

Leon County Tourist Development Council Minutes of the June 16, 2009 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Russell Daws, Chairman
Chucha Barber
Marc Bauer
Commissioner Dailey
Mayor Marks
Sam Patel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Georgia Ackerman
Michelle Wilson

STAFF PRESENT: Lee Daniel, TDC
Kaye Strong-Hogan, TDC
Wanda Barnard, TDC
Victoria Jackson, TDC

GUESTS PRESENT: Sharon Liggett, TACVB
Stephanie Reaves, TACVB
Brian Hickey, Tallahassee Sports Council
Bill Hagen, Tallahassee Sports Council
Chris O'Brien, Tallahassee Sports Council
Amanda Quick, Tallahassee Sports Council
Frank Murphy, FSU
Carrie Blanchard, City of Tallahassee
Jay Revell, Leon County
Vince Long, Leon County
Felisa Barnes, Leon County
Beneshea Simmons, Leon County
Jennifer Berria, Leon County
Will Brown, Tallahassee Democrat
Lee Ann Franceschi, Adventures in Travel

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by Chairman Russell Daws. Since four members did not constitute a quorum, no official business was conducted until the arrival of Chucha Barber and Commissioner Dailey. Chairman Daws requested self introductions for the record and for guests attending the meeting. While waiting for a quorum, those present discussed a variety of issues including the need for a Sports Tourism Assessment and the community's support for Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics.

General Business - Lee Daniel reported that there would be no committee reports today. The report from the Program Review Committee has been tabled

and no report will be forthcoming. He noted that he will be meeting with Michelle Wilson to finalize the grant program.

Mr. Daniel reported that the FSU Marketing 2nd Quarter Report was distributed to TDC members in advance of the meeting and he invited Frank Murphy to attend and answer any questions. Mr. Murphy stated that he is excited about this coming fall and the focus is on bringing people here for football. He reported that they have met with Katie Kole and others and have some exciting ideas about packages.

Mr. Daniel recognized Brian Hickey and Bill Hagen who provided an overview of the Tallahassee Sports Council. Mayor Marks apologized that he had not been more active due to scheduling conflicts and expressed a desire to know more about the Sports Council. He suggested a one-on-one meeting with Brian Hickey. The Mayor also discussed the need for Tallahassee to have a travel channel.

The day and time of TDC meetings was discussed because Tuesdays has been a challenge for some members. Others indicated that earlier in the day would work better. There was a consensus that meetings would be held on the Second Thursday at 9:00 a.m. A formal vote will be taken with a quorum present.

A break was taken while waiting for a quorum. Chucha Barber arrived and the meeting was officially called to order.

Request for Additional Agenda Items – None

Items for Consent – Chairman Daws called for a motion to approve items under consent. The motion was moved by Mayor Marks and seconded by Sam Patel to approve the following items for consent. The motion carried unanimously.

1. May 19, 2009 meeting minutes
2. Direct Marketing and Convention Services
3. Financial Reports May, FY2009
4. Total Year-to-Date Bed Tax Collections

Director's Report – Mr. Daniel reported that information regarding the proposed structure was sent out in advance of the meeting, but there were some last minute changes. He noted that he met with the County Attorney and he indicated that the name Leon County Tourist Development Council can remain the same. However, what we are called in the market place is up to us. The name Tallahassee Area Convention and Visitors Bureau will be available October 1, 2009, as the CVB Board voted to dissolve the 501C-6 at their meeting this morning (assuming the Board of County Commissioners ratifies the action it took at the June 3 Workshop and Strategic Planning Retreat at the July 14 Board Meeting). He advised that more destinations are getting away from the name

"CVB" because people do not understand what a CVB is or does. He stated that the trend in the industry is to use the destination name and everything seems to lead to Visit Tallahassee. Several suggested names were discussed such as "Experience Tallahassee", or "Explore Tallahassee". After more discussion, the consensus was to go with Visit Tallahassee and also look at different URL's that can be purchased in the future. Chairman Daws pointed that it doesn't prohibit us from changing the name in the future. There was discussion as to what to do with the merchandise for sale in the Gift Shop and what to do with the space on the first floor of the Welcome Center. Chairman Daws stated that it seems to be the consensus that branding with relation to the first floor is important and something everyone would like to keep. Discussion occurred regarding staffing the Visitor Information Center with a Visitor Services Manager and volunteers from Leon County. Chairman Daws cautioned against volunteers handling cash.

Mr. Daniel also pointed out that being a part of county structure will not prohibit us from applying and receiving grants, as well as conducting cooperative sales missions and advertising. In the meeting with the County Attorney, Mr. Daniel recommended not to keep the membership. He encouraged all members as their dues are rolling over, to invest some of those dollars in cooperative opportunities. Marc Bauer inquired about a rebate for those that just joined in March. Chucha Barber emphasized the need to communicate to stakeholders regarding redirection of those funds, otherwise they will direct them somewhere else. Mr. Daniel stated that an e-mail blast about the new structure and other things will be sent to the industry. He pointed out that the entire destination will be promoted regardless of membership.

Mr. Daniel reported that the proposed structure was a difficult decision and a lot of hours and thought were put into the decision. The recommendations are based on how many positions we can afford and what it will take to move forward. He pointed out that he was very sensitive to those positions that are recommended to not be brought forward. He noted that depending on what comes out today, he and Sharon Liggett are meeting with Lillian Bennett, Director of Leon County Human Resources. Ms. Bennett has indicated that she will be proactive in looking for opportunities for those that are displaced. He also noted that he and Ms. Liggett will meet with the CVB staff after the meeting with Ms. Bennett.

Marc Bauer pointed out that during the Tourism Retreat and today, the importance of the sports market was emphasized, but in the OMB Report it appears there is only a Sales Sports Manager. Mr. Daniel stated that he has a background in sports and a personal interest as well. He pointed out that in the proposed new organizational chart there is a Sports Sales Manager and a Sports Sales Representative position. After more discussion, the Mayor moved to approve the proposed structure with a slight adjustment to the organizational chart to better reflect the duties of economic development. Motion was seconded by Sam Patel and the vote was unanimous.

FY 2010 Budget Discussion – Mr. Daniel reviewed the budget that was sent out in advance of the meeting. He stated that he attempted to identify additional funds based on the structure to increase advertising and public relations. He pointed out that the budget includes 70% of his salary with 30% being paid from the General Fund. Sam Patel asked for clarification regarding the other TDC staff and their assistance on economic development projects. Mr. Daniel indicated that he doesn't foresee this happening. The Mayor brought up the Sports Needs Assessment with respect to the budget. Mr. Daniel stated that he will look to contingency funds. Chairman Daws advised Mr. Daniel to think hard about the use of volunteers with respect to running an organization when no one shows up. Mr. Daniel stated again that he would look to contingency funds to fill that void. A motion to support the budget was made by Commissioner Dailey and seconded by Sam Patel. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Daws called for a motion to change the day and time of TDC meetings. In order to maximize attendance, Commissioner Dailey moved to change the day and time of the meetings to the second Thursday at 9:00 am starting in September. Motion was seconded by Sam Patel and carried unanimously.

Tourism Development Transition Plan – Mr. Daniel provided draft copies of a Revised Tourism Development Plan, Attachment A that will need to be reviewed and approved by a special meeting or vote by e-mail. Mayor Marks suggested getting a consensus and approval by e-mail. He pointed out that the Board of County Commissioners has the final approval and he does not feel that a formal vote is necessary. Mr. Daniel requested that TDC members review the draft and send comments back via e-mail by the end of the week.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Russell S. Daws, Chairman

Attest: Wanda Barnard