

**PASCO COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING**

**ANNOTATED MINUTES**

**JULY 20, 2016**

**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  
IN WHICH THE ITEMS WERE HEARD**

**9:30 A.M.**

**WEST PASCO GOVERNMENT CENTER  
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL**

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**Tourist Development Council Members**

**The Honorable Kathryn Starkey**  
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners

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

**The Honorable Chopper Davis**  
City of New Port Richey

**John Heather – Present via Skype**  
Saint Leo University

**Gail Cushman**  
Days Inn & Suites

**Toby Caroline**  
Paradise Lakes Resort

**Piyush Mulji**  
Hampton Inn Dade City / Zephyrhills

**Pat Ciaccio - ABSENT**  
Saddlebrook Resort

**Staff Members**

Ed Caum, Tourism Manager  
Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney  
Richard Gehring, Strategic Policy Administrator  
Michele Baker, County Administrator

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**1. Call to Order – 9:30 a.m. Chairman**

Chairman Starkey called the meeting to order at 9:33 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. Mr. Pat Ciaccio was absent. Mr. John Heather was present via skype.

## **4. Adoption of Minutes**

### **a. TDC May 18, 2016**

Chairman Starkey requested a motion to approve the minutes.

Mr. Caum noted that the spelling of Mr. John Moors name was corrected by the Clerk's Office.

**Motion to approve** the May 18, 2016 minutes to include the noted change; motion carried.

## **5. Public Comment**

Mr. Jeromy Harding spoke regarding his involvement in the SunWest project, TDC funding recommendations for the park, what constituted a tourist attraction, the number of tourists at the park 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, that the park had the potential to be a regional attraction, preservation techniques that would help the park to be a premier destination, and some unfinished park amenities.

The Council Members and Mr. Harding held discussion regarding necessary funding; the park was a great beach option for the area; public speaker timer; the park visitation numbers report; and determining what was a Tourist Development assessment.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Short-term Rental Information**

**Elizabeth Blair, Senior Assistant County Attorney  
TD16-042**

Ms. Blair spoke regarding issues with short-term rentals. The issues mentioned were an Ordinance adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 1999 that placed restrictions on short-term rentals/vacation rentals, the registered number decreased from 200 to 52, provisions made for new developments, since the adoption of the Ordinance there was only one community properly platted with recorded restrictions and notification to homeowners, how many were operating illegally in the County, an agreement between the Department of Revenue and Airbnb to collect revenue, a meeting that would be held with a company that could track how many were in a community, potentially amending the Ordinance to allow the operation in a different way than was currently allowed, vacation rentals were required to pay Tourist Development Taxes, jurisdictions that were lobbying for the rentals to be regulated, potential revenue streams, and quality of life issues caused by these type of rentals.

The Council and Staff held discussion regarding the issues that the Ordinance was specifically drafted to address; in 1999 Paradise Lakes residents claimed that if they paid the bed tax they would lose revenue; a request from the County to Paradise Lakes to produce a roster of people coming into the community; putting homeowners on notice was effective; registering short-term rentals with the State; under the current Ordinance Pasco County residents could rent their property three times per year before being cited; utility bills for short-term rentals were normally mailed to an alternate address; requirements and tools for enforcing the Ordinance; key indicators that a home was being used as a short-term rental; the number of short-term rentals in the County that were not paying bed taxes; discussions held with the Tax Collector's Office regarding self-collection of bed taxes; a legislative move to require short-term rental numbers/State license numbers be included on all advertisements; efforts being made by Airbnb and the State Attorney General's Office to collect taxes to remit back to the State; ensuring that everything was being done legally would increase Airbnb's level of customer service; the necessary requirements for communities that wanted to become short-term rental communities; one individual who without license rented forty-five short-term rentals in clothing optional communities; short-term rental applications required the accompaniment of a signed petition by adjacent property owners within the entire subdivision; holding a workshop with the Board of County Commissioners to further discuss alternative options; short-term rental inspections and visitor safety; the Sheriff's Office did not have jurisdiction over rentals without a hotel license; various requirements for registered rental properties; typical reported complaints for short-term rentals; Staff did not want to create an unenforceable Ordinance; how much the legislature would allow the Ordinance to be amended; information on what was/was not acceptable under the Short-term Rental Ordinance was available on the County's website; having the information posted on other Constitutional Officer's websites; educational campaign flyers to be placed in the utility bills; a meeting to be held with I-Compass which was a company that collected rental data; and the Council agreed to move the process forward.

The item was for information only. No action was taken.

**b. Presentation - Savage Race – Sam Abbitt  
TD16-050**

Mr. Caum introduced Mr. Sam Abbitt who would give a presentation on the item. Staff recommended extending the contract 5 years and keeping the sponsorship level the same.

Mr. Sam Abbitt, Savage Race Founder/CEO, stated that his company produced obstacle races throughout the United States since 2011. He spoke regarding the event's growth, participant demographics of the event, that since there were two events per year in Pasco County his company took additional measures to keep the event appealing to those participating, economic impacts for the last 5 years was approximately 6.3 million dollars, event survey results, efforts to promote Pasco County hotels, the number of hotel rooms and nights booked, the core demographic was a 25-35 year old professional, Pasco County hotels and things to do was promoted on the race's website, a heat map produced from register participants, digital outreach for the event, the number of views on the Savage Race website that were based on Pasco sponsored videos, and a dedicated spot on the Savage Race website which gave visitors a list of things to do while in the area. He shared a promotional video clip that showed additional obstacles.

The Council, Staff, and Mr. Abbitt held discussion regarding promotional and partnership opportunities; the amount of funding that was being requested; and a 5-year contract extension with the same sponsorship level; a race with an older target demographic; future efforts to include more of the amenities offered by the City of Dade City; volunteer and participant opportunities; some of the event's best ideas were developed with Pasco County Staff; exposure for the County and the return on investment; other promotional tools used to promote Pasco County; a sign showing a collage of opportunities in Pasco County; local businesses could set up an activation tent in the festival area at the event; Little Everglades Ranch was a tourism asset; creating a Savage Race weekend to allow participants to move throughout the County; the Savage Syndicate which was a new program that rewarded people who ran more than one event per year; and additional event marketing ideas.

**Motion to approve Staff's recommendation; motion carried.**

**ADDENDUM ITEM**

**TD16-052 – Sun West Board of County Commissioners Action Request  
Use of Tourist Development Tax for Sun West Park - Phase Two -  
construction and consideration of defining tourism assets for Tourist  
Development Tax funding.**

Mr. Gehring explained why the item was added as an addendum. He spoke regarding the request for funding relating to a capital investment at the SunWest project, defining a tourism asset, the statutory requirements, the Attorney General's opinion on what facility investments could be made by Tourist Development Councils (TDC), the item was presented to the Board of County Commissioners by the Parks & Recreation Director with the Board requesting that the item be presented to the TDC first, the process that the item would follow, and the current policy framework, Statute, and plan structure.

Mr. Caum spoke regarding the history of funding requests for the project, the amount of funding requested for acquiring sand for the project, that the TDC previously supported a sports aspect with the volleyball courts, requested post event reports from event coordinators to track economic impact, blocks of hotel rooms that were set aside for events at the park that were not filled, the National Volleyball League (NVL) backed out of a contract because they were not able to use TDC funds for monetary awards, funding for the project was previously approved based on the site being a sports amenity not a tourism asset, and alternatives available to the TDC. He reviewed the funding request and noted that Staff did not recommend funding.

Ms. Blair spoke regarding the responsibility of the TDC for adopting a plan regarding net Tourism Development Tax Revenue and proposed uses, the Statute dictated how funding was spent in each category, what was included when promoting the County regionally/nationally and internationally as a sports travel destination, financing of beach park facilities or beach improvements, previous sand purchases and erosion control for various parks across the County, the Attorney's General's Opinion (AGO) 2015-14 that beach improvements had to relate back to the physical preservation of the beach shore line/inland lake or river, a midwall erosion control structure that was proposed for SunWest Park, and the County's plan did not contemplate capital items that were not related to sports. She recommended that if the item was approved the funding should be limited to what was contemplated in the specific section of the Statute that referred to erosion control measures or beach renourishment.

Ms. Lauren St. Martin, Tourism Marketing Coordinator, reviewed the definition of a tourism asset. She gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed the timeline of the Tourist Development Plan (TDP), future meetings to collect and review the members input on the TDP, defining tourism assets, what was being done by other counties, identifying attractions as tourism related projects, the number of miles a visitor traveled that would be considered as an out-of-county visitor for a specific asset, and a graph report of project focus areas.

Ms. Kelley Boree, Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources Director, explained the request for funding was for Phase II construction that would enable the park operator to build out the park. She gave a PowerPoint presentation which reviewed an overview of the park area, the funding request for the retaining wall, sidewalk, and landscaping, amenities that were made possible by in-kind services and donations, the requested

landscaping was the code compliant landscaping to go with the north side parking lot, the park operator would provide visitation information from ride waivers used at the site, and the park was being built-out as a sports complex which included multiple sand volleyball courts. She reviewed the Staff memorandum that had been distributed.

The Council and Staff held discussion regarding what funds could be used for capital requests; beach sand and erosion protection construction; what was eligible for Tourism Capital funding and was there an application; developing an outline for future capital funding requests; tourism asset parameters; potentially using "endless summer" license plate revenue; what could be covered under the AGO 2015-14; the height of a midwall or retaining wall; the location of the proposed retaining wall that would be used to keep the investment of sand in place; building an application process for the TDP; the amount of funding generated from the ten percent allocation; the information that was needed to support receiving TDC funding; defining a tourism asset set the standard; the amount of funds available in Capital Reserves; funding went into reserves unless otherwise encumbered; a memorandum that was forwarded to the Council from the Board; Phase One and Phase Two of the project; and the cost of the midwall only.

Mr. Roberto Saez, Project Management, responded to the questions raised and spoke regarding the costs involved, the importance of the midwall, the project phases, efforts made to prevent sand erosion, and in-kind donations.

Discussion continued that no mechanism was currently available which would allow the TDC to allocate the funds; protecting the beach asset; the need for a plan amendment which would allow the park to be declared a tourism asset; other items that could be considered tourism assets; they had already contributed \$450,000.00 towards sand; future visions of the project would bring people to the area; visitation to the park; the Statute allowed for beach restoration; it did not appear the TDC could fund the sidewalks; the actual midwall costs; were they certain the height and design of the midwall would work; where this fell as a priority within Parks and Recreation/Natural Resources; the effectiveness of "knee walls"; the cost involved with funding the midwall only would be \$158,000.00; and the actual size of the midwall.

Ms. Boree responded to the questions raised and stated they received 700 to 800 cars per day on weekends and between 250 to 350 cars on week days; holidays and special events had considerably more visitors. She explained her department would bring forward another agenda item regarding beach renourishment of the beachfront parks for the Hudson and Anclote areas.

Mr. Patrick Panokos, Park Operator, spoke regarding the operation of the park and deficiencies in the park including the funding put into the sand without any way to protect the sand, that he had brought up the concern in the beginning, additional shelters would be added, and a private donor who would help facilitate the building of Phase 2 bathrooms and parking lots. He spoke regarding the need for a north parking lot, park attendance, festivals held at the park, the need for additional restrooms, this

was a phased development, and the request for landscaping was to help finish the parking lot. The retaining wall was an oversight from the engineer.

Chairman Starkey felt the County did not adequately fund the parks. When the budget took a big hit it mainly came out of parks and libraries, and they had not yet been able to restore the funding. In the upcoming budget they found an additional million dollars that would go to the parks department. The last Parks Plan was done in 2001 and this park was not contemplated. This park had come to them outside of the normal planning process and it had been a challenge for the County to fund the park. The park was beautiful, but they did not have the budget to fund some of these items. The County was able to fund Phase 1, but now they had gone ahead and started Phase 2. She spoke regarding the generous donations received, but noted there was no capital money available for funding Phase 2.

Ms. Baker stated the Parks Plan did contemplate the need for additional boater access points.

Mr. Gehring spoke regarding the limitations of funding and possible BP settlement funding. He said Staff needed the framework for processing the request.

Ms. Blair reviewed the Tourism Plan and explained she was struggling with what the Tourism Plan allowed. The TDC could make a determination this was contemplated in the Tourism Plan and recommend the Board of County Commissioners fund the item. She requested the TDC identify projects and specific uses when the Tourism Plan was updated. She felt when the Tourism Plan was updated the TDC should identify projects and specific uses. She reviewed the specific language with the Council. The Board of County Commissioners had stated that SunWest was not yet a sports destination, but it would become a tourist destination once it became built up, which should be included in the Tourism Plan as a future focus. If they wanted SunWest to be a tourist destination, then it should be placed in the plan which would be adopted by the Board.

Extensive discussion followed regarding whether the midwall could be funded if it would maintain the sand; a feeling that they needed to maintain what they had and to look at the \$150,870.00; they would also need to look at sand next month for other beaches; where would the money come from; that they could protect the sand without opening up the tourism asset today; the midwall would protect the sand they had previously purchased; the location of the sand that was previously purchased; the total cost of the midwall would be \$150,870.00 to protect the entire investment; and this could be done without naming SunWest as a tourist development asset.

Mr. Caum said in the Reserve Tourism Construction account they had 2.9 million, with 2.5 million of that being the buy back of the turf fields. In the TDP they wanted to put 2.5 aside in entrances and trails. There was \$455,000.00 available within Construction Reserves that could be used if the TDC found that it met their plan and the Statute.

**COUNCILMAN DAVIS MOVED** to invest in the protection of the existing sand in the amount of \$150,870.00; **MS. CUSHMAN SECONDED**.

Discussion continued regarding whether they were certain the investment would work and other options; would need to revitalize the sand with an additional investment; that a partial midwall had already been constructed and was working; Staff had explored several options such as land rock and stones in the area; the park operator was responsible for the sand; it would be beneficial to stop the erosion; the wall was also designed to be a seating area; the sand preservation would fit into both the existing Tourism Plan and the statutory constraints; their capital dollars were \$100,000.00 per year; this request would not fall under Penny for Pasco funding for economic development; the need to start identifying a vision to move toward; and that the park operator was allowed to sunset the current entrance fee structure and implement a different entrance fee structure.

Chairman Starkey called on the motion; the motion carried with Mr. Mulji voting nay.

Discussion followed regarding sporting events held with no follow-up reports from SunWest; the three events held at SunWest were not in contract with the County; an event promoter held the events and Staff requested he provide the reports; Staff found the promoter was probably not a successful partner to move forward with; the need to work with Mr. Panokos to find the right event producers; that there had been interest from various nudist organizations looking at the north west lake as a possible location for a clothing optional beach; the mitigation plan; and meetings held with the Green Key Beach community.

## **7. Tourism Manager's Report**

TD16-051

### **Conference Attendance and Special Engagements**

- Florida Sports Foundation Annual Meeting – May 25-27
- DMAI Annual Conference – August 1-4

Mr. Caum spoke regarding the Florida Sports Foundation meeting and the post event reporting process, that he would be attending the DMAI Conference in August and the possibility of a software demonstration.

### **Website, Social Media and Marketing Update**

- Pasco County Tourism on Facebook

Ms. Lauren St. Martin, Tourism Marketing Coordinator, provided an update regarding social media marketing, and spoke regarding issues in the distribution of the monthly newsletter.

### Old Business

- Cycling update:
  - NE Pasco Safety Study (MPO)
  - 2.5 Million (TDP)

Ms. St. Martin explained the MPO was working with an external group to conduct a safety study of the roads to determine what could be done to improve safety.

Chairman Starkey said she had requested a community workshop in the San Antonio area to discuss what was needed and how to move forward.

Ms. St. Martin said she wished to clarify the Council's direction previously on the TDP funds and what would be done with the 2.5 million. She displayed a PowerPoint presentation and spoke extensively regarding wayfinding and amenities, and gateway signage.

- Carry Forward – It was approved by the BCC on July 12, 2016

Mr. Caum explained the BCC approved the roll forward. Staff was moving over to a new system and would be on a spending hold before new purchase orders were created. He noted they had spent all of their special event money.

Discussion followed regarding specific line items and the proposed Wiregrass Sports Complex.

- 2017 – 2020 Tourist Development Plan (TDP)
  - We need to define what a tourist asset is and the future process to qualify for tourism funds.
  - We also need to establish the minimum reserve balance.

Mr. Caum noted as the Tourist Development Plan was updated they would also need to update the Ordinance. He explained the Sports Coordinator Position would be moved into administrative costs and that their indirect costs to the County had increased.

Discussion followed regarding the fund percentages.

- Dick's TOC Agreement update – The agreement was signed by KSE and will be presented on August 9<sup>th</sup> to the BCC.

Mr. Caum said the contract had been signed and would go before the BCC on August 9, 2016.

- NVL Volleyball Event update

Mr. Caum spoke regarding NVL which had presented to the TDC with the TDC agreeing to \$7,000.00 in event sponsorship funds. Staff had multiple contacts with them, and they had not come back once they were told the funds could not be used for monetary awards.

### **New Business**

- New TDC member applications

Mr. Caum reviewed the applications that had been received and recommended Mr. Curtis Beebe who was a restaurateur, Ms. Costello who had a culinary background, or Mr. McDuffie from Zephyrhills.

The Council agreed to take action at the next meeting.

- March – June quarterly treasurer's report

Mr. Caum reviewed the report and noted the collections were above normal.

### **Past/Upcoming Events**

- USBC Bowling – May - Jun
- Skating Artistic Regionals Championship – June 11-14
- Sunshine Shoot-out – June 17-26

Mr. Caum explained Spinnations continued to have flooding issues and that the Artistic Skating event had moved to Orlando.

### **8. Board Member Comments**

Councilman Davis spoke regarding a movement to replace porch lights with a blue light in support for Law Enforcement.

Mr. Gehring thanked the Council for the review of the addendum.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 p.m.



TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 20, 2016

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

Prepared by:   
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