

PINELLAS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

June 20, 2018

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 in the Clerk's Fourth Floor Conference Room, 315 Court Street, Fifth Floor, Clearwater, Florida, on this date at 9:01 A.M. with the following members present:

Kenneth T. Welch, BCC Chairman, Chair  
Doug Bevis, City of Oldsmar Mayor  
Timothy Bogott, TradeWinds Island Resorts  
Jen Carlisle, Clearwater Marine Aquarium  
George Cretekos, City of Clearwater Mayor  
Charlie Gerdes, City of St. Petersburg Councilmember  
Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises  
Joanne "Cookie" Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach Mayor  
Anthony Satterfield, Alden Suites  
Eric Waltz, Sandpearl Resort

Not Present

Russ Kimball, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Vice-Chair  
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry

Others Present

David Downing, Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO  
Tim Ramsberger, Chief Operating Officer  
Teri Tuxhorn, Administrative Director  
Craig Campbell, Senior Activation and Promotion Manager  
Sarah Kirchberg, Senior Business Development Manager  
Liz McCann, Executive Administrative Assistant  
Dave Eggers, County Commissioner  
Charlie Justice, County Commissioner  
Janet C. Long, County Commissioner  
Karen Williams Seel, County Commissioner  
Paul Sacco, Assistant County Administrator  
James Abernathy, Office of Management and Budget  
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney  
Dennis Long, Consultant  
Brad Miller, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) CEO  
Other Interested Individuals  
Michael Schmidt, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

Agenda

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Kenneth T. Welch
- II. CHAIR COMMENTS
- III. APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES – Meeting of April 18, 2018
- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- V. COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT – Michael A. Zas
- VI. ELITE EVENT FUNDING – Gasparilla Bowl
- VII. PRESENTATIONS
  - A. Transportation Overview – Whit Blanton
- VIII. STAFF REPORTS – None – All Department reports are on file at Pinellascvb.com
- IX. VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT – David Downing
  - A. Tourism Economics Snapshot (Pinellas County Bed Tax)
    - i. April 2018
- X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS
- 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 Welch called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M. At his request, those in attendance introduced themselves.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Welch related that the meeting will be followed by a work session, and reviewed matters to be discussed.

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 18, 2018 MEETING – APPROVED

Upon motion by Mayor Bevis, seconded by Mr. Bogott and carried unanimously, the minutes of the April 18, 2018 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hannah Beggins noted that she is a student of St. Petersburg College and is completing her final semester coursework in the Public Policy and Administration Program. Referring to a document titled *Emergency Response Plan: Active Shooter*, she related that her capstone project has been to develop a crisis and emergency management plan for active shooter situations at hotel properties; whereupon, responding to query by Chair Welch, she agreed to provide a digital copy of her plan to Intergovernmental Liaison Brian Lowack, and brief discussion ensued.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Zas discussed how state statute has been amended to allow for expanded uses of the Tourist Development Tax, indicating that one of those expanded uses is public facilities, including transportation facilities; and that discussion will take place during the work session regarding how applications will be received and processed on a case-by-case basis.

ELITE EVENT FUNDING – GASPARILLA BOWL

Mr. Downing discussed a funding issue regarding the Gasparilla Bowl, reporting that the County Attorney's Office has advised that a material change has been made to the event, post application; and that he is bringing the item before the members for direction regarding how to proceed.

In response to queries by Chair Welch, Mr. Ramsberger related that the members had voted to award the event up to \$75,000; that the applicant subsequently changed the venue from Tropicana Field to Raymond James Stadium; and that while the corporate office did provide notice of its intentions, no amendment to the application has taken place; whereupon, he indicated that the entire package had been pulled from the County Commission agenda; and that all of the events are currently on hold, and discussion ensued.

Councilmember Gerdes moved, seconded by Mayor Kennedy, that the members recommend that the County Commission approve the Elite Event Funding applications with the exception of the Gasparilla Bowl application. Following discussion with input by Chair Welch, Mayor Cretekos, and Attorney Zas, and upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Welch stated that he will not support the Gasparilla Bowl application, noting that it contains a material change; that it is basically a new application; and that it was submitted after the deadline; whereupon, Messrs. Henderson and Satterfield opined that the application should be reviewed by the members and not just summarily dismissed.

In response to comments and queries by the members, Gasparilla Bowl Executive Director Brett Dulaney presented information regarding the event moving from Pinellas County to Hillsborough County, relating that he could compile and provide statistical data in the near future with respect to room nights, event attendance, and similar matters.

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Ms. Carlisle left the meeting at 9:26 A.M.

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Councilmember Gerdes moved, seconded by Mr. Bogott, that the item be placed on the next TDC agenda in order for the applicant to provide additional information and a revised application. Following discussion and upon call for the vote, the motion carried by a vote of 7 to 2, with Chair Welch and Mayor Cretekos dissenting, and brief discussion ensued.

PRESENTATION

Transportation Overview

Following introduction by Chair Welch, Commissioner Long related that she is speaking for PSTA, as its Chair, Forward Pinellas, and the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA). She discussed the opening of state statute regarding expanded uses of the Tourist Development Tax and how the federal government and the Florida Department of Transportation are poised to designate millions of dollars to TBARTA to implement transportation solutions for the region; whereupon, she related that 34 million people are projected to visit Pinellas County over the next five years; and that the members can facilitate transportation solutions by demonstrating leadership and vision.

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Ms. Carlisle returned to the meeting at 9:31 A.M.

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Mr. Blanton provided background information regarding the item, and referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Investing in our Transportation Network*, discussed the following:

- Why Forward Pinellas?
- Integrating Land Use and Transportation
- Tourism, Transportation, and Land Use
- Changes to Tax Law; Law Requirements
- What May This Mean for Pinellas County?
- A Growing County and Increasing Tourism
- More Congestion
- Transportation Investments
- Visit St. Pete Clearwater Survey
- Connecting Workers to Jobs
- Pinellas County 2018 Citizen Values Survey
- Multimodal Transportation
- Transit Currently Supports Tourism
- Benefits of Improved Transit
- Building a Robust and Connected Transit Network
- Next Steps

Chair Welch provided further information regarding the opening of state statute for expanded uses of the Tourist Development Tax. He related that the TDC has the authority to approve funding requests related to transit; and that the 60-percent/40-percent marketing versus capital split approved by the members is included in the legislation; whereupon, in response to comments and queries by Mr. Henderson and Mayor Bevis, Mr. Miller discussed various options to assist local residents, hotel employees, and beach visitors traveling throughout the coastal communities, and Mr. Blanton presented information regarding various ways to get visitors to their final destinations.

In response to comments and queries by Messrs. Satterfield and Waltz, Mr. Blanton discussed the percentage of funding that the federal and state governments will provide regarding capital and operating costs, and related that the Tourist Development Tax will primarily be used for capital costs, not operating costs, and discussed the importance of catalyst projects; whereupon, Attorney Zas related that no more than 70 percent of the eligible costs for any one project can be covered by the Tourist Development Tax.

In response to comments and queries by Councilmember Gerdes and Mr. Bogott, Mr. Ramsberger related that the nexus between transit and tourism will be discussed further during the work session, and Mr. Blanton provided information regarding the 60/40 split and an eventual request for funding by PSTA; whereupon, Mayor Kennedy reported that a research project is underway that will determine the impact of extending the Clearwater Ferry route to reduce beach traffic, and Mr. Downing provided input.

Ms. Carlisle discussed the importance of determining return on investment, and Mayor Cretekos related that because it is doubtful that tourists will ride public transportation to the beaches, ways need to be found to encourage local residents to utilize transit to reduce traffic congestion, and Mr. Blanton provided input; whereupon, Commissioner Long discussed how a small amount of TDC money could be bonded and combined with state and federal dollars to support transportation solutions for both residents and tourists, relating that current transit systems are changing quickly; and that the future of transit is exciting and full of opportunity.

Commissioner Welch thanked Commissioner Long for bringing the item forward, indicating that the presentation was a great introduction to what will be a long-term conversation. He related that while it is important to understand the law that has been passed, it is equally important to realize that there are funding capacity limitations associated with the Tourist Development Tax; whereupon, he briefly discussed the upcoming Homestead Exemption Referendum.

#### STAFF REPORTS – NONE

#### VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

Mr. Downing discussed the importance of providing transit alternatives to Pinellas County visitors; whereupon, he provided information regarding St. Pete Pride, reporting that it is now an Elite Event; that VSPC is the prime sponsor; and that his team had two floats in the parade and a large presence at the street fair.

#### Advertising/Digital Media Updates

Mr. Downing displayed video of summertime advertising campaign placements and a multi-tiered campaign with Home Shopping Network.

#### Tourism Economics Snapshot (Pinellas County Bed Tax) – April 2018

Referring to the *Tourism Economics Snapshot, June TDC Meeting*, Mr. Downing reviewed the data for rooms sold, average daily rate, and revenue per available room, reporting that over \$6 million in Tourist Development Taxes were collected in April.

#### MEMBER COMMENTS

Chair Welch stated that the TDC Work Session will take place following a five-minute break.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:29 A.M.