

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA
Tourism Strategic Plan (2009-2014)
Workshop
September 8, 2009

The Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop session to discuss the *2009-2014 Strategic Plan for Visit Tallahassee*. The Workshop was held in the County Commission Chambers on Tuesday, September 8, 2009.

Chairman Desloge called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Present were County Commissioners Rackleff, Akinyemi, Thael, Sauls, and Dailey (Commissioner Proctor absent). Also present was County Administrator Parwez Alam; County Attorney Herb Thiele, and Board Secretary Rebecca Vause.

Facilitator(s): Vince Long, Deputy County Administrator
Lee Daniel, Tourist Development Council (TDC) Executive Director
Bill Geist, Zeitgeist Consulting, Madison, Wisconsin

Mr. Long stated that the Workshop's purpose was to present the first draft of the TDC Strategic Plan and to seek the Board's input and direction. He added that the Plan was the result of an extensive strategic planning process that engaged the Board, the TDC and industry stakeholders.

Mr. Daniel shared that he was pleased with where the program was today and looked forward to the Board's input on the Plan, which will serve as a "road map" for tourism development for the Tallahassee-Leon County area.

Mr. Geist presented the first draft of the Tourism Strategic Plan for review and discussion. He commended the County on the time and effort dedicated to the Plan's development and shared that it included feedback from interviews with stakeholders, an on-line survey, destination review/assessment, and input received at the Strategic Planning Retreat.

The presentation by Mr. Geist included information on:

- Local area assessment;
- Key findings;
- Destination challenges;
- Opportunities;
- Revised Mission Statement, and
- Revised Vision Statement

Comments from Commissioners included:

- Commissioner Dailey questioned the TDC's role in job creation, as was mentioned in the Mission Statement.
- Chairman Desloge mentioned the importance of an enhanced relationship with the Chamber, EDC, Universities, etc.
- Commissioner Rackleff expressed concern over the current contract with the Civic Center and its affect on the construction of a convention center. He also commented on the affects the recession has had on discretionary income and inquired what sort of industry trends analysis is being done.
- Commissioner Thael inquired about the importance of a "beach" in destination promotion.

Mr. Geist presented the Plan's proposed Goals and Objectives, along with suggested strategies and timelines, for the Board's consideration:

- Goal 1: Enhance the Organizational Strength of the TDC & Visit Tallahassee
 - Objective A: Align the priorities of the Board of County Commissioners, TDC and Visit Tallahassee in order to enhance the Tourism Economy of the Region, while maximizing the amount of Tourist Development Tax proceeds available to the TDC to carry out its Strategic Plan
 - Objective B: Complete the Merger of the CVB into the new Visit Tallahassee structure
 - Objective C: Enhance Resident & Business Awareness, Appreciation & Support of the TDC, Visit Tallahassee and the Visitor Industry of Leon County
 - Objective D: Reach out to Regional Partners to Enhance the Destination's Product Line
 - Commissioner Thael established with Mr. Daniel that the "region" would be established according to the marketing strategy implemented.
 - Objective E: Analyze Opportunities to become more Competitive by Increasing and Diversifying the Visit Tallahassee Budget
- Goal 2: Enhance the Destination Sales & Marketing of the Region
 - Objective A: Strengthen Destination Brand Identity and Awareness
 - Objective B: Enhance Visit Tallahassee's Utilization of Technology and Social Media
 - Commissioner Rackleff recommended that the *Tallahassee Democrat Limelight* be provided at local hotel registration desks.
 - Objective C: Identify and Maximize Niche markets in which Leon County can Effectively Compete
- Goal 3: Advocate for Destination Defining Development
 - Objective A: Develop a Tourism-centric master Plan for Leon County
 - Objective B: Communicate the Opportunities for Destination Enhancing Developments
 - Commissioner Dailey suggested that communications take place with the cultural arts community, specifically with the cultural plan, on how they can work with the TDC and CONA.
 - Objective C: Analyze and Support Destination Development Projects as Appropriate
 - Objective D: Represent the Interests of the Visitor Industry on Public Policy Issues

Commissioner Akinyemi emphasized the need to define "region" and urged the establishment of true partnerships with surrounding areas citing the potential use of Chamber organization. *Commissioner Dailey moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Rackleff, to accept to report as presented by staff.*

Commissioner Rackleff commented on the uniqueness of the area's history and stated that an effort needs to be made to stop the destruction of local historical commercial architecture. He added that a vibrant downtown is vital to become a successful "destination".

Chairman Desloge echoed the need for better partnering and noted the revitalization of Gaines Street as a move toward a true entertainment district.

Chairman Rackleff mentioned that the Downtown Improvement Authority was in need of office space and suggested that the TDC offices may be an appropriate location.

Commissioner Akinyemi offered an amendment to the motion to include the acceptance of the strategic plan. Commissioner Dailey accepted the amendment.

Commissioner Dailey moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Rackleff, to accept staff's report and approve the draft 2009-1015 Strategic Plan. The motion carried 6-0 (Commissioner Proctor absent)

The workshop was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

BY: _____
Bryan Desloge, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

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