the TDC and Staff that once the procurement process began companies would have no contact with any TDC or BCC member according to State Statute.

Mr. Thomas pointed out that it would be February of 2021 or later for the TDC to hear any presentation as a result of the RFP or RFQ.

Ms. Sanchez said a project for less than \$50,000.00 did not have to go through the RFP process, which was a more formal procedure. More than \$50,000.00 required an RFP and would likely take up to six months.

After much discussion, Ms. Sanchez clarified that a motion would be needed to move forward with procurement regardless of the process due to budget requirements.

A Council member clarified this motion would not be for an RFQ, what the TDC called the "Band-Aid" approach. The plan was for an RFP, at a higher cost, over \$50,000.00, and more time consuming.

Mr. Adams reminded the Board that according to the reserves policies, they had to request funds to be used out of the Special Projects account in order to access those funds.

The Council approved the clarified recommendation using funding from Special Projects.

D-2.6. The Express Conferences Funding Request
(Anthony Stinsman/Adam Thomas)

Mr. Thomas said the Pasco DMO was awarded the bid to host the The Express Conferences in January of 2022 at Saddlebrook and as such, Pasco County was to be the host of the closing reception at the 2021 event in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Ms. Sanchez had already made plans to attend and funding had been approved. Today's request was for \$7,000.00 to fund Mr. Thomas' attendance at the closing reception. While there were very few attendees, those in attendance were the "buyers" of the sports events rights holders. The long-term ROI was a lot higher to host this event as opposed to a normal sports events. The conference in January 2022 would be a budget item in next year's budget.

Ms. Sanchez gave a brief explanation of The Express Conferences, the Sport Express, which was a series of different conferences and different markets. This small conference brought together various elements of DMOs, meeting planners and event rights holders in order to network and build opportunities.

The Council approved Staff's recommendation.

E. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

(Consuelo Sanchez)

E-1. Upcoming Events

Ms. Sanchez said the spring Savage Race had been canceled due to COVID-19 but the November Race was still scheduled. The Lighting City Gymnastics Charity Challenge Invitational was to be a two-day event but due to cancellations, the November 2020 event was reduced to one day. They had already registered 500 people for a similar event in December with about 1,000 people registered for an upcoming event in March of 2021.

E-2. Site Visits Update

Ms. Sanchez said this was to have been kept confidential but the story had already been leaked to the media. The Toronto Raptors NBA Team was looking for a training home. They visited several venues in Pasco County and had also looked at other sites throughout the country. The DMO would report on the final selection at the next TDC meeting.

Ms. Sanchez noted another professional sports club, Envigado Futbol Club, a Colombian pro soccer team, visited the area recently. They planned to start a soccer

club and school in Florida and to host various events at their final site choice. Staff would be looking to work with them to locate a venue in Pasco County.

E-3. Other Updates

Ms. Sanchez noted a number of events were cancelled or cut down due to COVID19. The Blue Star event originally scheduled for November was cancelled and possibly the one in December also. The DMO agreed to be as flexible as possible and use current funding agreements and arrangements for events that had to be postponed as long as the rescheduled event was held by September 30th, 2021.

F. MEDIA REPORT

(Kolby Gayson)

F-1. Marketing Update

Ms. Gayson gave an update on the CARES Act funding and said they were able to secure two more media buys. One was with Identity Tampa Bay and the first of four videos had already been filmed in Dade City. These would offer further social media opportunities and feature different experiences people could have outside in the area. She spoke further on CARES Act funding and advertising/marketing plans. She played the most recent video campaign for the TDC.

F-2. PR Updates

Ms. Gayson said there was an event on November 5th at Widow Fletcher's to officially launch Pasco County's new beer by Escape Brewing Company. The Pasco County beer sold out and several vendors were now selling it at their establishments. A second production would be scheduled in the near future.

G. TOURISM SALES UPDATE

(Anthony Stinsman)

G-1. Tourism Sales Update

Mr. Stinsman said tourism sales were trending in the right direction and people were back to traveling. Staff had attended a large scale event in Orlando meeting with meeting planners and SMERF Planners. Pasco County garnered four RFPs from this event. He mentioned trade shows, data base building, vendor networking, and marketing leads.

H. INDUSTRY RELATIONS UPDATE

(Gaby LaJeunesse)

H-1. Industry Relations Update

Ms. LaJeunesse said Florida Sports Coast attended the Small Business Growing Global event hosted by PEDC which brought local businesses and diplomats from Mexico, Germany, and Brazil. Topics included resources to expand, benefits of export marketing, and other trade opportunities.

Florida's Sports Coast attended a meeting where Ms. Carol Dover, with the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, spoke regarding how Amendment Number Two might impact businesses in Florida.

Ms. LaJeunesse noted the Hampton Inn Odessa received the GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation related to the ability to prepare for and recover from biorisk situations.

DMO welcomed the Lucky Booty Cycleboats, the first paddle wheel boat powered by stationary bikes in the Sims Park area of New Port Richey, and available for tours.

I. DESTINATION REPORT

(Adam Thomas)

I-1. Destination Update: STR / TDT Revenue

Mr. Thomas gave a brief update on the STR report for September where they were starting to see good numbers coming in, with occupancy down only 2% from 2019. He felt this was a tribute to recent sporting events the DMO had been involved in. He mentioned extended scallop seasons in other counties and compared Citrus County to Pasco County. The year-to-year comparison showed Pasco was down 20% in occupancy. He felt the County was finishing the year strong but had still suffered a \$400,000.00 loss over the year due to COVID19.

I-2. July – September Quarterly Treasurer's Report

Mr. Thomas gave an update in the fourth quarter of 2020. He noted that the DMO did not spend what was originally planned for due to cancellations.

J. OLD BUSINESS

(Adam Thomas)

J-1. The Zimmerman Agency Agreement Update

Mr. Thomas said the DMO was cancelling the Zimmerman agreement and cited website maintenance issues, responsiveness and deliverables, and public relations. Staff would

bring back a proposal for the remainder of the year with an agency that would take the DMO to the end of FY2021.

K. NEW BUSINESS

(Adam Thomas)

K-1. Sports ETA Award

Mr. Thomas noted this was one of Ms. Sanchez's organizations and she had worked hard on this national award.

Ms. Sanchez said this award was a sports event with the national governing body for all sports commissions nationwide. The application was for the marketing campaign of the year for 2019. The award was related to and based on teamwork, marketing and advertising, and the website. Having a presence at multiple sports conferences helped. Pasco County had a "name" now, they competed with many larger venues and entities. She thanked the TDC for their support.

K-2. TDC Members Update

Mr. Thomas reminded the TDC there was a vacancy left by Ms. Sutton's resignation from the TDC and they needed a hotelier on the west side. After the nomination period ended, the applications would go the County Administrator and then to Chairman Moore for presentation to the BCC.

Chairman Moore asked if anyone had reached out to anyone at the Hacienda and discovered that facility was not open yet and may not be available for a while.

Mr. Riehle said Saddlebrook Resort had hosted 400 power company employees from various areas who were there to lend assistance to repair Hurricane Eta outages.

Councilman Burgess wished everyone a healthy and happy Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Mr. Bishop echoed Councilman Burgess' sentiment and gave a brief update on the new brewery under construction in Dade City.

Councilman Davis said there was another brewery opening on the west side of Pasco County. He asked if the County was working on Sunwest Park to enable scheduling volley ball tournaments.

Mr. Thomas answered in the affirmative and said they had hosted site visits with volleyball organizations. The DMO was marketing volleyball, sand soccer, beach rugby and other water sports at the site.

There was discussion regarding issues with Sunwest Park.

Councilman Davis noted he was now the Deputy Mayor of New Port Richey.

Councilman Davis confirmed the TDC meeting would begin at 10:00 a.m. now and noted that with travel time, they would probably run over into the lunch hour.

Mr. Thomas explained that the traffic between the east and the west side of the County, along with construction, had made the later meeting time more practical.

Ms. Longman felt it was the perfect opportunity to have lunch wherever the meeting was to support a local restaurant.

There was further discussion regarding the meeting time.

L. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2020



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

Prepared by: Katie McCormick
Katie McCormick, Records Clerk II
Board Records Division