

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Indian River County (IRC) Tourist Development Council (TDC) met on Wednesday, May 27, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers of the County Administration Building, 1801 27th Street, Building A, Vero Beach, Florida.

You may review the agenda and the minutes on the IRC website www.ircgov.com/Boards/TDC/2015.

Members Present were:

Chairman Joseph E. Flescher, Indian River County Commissioner, District 2

Susan Adams, Mayor, City of Fellsmere

Keith Kite, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodation Appointee

Randy Old, Councilmember, City of Vero Beach

Steve Hayes, BCC Appointee

Jim Hill, Councilmember, City of Sebastian

Karen Mechling, Interested in Tourist Development not an Owner/Operator (2:40)

Members Absent were:

Jennifer Bates, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Appointee (Excused)

Scott DiPietro, Owner/Operator Tourist Accommodations Appointee (Excused)

Others Present were:

Allison McNeal, Tourism Director, Indian River Chamber of Commerce

Nicole Holbrook, Tourism Director, Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce

Beth Mitchell, President/CEO, Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce

Rich Nalbandian, Assistant Executive Director, Treasure Coast Sports Commission

Rick Hatcher, Executive Director, Treasure Coast Sports Commission

Barbara Hoffman, Executive Director, Cultural Council of Indian River County

Susy Feeny, Executive Director, Heritage Center

Jillian Sparks, IRC/Events Office

Jacque Thatcher, Hampton Inn & Suites Downtown

Wesley Wilson, Treasure Coast Sports Commission

Indian River County Staff Present were:

Mike Zito, Assistant County Administrator

Kate Pingolt Cotner, Assistant County Attorney

Jason Brown, Director, Management and Budget, Indian River County

Tina Cournoyer, Commissioner Assistant, Recording Secretary

Linda Barton, Commissioner Assistant

Call to Order

Chairman Flescher called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m., and requested Roll Call. With a quorum in attendance, Chairman Flescher led the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Flescher introduced his new Commissioner Assistant and Tourist Development Council Secretary, Tina Cournoyer.

Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

None

Chairman Announcements

None

Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2015 TDC Meeting (*Action Item*)

ON MOTION BY Ms. Adams, SECONDED BY Mr. Old, the Members voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the February 18, 2015 meeting minutes.

Tourist Tax Revenues Update

Mr. Jason Brown, Director, Management and Budget, Indian River County presented an overview of how the Tourist Development Tax is broken down and used including a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office. He explained that Indian River County has collected 4 cents on each dollar on all tourist accommodations since 2001. Dodgertown receives 1 cent, Beach and Tourism receive 1.5 cents. He highlighted information contained in the Tourist Tax Revenue Report for the month of April 2015, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. He reported tourist tax revenues are up \$37,840 or 12.8% for the month, and up \$222,462 or 20.3% for the year. He further reported that tourist taxes are exceeding budgeted figures by \$188,154 or 16.6%.

Description of Tourist Development Grant Rating Sheet

Mr. Jason Brown gave a description of the Tourist Development Grant Rating Sheets and explained the rating process. A copy of the rating sheet is available on file at the Commission Office.

Mr. Brown informed the Committee that the 2015/2016 Tourist Development Fund Requests total was \$827,483, an increase of \$31,505 over the 2014/2015 budget. This requested amount was \$21,083 over the 2015/2016 budget. A copy of the 2015/2016 Budget Request Summary is on file at the Commission Office. Commissioner Flescher informed the Members and attendees that \$21,083 would need to be cut from the requests in order to balance.

Mr. Kite requested tourist tax revenue data going back at least three years. Mr. Brown stated he did not have that information on hand, but would provide it to the Council Members after the meeting.

Authorized Uses of Tourist Tax Revenue per Florida Statute 125.0104 (5)(a)

Ms. Kate Pingolt Cotner, Assistant County Attorney, Indian River County read the statute aloud. She stated the allowable venues that Tourist Tax Revenue dollars can contribute to are primarily convention centers, arenas, sports stadiums, zoological parks, beach improvements and advertising to promote tourism. A copy of the statute is on file at the Commission Office or Attorney's Office. Councilman Old requested a copy of the statute, which Ms. Cotner said she would provide after the meeting.

2015/2016 Budget Presentations

Sebastian Chamber of Commerce--Pelican Porch (Funding request- \$25,000) (This is an additional funding request to the \$467,483 budget request)

Ms. Beth Mitchell, President/CEO, Sebastian River Chamber of Commerce presented a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office, describing the vision of the project. She provided an overview of the improvements with emphasis on the proposed webcams. A final rendition of the Pelican Porch Visitor Center due to be complete in October 2015 was also shown.

Cultural Council of Indian River County (Funding request- \$60,000)

Ms. Barbara Hoffman, Executive Director, Cultural Council of Indian River County presented a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office, providing the Cultural Council's vision and an overview of cultural tourism. The presentation included an economic contribution analysis, a list of participating organizations and cultural tourism's financial impact for Indian River County. Ms. Hoffman described the 2015-2016 marketing plan for Cultural Tourism to include broadcast marketing, electronic promotion, print publications, collaboration, cultural arts village and outreach & programming.

Indian River County Historical Society (Funding request-\$20,000)

Ms. Ruth Stanbridge provided a brief history on the Indian River County Historical Society (IRCHS) and its mission. She presented a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office, that highlighted several destination points available to Indian River County residents and tourists. Ms. Stanbridge's presentation included IRCHS's proposal for the 2015-2016 budget year and plans for historical components, Jones Pier Conservation Area and signage on Jungle Trail.

Treasure Coast Sports Commission (Funding request-\$168,000) (\$17,600 increase)

Mr. Rick Hatcher, Executive Director, Treasure Coast Sports Commission (TCSC) discussed briefly the success of the TCSC, its partnerships, and efforts by the organization to rebrand itself. He then turned the meeting over to Mr. Rich Nalbandian, Assistant Executive Director.

Mr. Rich Nalbandian, Assistant Executive Director, TCSC, provided an overview of the purpose and mission of the TCSC and a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office. The presentation included a list of national, state and local event partners. Also included was a list of Indian River County venues, projected sponsored sporting events and the proposed Indian River County Intergenerational Recreation Center.

Vero Heritage, Inc. (Funding request-\$12,000)

Ms. Susy Feeney, Executive Director, Heritage Center presented a Power Point presentation, a copy of which is on file at the Commission Office. The presentation highlighted special, annual and monthly events held at the Heritage Center. Statistical data was provided identifying the type of events held, the number of visitors/guests and where they were traveling from. Records show visitors from 43 states and 31 foreign countries. Ms. Feeney discussed using technology to direct the Center's efforts to find new audiences and host more diverse events to capitalize on revenue.

Discuss Budget Requests for 2015/2016 Fiscal Year, Complete Rating, and Decide Level of Funding.

Chairman Flescher restated the budget shortfall of \$21,083. He requested that Mr. Jason Brown provide options to the council on how the shortfall could be resolved.

Mr. Brown offered three options:

1. Reduce all budget increase requests by 25%
2. Reduce all budget requests by 2.8%
3. Reduce all budget increase requests by 2.8% and the County absorb the remainder of the shortfall. This option would decrease the budget shortfall by \$18,493. The County would make up the additional \$2, 590.

Mr. Brown was asked what amount the County currently had in reserve. He stated that the reserves were healthy, in excess of \$200,000. Discussion ensued among the Council members.

ON MOTION BY Mr. Hill, SECONDED BY Mr. Hayes, the Members voted unanimously (7-0) to reduce all budget increase requests by 2.8% (\$18,493) with the County reserves funding the remaining \$2,590.

Chairman Flescher reminded the Council Members and the presenters that the Board of County Commission had to approve the recommendation.

Other Matters

None

Public Discussion

None

Next Meeting Date

The next Tourist Development Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.**

Adjournment: 4:47 p.m.