

PINELLAS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

October 21, 2020

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, met in regular session using the Zoom virtual meeting platform at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Pat Gerard, Chair, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair
Russ Kimball, Vice-Chair, Sheraton Sand Key Resort
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor (late arrival)
Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises
Frank Hibbard, City of Clearwater Mayor
Rick Kriseman, City of St. Petersburg Mayor
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.
Charles Prather, The Birchwood Inn
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry
Anthony Satterfield, Alden Suites
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Joanne “Cookie” Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach Mayor

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, Chief Operating Officer
Katie Bridges, Senior Advertising Manager
Leroy Bridges, Vice-President Digital & Communications
Liz McCann, Executive Administrative Assistant
Teri Tuxhorn, Administrative Director
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Other Interested Individuals
Teresa Ribble, Board Reporter

Agenda

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Pat Gerard
- II. CHAIR COMMENTS – Chair Pat Gerard
- III. APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES – August 19, 2020 and September 16, 2020
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE – Steve Hayes
- VI. SUPERBOWL LV DISCUSSION – Steve Hayes
- VII. MARKETING UPDATE – Leroy Bridges and Katie Bridges
 - i. Current effort
 - ii. Future Direction
- VIII. VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT – Steve Hayes
 - A. Tourism Economics Snapshot – August 2020
 - B. Pinellas County Bed Tax – August 2020
- IX. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
- X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS
- XI. ADJOURNMENT

All documents and presentations provided to the Clerk’s Office have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Gerard called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

CHAIR COMMENTS – NONE

MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 19 AND SEPTEMBER 16, 2020 REGULAR MEETINGS – APPROVED

Upon motion by Ms. Moore, seconded by Mr. Williams and carried unanimously, the minutes of the August 19 and September 16 meetings were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NONE

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – FINANCE

Mr. Hayes provided a recap of the Finance Subcommittee meeting held earlier in the morning. He reviewed revenue and expenses as compared to the budget, noting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Mayor Bujalski entered the meeting at 10:05 A.M.

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SUPERBOWL LV DISCUSSION

Mr. Hayes introduced Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee CEO and President Rob Higgins. Mr. Higgins related that the Super Bowl is unique in terms of social and economic impact to the region; that he has prepared three sponsorship options for the Council’s consideration; and that each is a blend of promotional opportunities and marketing visibility for Pinellas County.

In response to query by Mr. Williams, Mr. Higgins indicated that he anticipates the decision on stadium capacity restrictions to be made by the National Football League and local health and public officials; and that COVID-19 data is being regularly monitored. Responding to a comment by Mr. Satterfield, Mr. Higgins confirmed that the \$1.5 million investment recommended in February was modified due to COVID-19 impacts; and that three options were prepared so that the Council has choices for the level of commitment.

Following lengthy discussion pertaining to the three options and a comparison of Pinellas and Tampa investments, Mr. Higgins indicated that a \$5 million investment from Tampa is understandable given that the game will be played there; that overall brand exposure will be equitable; that there is financial support from both the public and private sectors; and that a post-event report will detail how all public monies were spent.

Following queries and discussion by the members, Mr. Hayes related that he requested a review of the items in each option by advertising agency BVK; and that the estimated total value is in excess of \$6.5 million; whereupon, he recommended the \$1 million option.

Chair Gerard noted that the option decided upon must be brought before the BCC for final approval; and that the Council’s recommendation to the BCC should be decided at today’s meeting due to the BCC and Council meeting schedules.

Mayor Kriseman moved, seconded by Mr. Kimball, that the members recommend \$1 million in support; and that Mr. Hayes be granted authority to negotiate event deliverables up to that amount. Following discussion with input by Chair Gerard and Attorney Zas, and upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

MARKETING UPDATE

Current Effort

Mr. Bridges referred to a PowerPoint presentation and provided information regarding current traveler sentiment. He related that while there has been a recent nation-wide decline in consumers ready to travel, data shows that the perception of safe travel has continued to improve; that consumers are open to receiving travel information; and that 43 percent of consumers surveyed intend to spend less on holiday travel this year.

Following comments and queries by Mayor Bujalski and Ms. Moore, Mr. Bridges related that Canadian citizens are permitted to travel by air; that he understands the local transportation implications for Canadian citizens who would typically visit via car; that it is difficult to track economic impact of that group of travelers; and that some Canadian airlines are offering free coverage for healthcare costs related to COVID-19. Mayor Bujalski suggested methods to encourage Canadian travel; that promotional deals through local transportation vendors may be an option; and that any promotions secured be housed on the VSPC website. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Kimball pointed out that the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority has provided reasonable options for hotel guests and staff.

Mr. Bridges announced that the City of St. Petersburg has been named tenth in the *Condé Nast Traveler 2020 Reader's Choice Awards* for the best large cities in the United States.

Ms. Bridges continued the marketing update and played a video titled *Rise to Shine Tourism Industry Involvement*; whereupon, she noted that the video is being used to encourage campaign involvement by local businesses; that 188 local businesses have registered and received collateral items such as face masks and hand sanitizer; and that the *Rise to Shine* digital campaign is also reaching the Tampa and Orlando markets.

Mr. Bridges referred to a PowerPoint presentation pertaining to summer and fall digital marketing campaigns and provided information on the following topics:

- A \$10 million economic impact through usage of first-party data reporting
- Nine million impressions generating nearly \$9 million in hotel bookings from July 1 through September 30
- Launch of Travelzoo campaign

Responding to query by Mr. Satterfield, Mr. Hayes related that visitor spending outside of the lodging sector is significant; and that higher retail and restaurant spending may be attributed to people visiting for the day.

Future Direction

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Bridges related that a winter recovery campaign is planned for launch in mid-November; that data is being utilized to identify in-state and out-of-state markets and timing for the campaign; that all forms of media will be utilized for promotional purposes; that the focus will be on the beaches and opportunities for outdoor activities; and that the budget is \$4 million.

Mr. Bridges provided an update regarding VSPC’s transition to Google Data Studio and related that one of its features is data report generation; and that reports containing data sets will be automatically and regularly sent to Council members via email.

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Mayor Kriseman left the meeting at 11:47 A.M.

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VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

Mr. Hayes reported that VSPC’s sales team is currently in Orlando for an in-person meeting planner conference; that the leisure travel team will be attending an Orlando conference in November; that teams are also still attending virtual trade shows; and that he would like to discuss strategic planning at the next TDC meeting.

Mr. Hayes noted that VSPC is working with market research agency Destination Analysts to develop tracking and forecasting data pertaining to travel to our area by *snowbirds*; that past measurements have not been attempted due to the length of their stays; and that he intends to work with the Property Appraiser’s Office to obtain information on non-homesteaded homeowners and homeowners with addresses outside of Florida.

October 21, 2020

Tourism Economics Snapshot – August 2020 and Pinellas County Bed Tax – August 2020

Mr. Hayes referred to the *Tourism Economic Snapshot* and stated that vacation rentals are doing better than hotels; that there appears to be a slow climb in a positive direction; and that bed tax was discussed in the Financial Subcommittee report.

Mr. Hayes related that the Travel and Tourism Research Association broadcast its *Outlook for Travel 2021* forum from The Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS – NONE

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 A.M.