

GADSDEN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MINUTES MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2011 -3:00 P.M.

Edward J. Butler Governmental Complex 9 East Jefferson Street, Room 101, Quincy, Florida 32352
Commission Meeting Chambers

Present: Jeff DuBree, Chairman of TDC, Sportsman's Lodge, Bed Tax Collector Lake Talquin
Jim Kellum, Vice-Chair of TDC, Business Owner and Antique Dealer
Patricia Vice, West Gadsden Historical Society, Tourist Attraction
Peter Patel, Bed Tax Collector
David Knight, Council Member of Midway

Absent:

Lee Garner - City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector (Excused)
Hemant Patel, Bed Tax Collector
Gene Morgan, Board of County Commissioner
Angela Sapp, City of Quincy Commission

Staff:

Sonya Burns, TDC Administrator
Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk

1) Call to Order

Jeff Dupree, Chairman of TDC called meeting to order.

2) Roll Call - Deputy Clerk

The roll was called by Beryl H. Wood, deputy clerk, with all members present as listed above.

3) Approval of Minutes

There were no minutes up for approval. The minutes of October 10, 2011 will be presented at the next scheduled meeting. The Chair asked for a motion to have the minutes approved at the next meeting.

UPON MOTION BY JIM KELLUM AND SECOND BY COUNCILMEN KNIGHT, THE BOARD VOTED 5 -0, BY VOICE VOTE TO HAVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 10, 2011 READ AT THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

4) TDC News & Updates

- a) Administrator Coordinator Updates – Sonya Burns
- b) **TDC Updates – Jeff DuBree**, Chair gave update on the following TDC programs.
 - i) **River Way South Tourism Summit Update**

Mr. DuBree commented on the River Way South Tourism Summit, he stated that it took place last month, October 28 in Blountstown Florida. He said that 8 rural counties were represented and Gadsden had several individuals in the County in attendance, such as the Mayor of Chattahoochee along with 2 of their City Employees, 2 representatives from our Chamber of Commerce, representative from Ron Sachs and West Gadsden Historical along with himself. He said that they set up a trade show booth which they had handouts for the attendees to pick up.

- ii) **Visit Florida Regional Promotion Discussion**

Mr. DuBree discussed Visit Florida. He said they were present at the Summit & was there discussing what they offer to small rural counties to help build tourism. We established a dialogue with River Way South to begin some regional promotional advertisements through Visit Florida and hopefully it will get some strategic partners by offering some of their services, restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfast. The Art Center has offered a private tour and they will package it in with some other things that are going on in the County. They also discussed having FAM tours coming up and we discussed that Gadsden is ready to jump on board.

- iii) **Gateway Grant/Design contract**

The Gateway Grant was designed as an entrance to the county. He said that he felt it was either 6 or 8 roads leading into the County, where they got some grant funding to design some signage and landscaping and wildflower planting coming into the County. Mr. Charles Chapman, Public Works Director asked Mr. DuBree to be a part of the Committee that would choose the engineer and we have done that. He also thanked the TDC for their involvement, with wildflowers and the need for signage in entrance ways, which was one of the reasons they applied for this particular grant. He wants TDC as involved as possible. He said that in the near future they will get in contact with Engineer to make sure that the proper signage goes up .How we want each entrance way to look, the logo. TDC will be involved as they move along.

Jim Kellum inquired did they bring up a figure of monies that were received.

Mr. DuBree commented that there was an amount of money that was approved, but I can't recall what the amount was.

- iv.) **BIKE FLORIDA Updates - March 2012 (136 Room Nights Blocked)**

Mr. DuBree gave an update of Bike Florida he said that the Nonprofit Bike Florida Inc. was formed in 1994, as a fundraising event and organization to help supplement the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program (FTBSEP). The main fundraiser is a week-long bicycle touring adventure for up to 1,000 cyclists, taking place in the spring. In 2008, Bike Florida began week-long luxury tours along the 260-mile St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop. The spring tour is annual; the luxury tours typically take place during fall and winter. Although the spring tour varies its route from year to year, the luxury tours follow the River-to-Sea Loop, a virtually trademarked Bike Florida route. All routes link small towns with natural and historic landmarks along mostly scenic country roads. All tours are fully supported and coordinated with local law enforcement agencies; our SHARE THE ROAD signage is prevalent along the routes.

Today, Bike Florida supports the mission of the FTBSEP, which is housed at the University of Florida, by providing them with safety-educational materials and assisting them in promoting bicycle safety throughout Florida.

He said there was an organization meeting with several people present including Sonya and him. One question of the gathers was what activities can take place in downtown Quincy. There will be another meeting sometime in February to finalize. They are looking to take downtown Quincy and hire a band, vendors and different activities. He said they had already booked 136 hotel rooms in the Quincy Area. They are looking for us to appoint a lead person to help coordinate the event. He said that his suggestion would be someone from Quincy Main Street such as Grace Malloy could coordinate with Sonya, or even someone from Ron Sachs office. He asked that if they had some suggestions to let him know.

v.) **Florida Wildflower Brochure**

Mr. DuBree briefed the Council briefly on the Florida Wildflower Foundation. He said they have received funding from Visit Florida to publish a brochure that will guide residents and visitors to the best of the Panhandle's native wildflowers. The region is widely regarded as one of the state's best places to view wildflowers.

The publication will include a map highlighting wildflower viewing routes, state parks, national forests and refuges, visitor centers, scenic highways and other places of interest in Liberty, **Gadsden**, Wakulla, Franklin and Leon counties. To help visitors identify native species, its reverse side will have labelled photos of common North Florida wildflowers. Also included will be a short history of La Florida, "land of flowers," as this land was named by Juan Ponce de Leon when he sighted it on Easter Sunday in 1513.

Florida has the nation's third-largest diversity of native wildflowers – a fact that is getting attention from ecotourists around the world. "Visitors are increasingly asking where they can view our wildflowers," said Lisa Roberts, the Foundation's executive director. "This beautiful publication is sure to entice more interest in exploring the Panhandle's natural side."

Look for the brochure next spring at state Welcome Centers and the region's visitor centers, parks and chambers of commerce.

Mr. DuBree said that through some work that Ron Sachs did and his knowledge, Charles Chapman and himself we gave a lot of information on the roads to feature in Gadsden County which featured the largest amount of wildflowers. He then named some of the roads that would be featured in the Gadsden Area that are: DuPont Road, State Road 12, State Road 65, Highway 20, Bear Creek Trails, Angus Gholson Park in Chattahoochee, Joe Bud Wildlife Management Area. He said that he had contacted them and asked them to include State Road 267 from I-10 and it would connect travellers coming throughout I-10 heading toward the Coast through Liberty County by connecting to Highway 20. He asked for other suggestions, because they are on the first phase of the project.

c) **Ron Sachs Updates – Lisa Garcia**

Lisa Garcia addressed Board and stated that they have a lot of decisions to make at today's meeting and she would move in that direction first and then the summary report.

Local Event Marketing Plan:

Events to promote:

- **February: Gadsden Arts Center Art in Gadsden exhibit, Georgia Slab Master/Crappie Masters Tournament, QMT "Once Upon a Mattress"**
- **March: Chattahoochee Challenge Boat Race (tentative), Bike Florida Tourism Summit**
- **April: QMT "Godspell"**
- **May: Quincy Blues & BBQ Fest, Talquin Pro – Am 2-Day Bass Tournament, Havana Merchants Havana Days**

Advertising Methods

- **Yahoo Advertising - \$6,000**
- **Radio Advertising _ \$4,000**
- **Print Advertising - \$4,000**
- **Facebook Advertising - \$1,000**

Ms. Garcia entertained questions from the Council.

Mr. DuBree inquired about the print advertisement, what would be some of the newspapers in that group.

Ms. Garcia replied they are the newspapers included in the North Florida Press Services which offers a "North Florida Print Network" package that included 25 newspapers with a total circulation of almost 200,000. She named some she knew of off hand, but stated that was not all: Alachua County Today, Baker County Press, Bradford County Telegraph, Fernando Beach News Leader, Free Press in Milton, FSU in Tallahassee, etc.

Mr. Kellum asked is Havana Herald included in the North Florida Print Network.

Ms. Garcia stated that it was not and that it probably was not part of the Florida Press Services. Mr. Patel asked how the clicks work with the Yahoo advertising. What happens to the budget money if not that many people click?

Ms. Garcia stated they could discuss it if there was a surplus, we could put in the continuing to advertise fund. We don't plan to use it all up at once. We will use the funds on the different scheduled events.

Mr. Patel asked how you would manage it.

Ms. Garcia commented that's why it's better to divide the budgets up.

Mr. Kellum will you give a report each month on number of clicks or how each one is doing.

Ms. Garcia replied that they would and it would be very detailed and will be shared. It's also a good way to see what works.

Mr. Patel stated that it still needs to be advertised in the local Newspaper.

Ms. Garcia said she could add budget for the local newspaper. She commented that they wanted to make sure they advertise 120 miles outside of the County.

Mr. Jim Kellum questioned is this coming out of Ron Sachs money or our money.

Mr. DuBree it's not out of their fee, it's out of ours, but we do have a line item budgeted.

Mr. Kellum said that the money would be used toward marketing events.

Mr. Knight queried is there additional cost to promote additional events.

Mr. Bob Lauther, of the Havana Merchants, on Havana Days asked would Ron Sachs' office get with them on what we want to get out to the public.

Ms. Garcia said they would. She commented that if TDC decides that is what they will promote, then we will contact them and establishing a working relationship.

Mr. Patel inquired how it would work if a particular business wants help and comes back with another event. He added that they should make sure they all know that, no double dipping.

Mr. DuBree said if we were to approve these events, they will be it, no additional ones.

Mr. Kellum asked the Council if they thought Ron Sachs, is better at promoting events then we do ourselves. "I think we pay you too much money. We can get anybody for a grant. I see things you should be promoting, press releases outside of 150 mile radius, instead of coming up with ways to spend money. I don't think you do \$5,000.00 a month of work. "

Mr. Kellum mentioned the need to advertise and protect the retail and business people. When we close the door we need to know what we are doing. We need to see more production.

Patricia Vice commented that you have a very gifted group of volunteers in Havana that other parts of the County don't have.

She discussed the Fireworks on her side of County the west and Mr. Knight stated that the east side also had fireworks during the 4th of July celebrations.

Mr. DuBree mentioned the Lawn Mower Parade in Havana that does extremely well.

Mr. Knight asked about the Dollar amount breakdown.

Mr. Kellum asked for contract. He said that he would like to see it.

Ms. Sonya Burns reminded the Council that they saw it first, and then it was presented to County Commissioners.

Mr. DuBree told the Council that they were now in phase 3.

Ms. Garcia said this is the best bang for your buck, if the events are tied to a charitable event you can leverage more with that.

Mr. Patel reiterated the importance of the newspaper advertisement.

Mr. DuBree inquired how much we can get for the \$6 or \$7, 000. I would like to see all the events be covered.

Mr. Kellum suggested that radio was a waste of time. Take \$ 4,000 and move it to something that works.

UPON MOTION BY JIM KELLUM AND SECOND BY PETER PATEL THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 - 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO REDUCE THE ADVERTISING FOR THE LOCAL EVENT MARKETING PLAN FROM \$15,000 AMOUNT TO \$11,000 TOTAL TO COVER 6 EVENTS AND RON SACHS COMMUNICATIONS TO CHOSE HOW TO ALLOCATE FUNDS AND ANY INTERNET (YAHOO ADVERTISEMENT) WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE ALL EVENTS THAT TAKE PLACE DURING THE 6 MONTH PERIOD, WHICH WOULD ALSO INCLUDE SOME PRINT ADDS FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS (ONE AD FOR A LOCAL NEWSPAPER PER WEEK)

Target Market Marketing Plan

Ms. Garcia reviewed the Target Market Marketing Plan with the Council Members by stating that these are draft ads.

Assets to promote:

- Nature- based, eco-tourism and outdoor activities
- Cultural, Arts and Heritage
- Local business

Current projects already in progress:

- Visit Florida Official Tourism Map -\$1,000
- AAA Worth the Drive- \$600.00

There was discussion on TDC logo and adding sponsored by TDC.

Ms. Garcia then discussed the Familiarization FAM Tours, which was a new project for discussion and approval.

Familiarization (FAM) tours - \$9,300

FAM tour is a free or reduced rate trip to travel professionals to acquaint them with destination and attractions. These planned experiences are a cost-effective means of marketing the county to journalists, bloggers and travel agents who can get the word out to large group of travelers.

Based on VISIT Florida recommendations, FAM tours should be micro-targeted to reach specific interest groups. We would plan and execute three FAM tours between January and June targeting different markets: outdoor/nature, outdoor/sports and history. The trips will be planned to coincide with different events, such as a fishing tournament.

Anticipated expensed include:

- Advertising to local businesses
- Travel costs to and from Gadsden
- Rental car and fuel
- Gift bags and other incidentals
- Lodging and food

Mr. Kellum said that he didn't think we had the monies for this venture right now. This is too much money; we are paying \$5,000 a month and what are we are getting. I thought a PR Firm was supposed to be paid to do what we ask of them. You should know people at Southern Living or Better Homes and Gardening or know contacts, there should be some communication that you have with these different organizations and how many news releases are being sent out to different newspapers in the Southeast (Outside the 150 mile radius). He said those are some of things Ron Sachs Office should be doing as A PR Firm.

Ms. Garcia responded to Mr. Kellum by saying the \$9,300 is for local advertising, for travel costs to get travel professionals for her and any other expenses. She also stated that they have a relationship with writers, but it still must be budgeting to get them here. She explained the \$5,000 retainer that the Council pays is for them to coordinate.

Mr. DuBree commented there is a lot of time involved in putting this together. He said that's why we pay Ron Sachs office, because they haven't had anyone volunteer to work for free for the Council. He

said when you talk to other rural counties that are far better along than Gadsden County. They have said the FAM Tours are the best way to get writers here to speak of the greatness of your County.

Mr. Kellum stated he agrees the best way to writers here to see our county is FAM Tours. He said the Council does not have \$10,000 to give them.

Mr. DuBree said we have money budgeted on line item for Target Market Marketing. I have separated out, when I wrote the budget we approved I spelled it out so the events would be taken care of properly. I lined item out and the remainder amount was to go after our Target Market in the Strategic Plan which were listed above as the assets to promote.

Ms. Sonya Burns reminded Council that all Mr. DuBree is discussing is outlined in the budget that was presented to the Council and then went on to be approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Knight asked about FAM Tours inquiring is it based on far away regions.

Ms. Garcia stated yes was the objective with the FAM Tours to reach a far away region that could include, writers, bloggers, etc. that focuses mainly on those topics such as Southern Living, Fish, antiques, etc. We wine and dine them and have them participate in whatever event is going on. In hopes that when they return they will write positively about their experiences.

Mr. DuBree interjected the FAM Tours from his understanding write about a specific article rather than all we have to feature, we highlight, choose one. He said that he was told that it works very well, it is very effective.

Mr. Patel asked do you have knowledge, do you have a plan for the budgeted amount of funds allocated.

Ms. Garcia we have a full blown out plan that we have provided to the TDC in the past and she informed Mr. Patel that it could be sent to him if he wanted. We have been working on this for a month and now it's time for the rollout plan, step by step is ready.

Mr. DuBree asked Council did they feel okay with FAM Tours coming to our Area, but with need more details.

Mr. Patel stated that Ron Sachs should have effective plans ready 6 months out, what writers they would like to bring. We need to know what's effective for the County to pay you \$5,000 and you should have it ready before it comes to us.

Ms. Garcia commented they would not move forward until you decide exactly what type of FAM Tours you would like. We will send the suggestions and you can decide. I would like to have as much Community participation so they have an opportunity

Mr. Kellum suggested that as far as the FAM writers are concerned it should be one of each, not 3 writers writing about the same thing. We need to know where we are going to pull money and which FAM Tours we are discussing.

Mr. DuBree asked Ms. Garcia would she be able to produce the 3 FAM Tours and specific writers for events by January.

Ms. Garcia said yes, she would have pitch done and we write to them. She said they come in groups and the thing is we don't have enough volunteers to take them out and cover the events that are going on. We have to focus on one topic.

More discussion occurred among the Council.

UPON MOTION BY PETER PATEL AND SECOND BY DAVID KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO TABLE MOTION FOR THE \$9,300 FAM TOURS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONCERNING SPECIFIC WRITERS.

5) TDC Business – Infrastructure Projects - \$8,570

Ms. Garcia discussed the Infrastructure she stated that the Budget was: \$11.5k and she stated that they felt as if the two major fuel stations that are located in Midway, off of I-10, Flying J and the Pilot would serve as great location for the Kiosks startup.

a) Travel Visitor Kiosks

i) Overview & Budget - \$11.5k

Pricing:

Touch screen (18", equipment only)	\$700 per screen
Stand alone Kiosk (entry –level equipment)	\$4,000
1-year onsite maintenance and warranty	\$770
Template software	\$200 per license

Recommendations:

1 stand alone kiosk w/maintenance	\$4,770
4 touch screens	\$2,800
5 software licenses	\$1,000
Total:	\$8,570

Remaining \$2,930 can be used for signage

Mr. DuBree commented they could eventually have the kiosk in all parts of the county.

Mr. Kellum inquired who uses the kiosk because he had never seen one.

Ms. Garcia replied they are in Miami & Pennsylvania. They encourage visits to your store and the entire County. Let's try one year maintenance for now.

Mr. Patel questioned Ms. Garcia about the potential of checking with other counties that have Kiosk and see is it productive.

Ms. Sonya Burns interjected that BCC is going to require that it be bid, because it's over \$5,000.00 and it's stated in your Strategic Plan that you must bid it.

Mr. Patel asked Ms. Garcia to check other companies, which is more effective the kiosk w/stand or just the touch screens.

UPON MOTION BY PATRICA VICE AND SECOND BY PETER PATEL THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO TABLE THE INRASTRUCTURE ON THE KIOSK BUDGET UNTIL ADDITIONAL QUOTES WERE RECEIVED.

Resource Guide Map

Ms. Garcia outlined some points of the Resource Guide Map and asked for any other feedback.

- Collaborated further with Gay Steffen to refine details of guide map.
- Continued to revise changes to map and include new additions.
- Will finalize after feedback is received from TDC members

There were questions regarding the information that was sent and several Councilmen stated they had sent in changes for review.

Ms. Burns commented that everyone should have the recent updated information.

Ms. Garcia said that she would make sure anyone who wanted it would receive it and that they are still updating all the changes they had received. She said their goal is to have the Maps out by January.

Mr. Patel suggested they are placed on alphabetical listings and would be easy reading.

Mr. DuBree commented they should allow Ron Sachs to forward because they have allocated \$5,000, but they would like the right things included. He asked that Ron Sachs Office send e-mail to everyone on Council and all parties involved for review. He also suggested that a date be set for revisions or changes.

- b) Approved Event/Brand Marketing Funds Oct-Dec 2011
- i) HMA – Lawnmower Parade
 - ii) GAC - 23rd Art in Gadsden
 - iii) QMT – “Into the Woods” production

c) **HMA funding request (Infrastructure) – Town banners**

Mr. Bob Lauford, of the Havana Merchants Association, addressed the Council. He commented the Havana Merchants Association had purchased new banners. He stated the price for the banners was \$9,200 expenditure. He reminded the Board that he had requested monies from the infrastructure budget at the last meeting. He mentioned as of today’s date they had raised \$4,600 and had asked that remainder come from the TDC Infrastructure Budget. He said that with the new banners hopefully it would encourage people to get people off of US 27 entrance to Havana and into the shops around the Community. He asked the TDC for the remainder of the funds totaling \$4,600.

Mr. DuBree cautioned the Council. He reminded them this particular budget year has the kiosk. He commented they needed to make a decision on kiosk, because if we go with kiosk then they would not have any remaining monies for the Infrastructure Budget. He said the kiosk was priority so we need to make decision before we spend any more money.

Discussion occurred among the Council.

Mr. Kellum expressed to Mr. Lauford that the Council was not saying no, but a decision had to be made on the kiosk first.

It was the consensus of the Board to decide on Kiosk before making a decision on HMA Town banners coming out of the Infrastructure funds.

6) TDC Business – BOCC 12-06-11 Agenda

Sonya Burns, TDC Administrator addressed the Board concerning the 2 year term that will expire for Lee Garner and Jim Kellum. She commented that Chair Taylor would like for it to be placed on 12-6-11 BOCC Agenda. She said that Lee Garner has consented to serve an additional term and she yielded the question to Mr. Jim Kellum who to agreed to serve another term. She said that TDC makes recommendation and goes to BOCC for final approval and decision.

- a) **Lee Garner - Term expires 12-31-11**
- b) **Jim Kellum – Term expires 12-31-11**

UPON MOTION BY PETER PATEL AND SECOND BY PATRICIA VICE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF LEE GARNER FOR A 2 YEAR TERM TO THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

UPON MOTION BY PETER PATEL AND SECOND BY DAVID KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 5 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF JIM KELLUM FOR A 2 YEAR TERM TO THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

7) TDC Business - Marketing 2011

- a) Event/Brand Awareness Marketing Campaign Jan – June 2012
- b) Destination/Target Marketing Campaign Jan – Jun 2012

8) Public News & Comments

There was discussion on E Gadsden Website (**egadsden.com**) and it was stated that more information would be forthcoming. Ms. Garcia reviewed the usage and traffic sources.

- Egadsden.com had 478 visits between October 10, 2011 and November 9, 2011.
- The most prominent spike in egadsden.com visits occurred in correlation with the facebook.com/Gadsden County Pumpkin Festival Photo Contest, which resulted in over 40 visitors on October 13.
- There were 292 unique visitors to the site.
- During the time frame, we had 58% new first-time visitors.
- The average visitor spent one minute and thirty six seconds browsing the site.

- An average of two pages were viewed per visit.
- The top viewed page was the home Page, with 428 views. Other frequently viewed pages included Activities Outdoors, Things to do, Events and Entertainment
- The top traffic source resulted from Search Engines, generating 43% of egadsden .com traffic.
- Direct Traffic accounted for 41% of the websites visitors.
- Visitors locating egadsden.com through Referring Sites generated 18% of the views.

Next Meeting

December Meeting: The Council discussed the December meeting and it was decided Chair DuBree and Sonya, TDC Administrator would come together and see if a meeting needs to take place.

January Meeting: The Council discussed the January meeting and it was determined that the meeting date fell on Martin Luther King Weekend. It was suggested the meeting date be moved to January 9, 2012, 2nd Monday.

Patricia Vice asked that meeting times be moved up to 2:30 p.m., due to the time change.

Concerns:

Mr. Lauther asked about egadsden website and the difficulty in retrieving it. He cautioned that it may not be user friendly.

Ms. Garcia stated they have not officially advertised egadsden and once they do with the Google advertising ads it will put them on the map.

9) **Adjournment**

There being no other business before the Council, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Jeff DuBree, Chair

ATTEST:

Sonya Burns, TDC Administrator