

## **TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

There was a meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Tourist Development Council (TDC) on Wednesday, December 3, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the County Administration Building, 1801 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Building A, Vero Beach, Florida.

Present were Chairman Wesley S. Davis, County Commissioner; Members: Sheryl Koenes, and Kathryn Beatty-Self, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Appointees; Susan Hunt, Vice Mayor Jim Hill, Sebastian Municipal Officer; and Mayor Susan Adams, Interested in Tourist Development Appointees.

Absent was Jon Bates, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations (unexcused); Councilmember Debra Fromang, Vero Beach Municipal Officer; and Ervin Roberts, Interested in Tourist Development Appointee (both excused).

Also present were IRC Staff: Peter D. O'Bryan, Commissioner, District 4; Jason Brown, Office of Management and Budget Director, Bob Keating, Community Development Director, Bill Schutt, Senior Planner and Misty L. Horton, Commissioner Assistant, District 1. Others present: Penny Chandler, Tom Colucci, Rich Nalbandian, Councilmember Bill Fish, Lori Burns, Rebecca Rickey, Nicole Holbrook, Mary Jayne Kelly and Scott Carson.

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Wesley S. Davis called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**ON MOTION BY Mayor Adams, SECONDED BY Chairman Davis, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the December 3, 2008 agenda with no additions or deletions, as submitted.**

### **Approval of Minutes of the September 24, 2008 Meeting**

**ON MOTION BY Mayor Adams, SECONDED BY Vice Mayor Hill, the members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the September 24, 2008 meeting minutes as submitted. (2:01:10)**

### **Tourist Tax Revenues Updates**

Mr. Jason Brown, IRC Office of Management and Budget Director, reviewed the Tourist Tax Report Highlights with revenue comparison by month for Fiscal Years 2006/2007 through 2007/2008, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. He explained the September revenues were down approximately 33%, from the same month last year. Mr. Brown stated this was not a big surprise as we are experiencing a real weakness in the economy locally and on the national level. Mr. Brown advised the year-to-date revenues for September, which was the end of the fiscal year, were down 0.23%, largely due to the year beginning stronger than it finished.

### **Budget Updates** (2:04:32)

Mr. Brown reviewed with the Committee the decline in budget revenues from a pro-rated budget by approximately 19%; however, the year-to-date estimated budgeted revenue numbers were accomplished by exceeding the budget by \$434.00. He mentioned roughly \$1,495,000.00 was collected for fiscal year 2007/2008, which was about \$3,000.00 from the prior year.

He referred to the comparison for revenues and expenditures by fund; looking at the page entitled "Tourist Tax Fund 119 Revenues and Expense" where it was indicated \$659,000.00 in revenues was collected for the fiscal year and spent approximately \$585,000.00; leaving a surplus of \$74,000.00 for the year.

Mr. Brown explained the Beach Restoration budget and noted the total revenue was \$8.7 million; obviously not all tourist tax. The tourist tax is approximately \$600,000.00 reflective of the 1.5 cents which goes towards beach restoration, along with grants from the State of approximately \$7 million to fund some of the major beach renourishment projects.

Mr. Brown summarized the spring training Dodgertown bonds as a holding fund for accumulating the revenues used to pay back the Dodgertown bonds made up of the \$500,000.00 per year from the State, a portion of the local ½ cent sales tax the County receives and one of the four pennies of tourist tax in the payment of the debt on the Dodgertown facility.

**Discussion with EDC representatives concerning the Economic District Guidelines under the Indian River County Comprehensive Plan (2:27:07)**

Mr. Scott Carson, Chairman of the Economic Development Council (EDC), provided a handout entitled “Indian River County 2020 Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 5 Economic Development Element,” a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. He explained the EDC was in the process of reviewing objectives and elements of the Plan and expressed discernment regarding Objective 6: Tourism Development as not a responsibility for EDC and requested TDC to review the element for possible elimination in the EDC evaluation.

Ms. Beth Mitchell, Sebastian Chamber of Commerce and Ms. Penny Chandler, Indian River County Chamber of Commerce, offered to independently create and facilitate a taskforce for an opportunity to expand on the tourism portion of the economic development element of the comprehensive plan.

Mr. Bob Keating, Community Development Director, volunteered to research and provide technical assistance to define policy for the taskforce.

**ON MOTION BY Vice Mayor Hill, SECONDED BY Mayor Adams, the members voted unanimously (6-0) for staff to assist the independent taskforce with research and technical assistance to amend the economic development element of the comprehensive plan in July 2009. (2:36:10)**

### **Other Matters**

Chairman Davis announced the availability of the Cultural Event Planner by the Cultural Council.

Ms. Rebecca Rickey, Vero Heritage, Inc. mentioned December 15, 2008, will kick off the "Adopt a Window program" for restoration work on the 56 wood frame windows of their building.

Ms. Mary Jayne Kelly, Cultural Council offered posters of the image on the cover of the Cultural Event Planner was available and on sale in their offices.

Mr. Brown disclosed should another agreement not be reached for the operation of the Dodgertown facility, the County would utilize tourism tax dollars fund balance reserves for the dormant maintenance on a temporary standby basis beginning January 1, 2009.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.