

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA**  
**Workshop**  
**Overview of the Tourist Development Council**  
**Structure**

The Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on the Overview of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) Structure on Tuesday, November 25, 2008 at 12:00, with Chairman Desloge presiding.

Present were Commissioners Sauls, Thaell, Akinyemi, Rackleff, Proctor and Dailey. Also present were County Administrator Parwez Alam, County Attorney Herb Thiele, and Board Secretary Rebecca Vause.

Facilitator: Ken Morris, Assistant to the County Administrator

Chairman Desloge brought the Workshop to order at 12:00.

Ken Morris stated that the purpose of the Workshop was to provide the Board with an overview of the TDC structure. He stated that members of the TDC Advisory Council and staff were available to answer questions.

Highlights of Mr. Morris's power point presentation included:

- **TDC Organizational Structure:** Statute Requirements and County Ordinances & Resolutions.
  - Florida Statute 125.0104, Local Option Tourist Development Act, governs the TDC structure, provides procedure and permitted use of levying tax, requires the County adopt a tourism development plan, and requires Board to appoint a TDC Advisory Council;
  - The Council is composed of nine members;
  - County Ordinance 95-15, includes organizational chart, provides the TDC's Marketing Plan, outlines service delivery methods through vendors and overview of special events grant program, and
  - County Resolution R02-02, amends the TDC Advisory Council structure and permits the county administrator to be involved in the selection of the TDC Executive Director.
- **Operations and Activities:** Contracted Vendor Providers and Special Events Grant Program
  - Research is done through contracts with FSU and Diversified Executive systems (DES) of Florida;
  - Advertising/Public Relations services are provided by The Zimmerman Agency;
  - Marketing and Convention Services: Tallahassee Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (TACVB) work to bring sporting events and convention events to Tallahassee area, and
  - Special Events Grant Program is managed by the TDC and the TACVB
- **2007 County Comparison Survey** of 17 counties was conducted by OMB staff. The survey was conducted to measure how Leon County compares to other counties and reviewed other methods of TDC service delivery. The following areas were surveyed:
  - Survey methodology
  - Service delivery method
  - Use of Convention & Visitor Bureaus
  - Administrative reporting

Mr. Morris advised that based upon a review of the data staff recommended the following:

1. Delegate tourist development to the County Administrator;

2. Authorize the Chairman of the Board, or designee from the County Commission, to serve on the TDC. Require an Industry representative to serve as TDC Chairman and remove the requirement that the Commission representative serve as TDC Vice-Chair;
3. Rescind the TDC's ability to hire an Executive Director and amend the organizational chart to reflect the Board's preferred structure, and
4. Request the Board Chair send a letter to the TDC members with attendance concerns.

**Board Discussion:**

Chairman Desloge stated his appreciation to Mr. Morris for his time and work with the TDC. Chairman Desloge also expressed gratitude to the TDC Board for its effort and work over the past year. He noted the completion of a strategic plan.

Recommendation 1

Commissioner Thaelle commended the Council for its diligence and commitment during a difficult year. He suggested that the TDC be placed organizationally under the County Administrator. Commissioner Thaelle noted that the County Administrator has the resources, ability and experience needed to administer the program.

*Commissioner Thaelle moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Rackleff, to approve Recommendation 1: Delegate tourist development to the County Administrator.*

Commissioner Rackleff thanked staff and the Council. He commented that County's greatest tourism need is the development of a "tourism economy", which requires a more focused and broader vision by the TDC program. He believes that local areas of interest have not been adequately promoted.

Commissioner Akinyemi suggested that a broader look at the program was needed and offered that 1) the organizational chart should be reviewed for possible revisions; 2) the role of the CVB and Chamber should be assessed; 3) County Ordinance 95-15 be reviewed to better define ranges in the marketing Plan.

Commissioner Sauls verified with Russell Daws, Chairman of the TDC Advisory Council, that the Council had reviewed staff's recommendations and had no opposition to the recommendations. He shared that the TDC Strategic Plan was completed, approved by the Council and had been distributed for the Board's review and input. Commissioner Sauls established with Mr. Morris that it was not staff's intent to intervene or replace the current strategic plan that was worked on by the Advisory Council; only to provide the Board an opportunity to have input through another process.

County Administrator Alam explained that staff, once comments were received by Commissioners, would work to incorporate comments into the plan.

*The motion to approve recommendation 1 was approved 6-0 (Commissioner Dailey out of Chambers).*

Recommendation 2

Commissioner Thaelle agreed that the Board Chair should not be required to serve as the TDC Vice Chair and supported Commissioner Akinyemi's suggestion that a broader look at the overall role of the TDC and what is being done in tourism development was needed. He indicated that more discussion on the future of tourism and community development was

needed before a determination was made on what entity would serve as an automatic Chair of the TDC Board. Commissioner Thael opined that determining what brings visitors into the community is a challenge and suggested that a cooperative effort between the public and private sectors was needed to help foster community development.

*Commissioner Rackleff moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to approve Recommendation 2: Authorize the Chairman of the Board, or the Chairman's designee from the County Commission, to serve on the TDC. Require an industry representative to serve as TDC Chairman and remove the requirement that the Commission representative serve as TDC Vice-Chair.*

Commissioner Akinyemi expressed concern over the recommendation requirement that an "industry representative must serve as TDC Chairman". He opined that the TDC should vote and appoint its own Chair. He stated that he will not support the motion.

Commissioner Proctor stated that he also would not support the motion and pointed out that "knowledge is not leadership". He offered a friendly amendment to remove the requirement that the TDC Chair appointment be someone from the industry.

*Commissioner Rackleff accepted the friendly amendment.*

*The motion to approve Recommendation 2, as amended: Authorize the Chairman of the Board, or the Chairman's designee from the County Commission, to serve on the TDC ~~Require an industry representative to serve as TDC Chairman~~ Remove the requirement that the Commission representative serve as TDC Vice-Chair carried 7-0.*

#### Recommendation 3

*Commissioner Sauls moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Rackleff to approve Recommendation 3: Rescind the TDC's ability to hire an Executive Director and amend the organizational chart to reflect the Board's preferred structure. The motion carried 7-0.*

#### Recommendation 4

Commissioner Proctor indicated that he supported a fresh new start for the TDC Board.

Commissioner Sauls voiced her concern that members of the TDC Board were absent from meetings and its affect on the Board's ability to conduct business.

County Administrator Alam explained that Florida Statutes require that two municipal representatives serve on the TDC Board (designees are not allowed). He added that staff's recommendation was made due to the inability of the municipal representatives to attend meetings due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Alam pointed out that due to the small size of the TDC Board (nine members) it was difficult at times to achieve a quorum. He suggested that Chairman Desloge discuss the issue with the Mayor.

Mr. Morris offered that the Board could consider some type of legislative remedy, i.e., an exception for counties with one municipality or counties with populations under 300,000-400,000.

Commissioner Thael recommended that Chairman Desloge bring the issue up at the Mayor/Chair meeting. He confirmed with County Attorney Thiele that there was nothing in the Statute that would preclude expanding the number of individuals on the TDC Board. Mr. Thiele noted that an amendment to the Ordinance would be required.

*Commissioner Rackleff moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Dailey to approve Recommendation 4: Request the Chairman of the Board to send a letter to the TDC members with attendance concerns. The motion carried 7-0.*

Commissioner Thaelle suggested that partners with differing sets of values be considered if the TDC Board is expanded. He noted that local cultural and historical destinations had not been marketed and stated that the intent of the TDC may need to be reevaluated.

Commissioner Akinyemi articulated that structural changes were needed and bylaws revisited to better promote and support tourism.

Commissioner Proctor stated that the strategic plan did not include the vision and direction he expected. He pointed out the importance of preserving the heritage the "old Florida" that is incorporated into the local culture and that this should be better promoted. He also suggested strengthening relationships and teaming with neighboring counties; development of a "magazine" that promotes a regional flavor (3-4 counties); teaming with Chamber; hotel promotions which encourage visitors to local attractions.

Commissioner Rackleff noted that a real strategy was needed, beyond review of the organizational structure. He mentioned the possibility of promoting inter-urban rail service for FSU football games. He expressed concern over the potential closure of four state parks in the area.

*Commissioner Rackleff moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to write a letter to the Department of Environmental Protection requesting that they reconsider the four local state parks being targeted for possible closure. The motion carried 7-0.*

Chairman Desloge commented that the current strategic plan was a great first start and should be considered a work in progress. He supported asking the County Administrator to conduct an audit of the program and bring back to the Board suggestions and an analysis of the program to include comments presented by Commissioners.

Commissioner Akinyemi opined that the Board should look at all options relating to the TDC structure and the delivery of services, i.e., contracting vs. in-house staff and work to strengthen the partnership between the City, County and Chamber.

Commissioner Rackleff stated that a good, solid outside assessment was needed to address: 1) what marketing opportunities are available; 2) what destinations are available to market, and 3) what types of destinations are needed.

*Commissioner Rackleff moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Proctor, to instruct staff to bring back an agenda item relating to an agency overview and an assessment of the tourism market. The motion carried 7-0.*

The workshop was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bryan Desloge, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Inzer, Clerk of the Court  
Leon County, Florida