



TDC Meeting Minutes

Dec. 10, 2020

Commissioner Brian Hamman, chair, called the Lee County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Council members in attendance

Commissioner Brian Hamman, Pamela Cronin, Colleen DePasquale, Rexann Hosafros, Brian Kramer, Tony Lapi, John McLain, Fran Myers and Robert Wells III.

Bill Waichulis was excused.

Lapi made a motion to approve the Nov. 12, 2020 TDC meeting minutes. Wells seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public to be heard

None to be heard.

Municipalities to be heard

None to be heard.

Report of the executive director

Tamara Pigott, VCB executive director, reported preliminary resort tax collected for October 2020 was \$2,167,203, a 3.9% increase over October 2019 preliminary collections of \$2,086,449. Fiscal year-to-date preliminary tourist tax collections are \$2,203,862, an increase of 2.6% year-over-year.

Pigott also reported that the average occupancy rate in October 2020 was 50.5%, which is down 17.6% from October 2019 (61.3%). The average daily rate for October 2020 was \$116.04, up 0.6% from October 2019 (\$115.39) and RevPAR for October 2020 was \$58.56, down 17.2% from October 2019 (\$70.70).

During October 2020, 417,305 passengers traveled through Southwest Florida International Airport, a decrease of 34.7% compared to October 2019. Year-to-date, passenger traffic is down 41.6% from the same period last year.

Pigott announced that Judi Durant, visitor services director, would be retiring at the end of the month and thanked her for her many years of service.

Consumer sentiment study update

Joseph St. Germain, DSG, reviewed wave 7 data of the consumer sentiment study to determine the impact of COVID-19 on consumers' feelings about travel and travel-related advertising. Overall, consumer confidence in all activities is unchanged from what it was in October. In December, fewer consumers feel it is safe to vacation, yet more have traveled. Over half of consumers feel it is safe to vacation again and those who do not feel safe traveling continue to rely on availability of a viable vaccine to determine when it is safe to travel again.

Marketing report

Brian Ososky, VCB marketing director, presented an overview of FY20-21 paid media strategies and how the VCB is approaching placements designed to impact winter/peak season travel on the leisure/consumer front. Ososky also announced the Sun Saver Passport for visitors and locals was launched Nov. 16, and there are already almost 1,500 downloads worldwide.

New business

The TDC appointed Wells to serve as vice chairman of the TDC for 2021. The motion was made by Myers and seconded by Cronin which carried unanimously.

The TDC approved the 2021 meeting dates with the motion made by Myers, which was seconded by Lapi and carried unanimously.

The TDC recommended the Lynn Hall Restroom Remodel Project request in the amount of \$75,000 be presented at an upcoming BoCC meeting for approval. The motion was made by Wells and seconded by Hosafros and carried unanimously.

For council information

Commissioner Hamman read a letter from Matlacha business owner giving kudos to VCB employees for their hard work on a recent press trip that took place during Tropical Storm Eta.

TDC member items

Myers gave thanks to Durant for her many years of service to the VCB and Lee County and wished her a happy retirement.

Other council members echoed these sentiments and wished everyone happy holidays.

DePasquale said that the SWFL Alliance of Chambers has had conversations with elected officials and VISIT FLORIDA funding was a major topic of conversation and will bring updates to the council.

Kramer announced that the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association's Love Local auction raised \$13,000 for local culinary and hospitality programs.

Hamman added he will be serving as chairman for another year.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Next TDC meeting

The next scheduled TDC meeting is at 9 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021, in the Admin East Building, Room 118, 2201 Second St., Fort Myers. To view a complete tax collections report, visit LeeVCB.com. Contact: Tamara Pigott, TPigott@leegov.com, Lee County VCB, 239-338-3500.