



**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AGENDA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019 @ 2:00 P.M.**

Councilmember Linda Kinchen – City of Sebastian
Councilmember Harry Howle – City of Vero Beach
Jennifer Bates – Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations
Will Collins – Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations
Keith Kite – Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations
Amanda Smalley – Interested in Tourist Development, Not an Owner/Operator
Steve Hayes – Interested in Tourist Development, Not an Owner/Operator
Karen Mechling – Interested in Tourist Development, Not an Owner/Operator

Indian River County Commissioner Susan Adams, District 1, Chairman

County Commission Chamber, County Administration Building A
1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida 32960

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1. Call to Order
 2. Pledge
 3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda
 4. Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2018.....
 5. Tourist Tax Revenues Update – Kristin Daniels, Director, Management & Budget
 6. Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce Marketing Update – Nicole Capp-Holbrook, Tourism Director
 7. Indian River Chamber of Commerce Marketing Update – Allison McNeal, Tourism Director
 8. Dodgertown Historic Status Update – IRC Historical Society – Ruth Stanbridge
 9. Social Media Campaign Update – Cultural Council – Barbara Hoffman
 10. Other Matters
 11. Follow Up to Discussion from May 16th, 2018
 12. Tourism Study
 13. Adjournment

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, June 19th, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.

Except for those matters specifically exempted under State Statute and Local Ordinance, the Committee shall provide an opportunity for public comment prior to the undertaking by the Committee of any action on the agenda. Public comment shall also be heard on any proposition which the Committee is to take action which was either not on the agenda or distributed to the public prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Anyone who may wish to appeal any decision which may be made at this meeting will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence on which the appeal is based. Anyone who needs a special accommodation for this meeting must contact the County's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator at 772-226-1223 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (TDC)

The Indian River County (IRC) Tourist Development Council (TDC) met at **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 5, 2018**, in the County Administration Building, Building A, Commission Chambers, 1801 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting; review the agenda and the Minutes on the IRC website – <http://www.ircgov.com/Boards/TDC/2018.htm>.

Present were: **Chairperson Susan Adams**, Linda Kitchen, City of Sebastian Representative; **Harry Howle**, City of Vero Beach Representative; **Jennifer Bates**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Keith Kite**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Will Collins**, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative; **Steve Hayes**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative; **Karen Mechling**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative; and **Amanda Smalley**, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative.

Others Present were: **Jason Brown**, County Administrator; **Mike Zito**, Assistant County Administrator; **Beth Mitchell** and **Nicole Capp Holbrook**, Sebastian River Chamber of Commerce; **Marty Smithson** and **Michelle Malyn**, Sebastian Inlet District; **Allison McNeal**, Indian River Chamber of Commerce; **Laura Moss**, City of Vero Beach; **Ruth Stanbridge**, Indian River County Historical Society; **Kristin Daniels**, Management & Budget Director; **Heather Stapelton**, Heritage Center; **Barbara Hoffman**, Cultural Council; **Kevin Greene**, Treasure Coast Sports Commission; and **Misty L. Pursel**, Recording Secretary.

Call to Order and Welcome

Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m., at which time it was determined there was a quorum present, and led the pledge of allegiance.

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

There were none.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Howle, seconded by Ms. Bates, the Council unanimously (9-0) approved the Agenda as presented.

Approval of the Minutes of August 22, 2018

Ms. Jennifer Bates, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative, reported her attendance at the August 22, 2018 meeting was in person and not via telephone conference.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Howle, seconded by Mrs. Kinchen, the Council unanimously (9-0) approved the August 22, 2018 Minutes, as corrected.

Tourist Tax Revenues Update – Kristin Daniels, Director, Management & Budget

Mrs. Kristin Daniels, Director, Management & Budget presented a PowerPoint presentation of the Tourist Tax Report Highlights for the fiscal year ending 2018, a copy is on file in the Commission Office. She explained Indian River County ("the County"), levying four cents of Tourist Tax: the first 1.5 cents allocated for tourism; the second 1.5 cents was allocated for beaches and the fourth cents was allocated to Dodgertown.

Mrs. Daniels explained September's collections revenue was down 2.2 percent, or \$3,367 when compared to September, 2017; however, the year ended with 11 percent, or \$292,205 increase, over last fiscal year. She stated revenues exceeded the 2018 budget by 19.6 percent, or \$484,840. She provided a revenue comparison by month for the last two fiscal years, showing consistently higher revenue each month with the exception of April, July and September, which were down slightly.

Mrs. Daniels showed the 2017/2018 revenues compared to the budget, wherein the actual collections exceeded the budget each month, ending the year with 19.6 percent over budget. She provided a monthly comparison for the last three fiscal years showing March as the strongest month and September generally showing as the weakest month.

Mrs. Daniels provided a ten-year history of Tourist Tax collections, showing an increase each year, with 2017/2018 collections more than doubling the 2008/2009 collections at 127 percent increase. She stated the current fiscal year ended strong; however, the Red Tide in late October and early November did impact Indian River County revenues; wherein those figures would be reflected in upcoming monthly reports.

Mr. Keith Kite, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative, requested a copy of the approved 2018/19 budget, which begun October 1, 2018.

Mrs. Karen Mechling, Interested in Tourist Accommodations (not Operator) Representative asked when the budget was met and there was an excess of funds, where did the funds go? Mrs. Daniels responded the excess funds stay within the Tourist Tax Fund, for occasions such as the Red Tide issue, whereby revenue collection may not meet budget demands.

MLB Dodgertown Update – Jason Brown, County Administrator

Mr. Jason Brown, County Administrator, provided a basic update with the status of Dodgertown and Major League Baseball (MLB). He reminded the Council Vero Town, LLC under the guidance of Peter O'Malley, has been running Dodgertown as an amateur sports venue since 2011. He continued Mr. O'Malley was over 80 years old and had been

searching for a long-term transition plan, as he wished to secure the future of historic Dodgertown in Vero Beach.

Mr. Brown reported Mr. O'Malley had facilitated MLB and the County coming together with a potential agreement, whereby the specifics of the lease agreement language included MLB basically stepping into the shoes of Mr. O'Malley's organization. He continued this collaborative would take MLB to the next level with their amazing marketing reach and exposure.

Mr. Brown conveyed the basic terms of the deal included deferred maintenance items from over the years the County would be responsible to take care of upfront, with MLB making a significant investment in improving the facility, being eligible for reimbursement by the County for up to 50 percent of the costs of those improvements. He continued once those improvements were completed (anticipated 3-4 years), there would be an on-going renewal and replacement account; however, it was anticipated all of the money would be depleted by the time the improvements were completed and all of the future utility maintenance repairs, renewals and replacements would be the responsibility of MLB.

Mr. Brown mentioned some of the initial improvements MLB was anticipating included an indoor training facility to maintain training and activity at Dodgertown year round. He estimated this improvement would be a 5 Million Dollar investment.

Mr. Brown also mentioned MLB was anticipating to re-doing the seating bowl at Holman Stadium to continue having the bigger events. He reported the Lease was expected to be brought before the Board of County Commissioners at the December 18, 2018 meeting.

Mr. Brown said MLB's interest was to continue running the current programs, primarily in the summer such as spring training, President's Day Tournament, Labor Day Tournaments, Umpire Training, as the operator of the facility. He informed the Council there was not any plans for additional hotel rooms beyond the current 89 rooms.

Mr. Keith Kite, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative, said he wished to have Council discussion regarding whether they wished to take any position of supporting the County in their pursuit of purchasing the old Dodgertown golf course property, as a valuable resource within the growth of sports tourism.

Chairperson Adams suggested the Dodgertown golf course property was not available to the County at this time; wherein Mr. Brown stated the conversations between the County and the City of Vero Beach may come back for discussion at a later date.

Mr. Brown mentioned the terms of the Agreement with the City of Vero Beach and the County have recognized a requirement for the County to maintain 2,000 parking spaces; however, should anything happen with the Dodgertown golf course property, the

County would continue to be obligated to provide 2,000 parking spaces. He pointed out there were limited options in the vicinity, so it was likely future discussion may take place.

Ms. Jennifer Bates, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Representative asked how would it work with the current parking issues within the County should the City of Vero Beach decide to sell the property, after the County's and the MLB's investment and should it not be resolved prior to putting it all together.

Mr. Brown responded the County can only buy what the City of Vero Beach wants to sell to it and he would continue to reach out to the City Manager of the city of Vero Beach. He added in recent conversations with the City Manager of the City of Vero Beach, he had indicated there were no current plans for the City of Vero Beach to jeopardize the County's contract with MLB.

Ms. Bates asked about the green space where there was parking in the grass at the entrance of Dodgertown. Mr. Brown responded the triangular piece of property on Aviation Boulevard, at the entrance of Dodgertown was not owned by the City of Vero Beach, nor the County; it was owned by a private entity. He continued permissions to utilize this area for parking was between the property owner and Historic Dodgertown and was contingent upon Dodgertown maintaining the grass being mowed. He noted the mentioned property was currently being offered for sale and should it sell, the parking would then not be available to the County for parking.

Ms. Bates asked how many parking spaces were available at the facility. Mr. Brown responded currently there were a few hundred parking spaces on the facility property and with a little clearing of the area, added spaces would become available to the County; however, nowhere close to the 2,000 spaces per the Agreement.

Mr. Brown relayed in addition to the golf course property, the City of Vero Beach owned two other pieces of airport property, across from Aviation Boulevard, that should the golf course property go away, those properties could be utilized for parking; however, it would not equivalent to 2,000 spaces.

Mr. Brown confirmed the County's current commitment to Dodgertown was \$325,000 annually for maintenance, 1 percent from tourist tax pays towards the bonds and \$75,000 annually for marketing coming from the tourist tax. He explained the proposed structured plan was, the \$75,000 annually from the tourist tax would go away and in place of the current \$325,000 annually, it would be \$800,000 annually, taken from sales and tourist tax revenues for the first five years, wherein the County would provide 50% reimbursement for the initial facilities upgrades, and from years 6 through 10, the annual amount would drop to \$400,000 annually for maintenance.

Mr. Brown relayed the financial plan was structured to utilize sales and tourist taxes to fund this enterprise. He explained when the bonds were paid off in Year 2021, the County would use a half of a penny of the fourth cent of tourist tax, leaving half of a cent available for other purposes such as tourism development.

Mr. Brown shared the plan was structured to fund the \$800,000 annual maintenance costs with a mixture of the County's one-cent sales tax, which could be used for infrastructure and some of the tourist tax. He continued the County planned to pay off a portion of the bonds secured by the fourth cent tourist tax, freeing up the fourth penny for a couple years, which would cover the bulk of the \$800,000 payment for the first three years, then in Year 2022, with the bonds paid off, the County would use only a half of a cent, freeing up the other half of a cent for other purposes. He advised the plan was for MLB to take over the Lease on January 2, 2019.

Indian River Chamber of Commerce Post Red Tide Marketing Update – Allison McNeal, Tourism Director

Ms. Allison McNeal, Indian River Chamber of Commerce, (IRCOC) presented a PowerPoint, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. She provided an update on the Tourism Recovery Grant Program for Red Tide and reviewed the stipulations of the grant and provided insight on two out-of-state commercial campaigns having been started and in progress. She advised the IRCOC was also working with Atlanta Magazine for a custom multi-platform campaign.

Ms. McNeal referenced the Quarter 1/Quarter 2 Media Plan presented at the last TDC meeting and confirmed IRCOC continued working on the plan; however, adding the Red Tide Assistance Grant, which was planned to be submitted by the end of the week. She mentioned surveys were sent out to local businesses; wherein the surveys collected depict the impacts were well over One Million Dollars in 15 days. Chairperson Adams added according to the Smith Travel Report, the County was down 18 percent in occupancy, just in hotels; not including the bed and breakfast type establishments and the seasonal rentals.

Centennial Celebration Update – Marty Smithson, Sebastian Inlet Tax District

Mr. Marty Smithson, Sebastian Inlet Tax District, presented a PowerPoint entitled, "Sebastian Inlet District 1919-2019", a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office, providing an overview of the past 100 years. He summarized some of the big plans for the promotional campaign to celebrate 100 years of the Sebastian Inlet District, which was planned to launch on May 23, 2019, to include two events at the Sebastian Inlet State Park, an educational lecturer series, community and media partners, standing banner historical displays, a coffee table book, t-shirts and other promotional items.

Other Matters:

a. **2019 Meeting Dates**

A brief discussion ensued regarding 2019 meeting dates for the TDC: March 13, 2019, June 19, 2019, September 18, 2019 and December 18, 2019.

ON MOTION BY Mrs. Kinchen, seconded by Mrs. Mechling, the Meeting Dates for 2019 were unanimously (9-0) approved by the Council.

b. Discussion & Update on Vacation Rental Policies & Procedures

Mr. Kite mentioned an Oregon County's policies and procedures for their vacation rentals, with an idea to equalize the footing and maintain the neighborhood safety with a uniform package to collect the sales tax.

Mr. Brown provided an update and status of Indian River County's Vacation Rental Policies and Procedures. He explained the County's Ordinance had certain limitations on vacation rentals; however, what can be regulated was very limited based upon Florida State law.

Mr. Brown continued from a compliance standpoint, there was a \$250 registration fee covering three years, providing the initial inspection for various things such as fire extinguishers, etc. He advised the registrars were contacted by the Clerk of the Court to ensure the registrars' awareness for the remission of the tourist and sales taxes to the State of Florida, or to the Clerk of the Court. He further advised in order to further assist with compliance, the County procured a provider, I-Compass, to provide a service to review various websites to find county-wide vacation rental advertisements, which helps the Clerk of Court ensure proper tourist taxes were being paid.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairperson Adams adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.