

**PASCO COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

MAY 20, 2015

**PREPARED IN THE OFFICE OF
PAULA S. O'NEIL, CLERK & COMPTROLLER**

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

10:00 A.M.

**HISTORIC PASCO COUNTY COURTHOUSE, BOARD ROOM
37918 MERIDIAN AVENUE, DADE CITY, FL**

Tourist Development Council Members

The Honorable Kathryn Starkey
Board of County Commissioners

The Honorable Camille Hernandez-ABSENT
Vice-Chairman, Mayor, City of Dade City

The Honorable Chopper Davis
City of New Port Richey

Open Position

Gail Cushman
Days Inn & Suites

Toby Caroline
Paradise Lakes Resort

Jack Phethean - ABSENT
Little Everglades Ranch

Pat Ciaccio
Saddle Brook Resort

Piyush Mulji
Hampton Inn

1. CALL TO ORDER – 10:00 A.M. – Chairman

Chairman Starkey called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Donalee Schmidt, Deputy Clerk, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

3. Roll Call

Ms. Schmidt called the roll. Mayor Camille Hernandez (excused) and Mr. Jack Phethean were absent.

4. Adoption of Minutes

- a. TDC Minutes December 10, 2014**
- b. TDC Minutes January 14, 2015**

Chairman Starkey requested a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 10, 2014 and January 14, 2015.

COUNCILMAN DAVIS MOVED approval of the December 10, 2014 and January 14, 2015 meeting minutes; **MS. CAROLINE SECONDED.**

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

5. Public Comment

No one spoke.

6. New Business

- a. Presentation – Savage Race, Sam Abbott**
TD15-044

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, introduced Mr. Sam Abbitt and Mr. Sean Wolters of the Savage Race.

Mr. Sam Abbitt spoke regarding the event which would be held at the Little Everglades Ranch. He presented a marketing video for the event and reviewed participant

demographics from the event. He spoke regarding past events held, room night stays, a map showing where the participants had traveled from, and the economic impacts to Pasco County. He spoke extensively regarding the participant survey results and explained that over 57 percent of the participants stayed in Pasco County hotels. He continued with the presentation and spoke regarding their marketing efforts, “digital reach”, the on-site billboard used at the event, printed assets, and that the marketing package was valued at \$55,000.00. He stated the funding request was for \$20,000.00 per event for the next three events and that the all of the funding would be used for marketing.

Discussion followed between the TDC Members, Staff and Mr. Abbitt regarding past events; the Savage Junior Race Series; event attendance; the scheduled event dates; that Little Everglades Ranch was a fantastic setting for the event; that the VisitPasco.net did not state Florida; a challenge for the County Commissioners to participate in the event; TDC Members participation in the event; photos of participants in front of the event billboard; on-site informational booths; promotion of other festivals and events; this partnership was an asset; that grass root events were the “meat and potatoes”; similar events such as the Tough Mudder, Spartan Race and Warrior Dash; this event was the largest of this type of event in Florida; ages of the race participants; the obstacles used; event growth; event waves; and the medical staff.

Mr. Caum stated Staff’s recommendation was to enter into a contract for \$60,000.00 which would cover the October Event, the Spring Event and the following October Event. He noted this would allow them to plan their next events over two budget cycles.

MS. CAROLINE MOVED approval of Staff’s recommendation; **COUNCILMAN DAVIS SECONDED.**

Councilman Davis clarified \$20,000.00 would be provided for each event.

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Mr. Richard Gehring, Planning and Development Administrator, commended Mr. Abbitt on the event package that was submitted.

b. Finalize and Recommend Pasco County Tourist Development Plan 2016-2020

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, explained this had been an on-going process. He spoke regarding the comments received which included a suggestion of the organization priority order, a question of whether becoming a Destination Marketing Organization would be more expensive to administer than the current structure, that the clothing optional industry should be represented, the bed tax should remain at two

percent and should not be increased, if they were unable to build a sports park the construction fund could be spent to enhance the beaches and parks, the strategic plan was clearly expressed and well thought out, and the importance for the TDC to be consistent with all policies.

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney, explained the plan was a blueprint of how they would spend the tourism revenues collected and spoke regarding the process for amending the plan. It was important for the Council to come to some consensus in order to make a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners. She reviewed the ordinance, statutory requirements, and the procedures to be followed.

Discussion followed among the Council Members and Staff regarding terms used within the plan; the business model; that the Statute was the driver of how the funds were spent; equal priorities; the differences between the east, central, and west sides of the County; a feeling that they were working too hard on hitting the grand slam as opposed to spreading the allocations throughout the County regionally; the bike trails; SunWest; a regional sports facility; the ability to have multiple events going on in the County; the focus should be on the proper way to spend the 11 million dollars to benefit the entire County; public-private partnerships; the status of the feasibility study; a feeling that the plan was well written and aggressive; the importance of arts and culture; all parts of the plan had value; blending economic development and tourism; the five market areas of the County; tourists did not see boundaries; how should be the money be spent with a flat budget; further consideration was needed on the plan; the current plan was in place until 2016; event growth and evaluation; the use of digital marketing; the tourism fund allocations; and the Council needed to base their investments of facts.

Chairman Starkey stated the item was tabled for more review.

COUNCILMAN DAVIS LEFT THE MEETING AT 11:30 A.M.

7. Old Business

Ms. Roni Lloyd, Sports Marketing Coordinator, spoke regarding the National Association of Sports Commissions which was held in Milwaukee, meetings held, and the need to build credibility. She felt they needed to re-establish sponsorship criteria and tourism development guidelines. She spoke regarding the need to better evaluate groups receiving funding, the criteria involved, the ice complex and the various types of venues. The right type of events instead of the number of events. She spoke regarding the possible elimination of some events that had been handed subsidy. She thanked the Council for their guidance and instruction.

Mr. Ciaccio spoke regarding the ice complex and possible events.

8. Tourism Manager's Report
TD15-045

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, spoke regarding Travel and Tourism Week, and the marketing summit with the Florida Association of Destination Market Organizations. He reviewed the website and social media numbers. He noted the Tourism Office was now located in Suite 135. He introduced Ms. Lauren St. Martin who was recently hired as the Tourism Marketing Coordinator.

Ms. Lauren St. Martin, Tourism Marketing Coordinator, provided her background to the Council and stated she was excited to do her part.

Mr. Caum gave an update regarding SunWest Park and explained a grand opening would be scheduled at a later date. He noted Pasco County was now a member the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber.

Discussed followed regarding the name of the park being SunWest Park not SunWest Beach Park; and past events held at SunWest Park.

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney, stated Pasco County was not in control of SunWest Park, nor was an individual Commissioner, and that it was in the hands of the Park Operator. She noted for people to go out onto the site before it was formally opened would be considered trespassing. She explained there was nothing scheduled at the park for Memorial Day Weekend.

Ms. Cushman suggested the local hotels be notified of the opening.

Ms. Blair felt the Park Operator would handle their messaging and marketing when it was appropriate.

Mr. Caum reviewed the recent events including Paddlepalooza, the Seafood Blues Festival and the Skating Championship.

9. Board Member Comments

Ms. Caroline spoke regarding the photo of the dolphin near Eagle Point from the Paddle Pasco Event.

Chairman Starkey spoke regarding the tourism website and noted that Starkey Wilderness Park was the most visited tourism spot in the County. She spoke regarding the bike trails listed and explained they were working on a concessionaire in the park to provide bikes.

Mr. Ed Caum, Tourism Manager, stated the June meeting had nothing scheduled. He asked if the Council wished to hold a workshop to further discuss the Tourism Plan and suggested the workshop be held at Saddlebrook.

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney, clarified the workshop could be held at Saddlebrook provided the Clerk was available to attend.

Chairman Starkey stated the location would need to be determined.

It was the consensus of the Council Members to cancel the June meeting.

10. Adjournment

MS. CAROLINE MOVED to adjourn the meeting; **MS. CUSHMAN SECONDED.**

Chairman Starkey spoke regarding the Council vacancy and noted an application had been received from Ms. King. She asked what was the procedure followed for vacant positions.

Ms. Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney, reminded the Council that the Board of County Commissioners made all appointments. The council could provide a recommendation for anyone whom they felt was appropriate. An application was available on-line for all Board appointments.

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the vote was unanimous and the motion carried with Councilman Davis absent from the vote.

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 20, 2015

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

Prepared by: _____
Donalee Schmidt, Operations Lead
Board Records Department