

Tourist Development Council
Elite Events Funding Committee
Pinellas County
June 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC) Elite Events Funding Committee met at 9:00 AM on this date in the Magnolia Room at the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida.

Present

Dave Eggers, TDC Chair, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises
Melinda Pletcher, City of St. Pete Beach Commissioner
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, VSPC Chief Operating Officer
Craig Campbell, VSPC Community and Brand Engagement Director
Liz McCann, VSPC Executive Administrative Assistant
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Teresa Ribble, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE/ROLL CALL

Chair Eggers called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM and thanked the Committee members for volunteering their time for this process. He noted that Ms. Rodriguez would not be present; that she evaluated and scored the applications prior to today's meeting; and that Attorney Zas indicated that her scores may be utilized.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

No report was provided by the County Attorney.

APPLICATION REVIEW – ELITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Ramsberger explained that the scoring recommendations determined today will be presented to the full TDC; and that the recommendations of the TDC will be presented to the BCC for final funding approval.

Fast Track Applications

Mr. Ramsberger related that the following applications qualify for the Fast Track provision; and that these events have been funded for at least the last five years:

Valspar Championship (funding request: \$125,000)
Clearwater Beach Day & Outback Bowl (funding request: \$75,000)
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival (funding request: \$75,000)
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals (funding request: \$75,000)
Clearwater Jazz Holiday (funding request: \$75,000)
28th Annual Fall King of the Beach (funding request: \$25,000)

Mr. Williams noted that he would not score the Valspar Championship Event due to a conflict of interest and, in accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Conduct Law, a Memorandum of Voting Conflict form has been filed and made a part of the record; whereupon, Mr. Henderson moved, seconded by Mayor Bujalski, that the applications stated be approved for evaluation bypass consideration. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Category One Events

PELICAN LPGA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (FUNDING REQUEST: \$125,000)

In response to queries by members, Outlyr Vice President Kyle Draper elaborated on the event's marketing plan, estimated attendance, preliminary ticket sales, and charitable donations, and noted that the typical commitment from the LPGA is on a three-year basis.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mr. Henderson, 795; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 705. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 750.

Category Two Events

ENCHANT CHRISTMAS ST. PETERSBURG (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

Responding to queries by Messrs. Henderson and Williams, Enchant Christmas St. Petersburg General Manager Nancy Hutson discussed community support, total attendees at last year's event, and anticipated attendance this year.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the December 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Ms. Pletcher, 775; Mayor Bujalski, 700; Mr. Williams, 775; Mr. Henderson, 805; and Ms. Rodriguez, 930. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 797.5.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARADE WEEKEND (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

In response to a query by Mr. Henderson, Advantage Village Academy Office Manager Anthony Hart explained that event sponsors are promoted online and during the parade; that VSPC would have the opportunity to provide a float for the parade; and that banners for each sponsor are located along the parade route.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the January 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 775; Mr. Henderson, 705; Ms. Pletcher, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 740. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 761.7.

ST PETE PRIDEFEST AND PARADE (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

St Pete Pride representative Tiffany Freisberg introduced herself and noted that next year will mark 20 years for the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the June 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Mr. Williams, 800; Mr. Henderson, 775; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 1000; and Ms. Rodriguez, 925. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 854.2.

Category Three Events

DTSP SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Responding to queries by Messrs. Henderson and Williams, Cox Media Group Tampa Director of Branding and Programming Dan Connelly discussed sponsorship benefits and the increase in room night projections over last year's event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 725; Mr. Henderson, 735; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 650; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 805. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 735.8.

12TH ANNUAL SANDING OVATIONS MASTERS CUP (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

City of Treasure Island Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Justin Tramble introduced himself and noted that the event is international and held on the beach at Treasure Island.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Ms. Pletcher, 800; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 850; Mr. Henderson, 865; and Ms. Rodriguez, 905. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 836.7.

ST. PETE BIKEFEST (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

OCC Roadhouse and Museum Manager Keith Overton introduced himself and provided historical and economic impact information.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 900; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 800; Mr. Henderson, 850; Ms. Pletcher, 900; and Ms. Rodriguez, 900. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 866.7.

GASPARILLA BOWL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

In response to a request by Chair Eggers, ESPN Events – Gasparilla Bowl Executive Director Scott Glaser addressed how the event benefits various local charitable organizations.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the December 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Mr. Williams, 900; Mr. Henderson, 735; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 775; and Ms. Rodriguez, 680. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 785.8.

FESTIVALS OF SPEED (FUNDING REQUEST: (\$25,000)

Responding to queries by Mr. Henderson, Festivals of Speed Founder and CEO Joe Sabatini indicated that the event will be marketed outside of Pinellas County; that VSPC's logo can be present on all promotional items; and that free tickets and sponsorships are given to charities and businesses.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the January 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mr. Williams, 800; Ms. Pletcher, 775; Mayor Bujalski, 650; Mr. Henderson, 805; and Ms. Rodriguez, 830. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 768.3.

DUNEDIN HIGHLAND GAMES AND FESTIVAL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Mr. Ramsberger, with input by Attorney Zas, related that this event qualifies as either a Category Three or as a cultural vendor under Category Four; that consideration under Category Four is advantageous to the applicant since there is no room night requirement; and that, in this case, staff placed the application into Category Three.

Following discussion, Chair Eggers' indicated that there is consensus among the members to score the application under Category Three; whereupon, Dunedin Highland Games Historian Dr. Patricia Snair responded to queries by Chair Eggers and Ms. Pletcher, clarifying the timing and length of the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the March/April 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 850; Mr. Williams, 750; Mr. Henderson, 750; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 900; and Ms. Rodriguez, 600. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 766.7.

29TH ANNUAL SPRING KING OF THE BEACH (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Old Salt Fishing Foundation representative Amy Verdensky introduced herself and provided brief comments regarding the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the April 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 700; Mr. Henderson, 790; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 745. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 760.

Category Four Events

ST PETE RUN FEST (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Referring to the TDC's definition of a cultural heritage event, Attorney Zas suggested that the members make a determination as to whether this event meets the definition. Mr. Ramsberger clarified that category placement is based upon the information supplied in the application.

At the request of Chair Eggers, EndorFUN Sports Chief Operations Officer Ryan Jordan provided information regarding the nature of the event, including statistical data and

marketing efforts. Responding to comments and queries by the members, Mr. Jordan indicated that the event is a festival celebrating St. Petersburg; and that the race is one piece of the event.

Lengthy discussion ensued, with Attorney Zas noting that the cultural heritage category was created to fund events with ties to the history of the community and provided the Martin Luther King, Jr., event as an example. Mr. Williams related that the event could be scored at face value and then discussed further at the TDC meeting. Ms. Pletcher indicated that she believes the event will be difficult to score in this category, and Mayor Bujalski concurred; whereupon, a motion was made by Ms. Pletcher, and seconded by Mayor Bujalski, that the St Pete Run Fest would not qualify as a cultural event. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Henderson recommended that despite the decision not to recommend funding to the TDC for this event, VSPC should still provide some form of event support, as has been done in the past.

LOCALTOPIA, "A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF ALL THINGS LOCAL" (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Keep Saint Petersburg Local Founder and Executive Director Olga Bof appeared and provided information regarding the scale of the event and its significance to the community.

In response to a query by Chair Eggers, Mr. Ramsberger related that the event was funded as a cultural event last year, and discussion ensued; whereupon, Mr. Henderson moved, seconded by Mr. Williams, to consider Localtopia as a cultural event. Following further discussion, and upon call for the vote, the motion carried 3 to 2, with Mayor Bujalski and Ms. Pletcher casting the dissenting votes.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the February 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 700; Mr. Henderson, 725; Ms. Pletcher, 600; Mayor Bujalski, 700; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 550. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 670.8.

Applications Not Meeting Minimum Criteria

BOOKS AT THE BEACH CONVENTION (FUNDING REQUEST: \$10,000)

Mr. Ramsberger indicated that the application failed to meet the minimum requirements for committee review; and that the applicant has been notified.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Deviating from the agenda and at the request of Chair Eggers, Mr. Hayes indicated that he would like to schedule a workshop in the fall to discuss further refinement of the Elite Events funding process; that an email has been sent to TDC members requesting input regarding the strategic plan; and that he is in communication with County staff, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the State Emergency Operations Center, to remain apprised of developments regarding Red Tide; whereupon, he responded to queries by the members, with input by Mr. Ramsberger.

Responding to a query by Mr. Williams, Mr. Ramsberger indicated that TDC members have been provided an analysis of economic impact for previously funded Elite Events at an earlier TDC meeting; and that staff is prepared to discuss the information, when needed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 AM.