

**AT A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION  
AND THE TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HELD IN AND FOR  
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA ON AUGUST 23, 2011 AT 4:00  
P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDING WAS HAD, VIZ:**

**Present:** Jeff DuBree, Chairman of TDC, Sportsman's Lodge, Bed Tax Collector Lake Talquin  
Sherrie Taylor, Chair of BOCC, District 5  
Patricia Vice, Greensboro Area Tourism  
Lee Garner, City of Chattahoochee Manager and RV Campground, Tax Collector  
Jim Kellum, Business Owner and Antique Dealer  
David Knight, Council Member of Midway  
Larry Edwards, City of Quincy Commission, District 2  
Eugene Lamb, Jr., District 1  
Brenda Holt, District 4 (arrived late)  
Doug Croley, District 2  
David Weiss, County Attorney Office  
Michael Gray, County Attorney Office  
Arthur Lawson, Interim County Manager  
Muriel Straughn, Deputy Clerk

**Absent:** Gene Morgan, District 3

The meeting was called to order by BOCC Chairman Sherrie Taylor. She then asked everyone to introduce themselves. She then stated that since, this was the Tourist Board sharing their vision plans with the Board of County Commissioner's she would turn the meeting over, to Jeff DuBree, TDC Chairman. She reminded everyone that they would try to move quickly due to the fact there was a 6:00pm meeting scheduled.

### **Tourist Development Council's Vision (Strategic Plan)**

Jeff DuBree, TDC Chairman introduced the Vision. He commented they had not met as a body, since the last County Commission Meeting, so we haven't had an opportunity collectively to discuss today's meeting.

Chair Taylor commented that was good, which means no preset agenda, so we can all kind of talk.

**Chair DuBree:** As far as the Strategic Plan and our vision it's spelled out on the pages, it's probably consistent with what we are trying to do here. We are trying to create Tourism, we are create a Tourism based Economy and enhance that to see if it gets larger, create jobs. We would like to do that by having the slightest amount of impact on our Residents. That's pretty much kid of our vision with much more detailed spelled out in the Strategic Plan. If you have any questions with regard to that or anyone else have any comments, but that would sum up our vision.

***Commissioner Holt arrived at this juncture of the meeting.***

**Chair Taylor:** I've turned the meeting back over to Jeff, the Chairperson of TDC. He has just gone over the vision of the Tourist Development and I think it is found on page 4. They have not had an opportunity to meet, so they don't really know what will be asked of this meeting. The idea is that the County Commission has a clear conception of what is going on with TDC, so there aren't any questions are confusion as to what's coming through the Board for approval. He (Jeff) was at the vision statement, could you please reiterate that one more time.

**DuBree:** Basically, our purpose is to create tourism in this community a viable economic boost through tourism. We feel it's a pretty viable a 4 million dollar industry right now, just in Bed Tax Collections, probably you could double that number for the people that come in stay in hotels and camp grounds that are subject to the Bed Tax are probably going to spend that much money again, so it's a boost right now currently the way it is probably a 8 to 9 dollar Industry to this community, so it creates that kind of economic boost. We want to see it improve, we want to see the Bed Tax number go up, and we want to do all that by focusing around some target markets that are spelled out in the plan. We would like to do that with the least and slightest amount of impact unless it's a positive impact on our residents here.

**Taylor:** Any questions about the vision? The vision seems to be fair and on target, the question now is how you are going to make this vision a reality? What are your plans?

**DuBree:** Well, over the last couple of years, we have shifted gears and hired a PR Firm, we didn't have a brand, and we didn't have really an effective website. We've worked on that over the course of the last 8 or 9 months and we are now at a stage where we can begin marketing. We haven't done a whole lot of marketing other than some events, that we've been able to market late in the game of the last fiscal year, so really are marketing strategy is just starting, but we have the brand and we want to keep that brand consistent and get it out there and focus on the target markets, focus on the current events, possibly produce some new events, especially those that might be more length than one day it might be combining events that we already have or a new event that would create people coming to stay for a

length of time, the County could really recognize us from all around the region. "That's where they have the X, Y, Z festival, but primary our main goal is bringing people here every day and that's to increase that number, my experience with the Tourism as it relates to Lake Talquin, I see tourist every single day, coming in that our from out of this area. Some of the tourist are day trippers but a lot of them are from outside of the areas, so I think there are other regions in the county, that can say the same thing about Tourism, I think to create jobs you are going to have to produce tourism coming here on daily basis, not just on a focused event. The primary focus where I think the TDC has shifted over the last 2 years is to try to really focus on everyday tourist, not giving up the events, still focus, we are trying to advance to improve our image, not only with our residence, that will help tourism. If our own residences speak highly of our community, then that's going to spread out beyond our boundaries. To use those events and still focus, the priority really has shifted gears over the last 2 years with the Strategic Plan and hiring of PR Firm to bring more everyday visitor's to come to the community.

**Kellum:** In doing that transition over the last two years, its kind put everybody in a tough position. We don't have millions of dollars to be spending; we have a certain amount of monies. A lot of those monies have already been tied up in different areas and categories. I do believe that the vision was to try to go beyond events. Events are what have been driving Gadsden County for the past 10 or 15 years that I know of. What events do, it may not bring a total amount of Bed Tax that we want every month, but what it does do when have events, that we help get started produces numbers like the Pumpkin Festival use, I'm very familiar with that number, we driving that number to almost 15 or 16, 000 per year of people. What it does do is when they come to this county, whether they come to the Pumpkin Festival, do rides whatever they do at Pumpkin Festival, they still buy gas, they stop and shop, they might pick up groceries. What where trying to do is expand on what we have already been doing for the last 12 or 15 years, but by going with Ron Sachs and trying to do a broader market, where we trying to get people more aware everyday of Gadsden County and the events going on. Now, that's been a struggle too, because we spent a lot of time on developing the internet which I thought it took longer than it should have taken. The things that we doing on that, I'm just not totally happy with. What I'm hoping for is down the road we will be able to get some articles like we get years and years ago, through Gagner where they actually got writers to come and we actually had an article written in Southern Living and for 4 or 5 years people would come to especially Havana because they did an article. They would say I read your article last week in the Southern Living, which was in a Doctor's Office, which was 5 years old but it didn't matter it still made the tourist drive. When they came down they looked for this area. I think that's the vision that we are trying to do is keep enough money to try and keep our events going and promote new events and as these events continue to go and we don't need to fund them, maybe we can help the younger events come in, which is a good idea. That's been the kind of struggle the last couple of years, to try to diversify some of the money to cover a much bigger area.

**Chair Taylor:** I follow that, comments?

**Commissioner Croley:** I was going to ask the question about, to measure the effectiveness, what's the best yard stick to do that by, Jeff?

**DuBree:** I think the look at the Sales Tax Data, which would be the Bed Tax portion of it and see if what we are doing is working.

**Croley:** So the most effective yardstick, the fairest objective is to look at the increase in Bed Tax Revenue, which if it's going up, and then we must be doing something right. If it is stagnant or going down then we must be doing something wrong. Is that fair to say?

**DuBree:** I brought some data with me that I will pass down. These are the Bed Tax Collections for the last fiscal year and this fiscal year running from July 09 through June 10 then the second year would be July 10 through June 11, if you look at Gadsden County at the top, those are the monthly Bed Tax Collections for that 12 month period. In the fiscal year of 09-10, we collected \$73,831.00 in Bed Tax. In 2010 – 2011 Budget Year, for the same months we collected \$82,389.00 which is an 11.6% increase, which I think is pretty impressive, because I also looked at Gadsden County General Sales Tax, and it remained relatively equal from these two years. While the rest of the Community's Economy is very roughly the same, tourism as far as Bed Tax Collection increased by 11.6%. I also copied some counties that are surrounding us, Jefferson, Leon, Franklin, Washington, Wakulla and Jackson County. Liberty and Calhoun don't have a Bed Tax, but I listed them just to show I was picking up the surrounding areas. If you look at the percentage change in the other counties Jefferson County went down 5%, Leon was relatively equal down less than 1%, Washington County was down, Wakulla County was up 3.4%, but bear in mind they received a lot of money from BP, so even with that money from BP they only went up 3.4%. Now, Jackson I can't understand the data there, they jumped 50%, but if you look at November for some reason they went from collecting \$19,000.00 in November 09 to \$96,000.00 in 2010.

**Unidentified Person:** I think they have an increase in the amount they charge.

**DuBree:** I thought so to, but then I don't know how to explain that either way they had an increase. They did a good job I think over in Jackson County and I think it shows and 11.6% increase from last year. We are doing something right.

**Croley:** That's my whole point that if I look at what you are doing there is a group of volunteers that have hired a special media representative to help you and formulate a business plan, would you have a market plan. I don't see where you are going wrong with the surrounding counties. Jackson County isn't further enough out in an isolated spot when you are traveling there with those motels that they have, like right there at I-10, they probably pick up more revenue on the Bed Tax and if they have an increase more than like you said.

**DuBree:** I think one thing is some of the money, it was something that happened last year or year before last that change the way they code their impact money. I think it was for the Civic Center and they decided they are not going to build one.

**Croley:** I think ya'll are doing a great job, especially with the amount of pay ya'll receive.

**Lee Garner:** If, I may Mr. Chairman. I think we have come a long way in the last 2 years; we struggled trying to find ourselves in terms of who we were and what we were supposed to do. I think when we

started and we work on this Strategic Plan and got professional help. I think that sort of turned everything around. I commend the Commission for approving our Strategic Plan and for allowing us to where we been so far. We are just beginning to walk.

**Commissioner Holt:** I'd like to thank you for the work you have done. I want you to keep that in mind when you hear me talking, because when we do volunteer, we appreciate when other people volunteer, so that's kind of a wash, as far as that goes. My concern is when you said every day. That's what I'm looking for that everyday type of thing of thing; if you head in that direction I don't have a problem with it. My real concerns though are not just with this Board, I asked to meet with all the Boards that we have appointed. For some reason over some years, it's been understood by some people that when you bring things before this Board that they are automatically approved and they may not be your concept. I heard from Planning and Zoning, I heard from other Boards, we did all that work and then ya'll didn't vote for it. We are not supposed to vote for it, that's not what we are supposed to do. We are suppose to consider it, you turn in a recommendation and then we are suppose to consider it and way it out along with Citizen's Input. Citizen's are calling us about issues that your Board recommended are other Boards, so it's not anything about you are your particular Board. They are doing this with all Boards as they become more knowledgeable about the items and issues that are going on in the County, they are concerned about those. I just wanted to make sure that we are on that plan so that we understood. The other thing my concern with this is improvement; if we have the 11%, how did we get to 30%. How do we get to that effectiveness and as quickly as possible, because this is an economic engine? We need to be able to produce jobs; everything that this Board looks at from now on has been if it will tie in to jobs. I cannot be tied to anything else. We must produce the jobs, if we didn't have boating on Lake Talquin; I'm looking at having Tourist Boats down there are whatever it takes. I don't want to fish because it's too hot, but I sure would ride round and look like I do on tours. This weekend starts football season, as I said before FAMU will have 20-30,000 people and FSU will have 40-50,000 people at their football games, how do we get them over here, before or after the game. That's what I'm interested in, if they are already there they are a captive audience, they are ready for the game. How do we get them to come to Gadsden County? We want them to shop and put them on I-10 and Highway 90, then they can go on back to the game, but we don't have to provide all those services for them, but we have to try to capture those dollars, so these are some things that I'm looking to be included in your plan. When that comes that you have a few events and you are advertising out there, it's drawing in that population that's already in Tallahassee. I don't care if FSU is playing Notre Dame, but I would like to see people from Notre Dame over here shopping and spending money over here in Gadsden County. That's where my concern is not at an event, but how do we get those dollars over here. How do we tie that to the economic process? I think this is a good start, because you are hearing what we have to say and we are hearing what you have to say. I'd like to make that point, I was talking to someone that was appointed to the Board and they said I don't want to be taking off that Board. I told them it's not about me and it's not about you, it's not about neither one of us. It's about the people here and what they need and if I don't feel like you are the right person for that appointment, then I'm going to withdraw you off there as soon as I can and have someone else and as soon as it's time for me to leave this Board people are going to move me, it's no hard feelings. That's just the way politics are, but I would just like to see that number go up. We start hammering out how we are going to get those numbers up. Another thing that

Data, I know I'm Data driven at the hotel and events you don't have those Data Cards. I need for them to say why are you in Gadsden County, if it's Pumpkin Festival, write that on there. Where are you staying at? I ask for this for years. The other thing is I asked for it to be in this building also, I think all County Employees, Governmental Offices should have a card, it could have something on like how am I doing. Let them rate you every now and then, people are going to say negative things about us, but you also get some improvement things in there too. That will help us. That's the kind of thing that I'm looking for. My last one on the fish is as you know there is a lot of development out in Gretna, how do you partner with them to get that tourism coming in. It's going to coming on that West Side, if Mom and Dad and all them are coming in with the Family for a Poker Tournament, they're going to be sitting out there in those hotels. How do we get them to do? What is it they are going to be doing are we going to have a Water Works Park or some Put-Put Golf, that end put that you may be able to find out about, what other people are doing? How do we get it here? That's kind of thing that you may hear about that I may not hear about. What are those people going to be doing, when those events are going on, people will have their families with them a lot of the times. Look around and collect that data to see how we can improve. Plan with the Cities and the Counties to see what we can do when we see development coming. Thank you.

**DuBree:** To respond to a couple of your comment. I think first comment was reference to how the Board our Council operates. I think everybody on this Board knows that we are an Advisory Board. We have been fortunate much of the items we have brought before you, have been vote our ways, so we are thankful of that. As a Council here, I don't think there is anyone that is not aware of what our role is. I think this probably ok. As far as increasing money coming in that number we mentioned, we are now just beginning to market, so we are hopeful, that the number will continue to increase. I think a 30% jump might be kind unrealistic right off the bat, we shoot for it. Certainly we want to see a study climb. The fact that we are already 11% plus and haven't done a whole lot of marketing, I think is a good sign. FSU and FAMU are part of our plan. We want to focus over bringing people over just like that by doing some marketing with Alumni and different sources that would be tied to the event. Maybe steer some events that are taking place. I think sometimes an event coordinator has to try decide should they have an event during a football game or pick a weekend that's not during a football game, so that's kind of a tuff call for the Event Planner. Do you want to try to focus on the local people that would probably go to a game and would probably go to a game and would probably have to make a choice or you want to play off that market 100,000 people or 60,000 people that are at a major sporting event. That can play a role. The Guest Survey's that you mentioned we are working on that right now. We have a survey already written, we just have to go around and get some feedback from the hotels and properties to see what is feasible, but we have one written that's asking a lot of the questions that you referred to that we want to start that program. Gretna you mentioned also, we are chopping at the bits, to get on board with Gretna. I have had several conversations with Antonio Jefferson to keep me informed as to what's going on. I've made the connection with Ron Sachs; hopefully they can play some media role for press releases, to help them get really kick started when they get the ball rolling. Telling the locals and how the project is coming along with construction. That's what we are working on as far as Gretna, right now.

**Kellum:** The last event we had at the Pumpkin Festival, we addressed that issue and actually hired 4 or 5 students from FSU that came out and did the survey for us on the street. I was real disappointed because we only did like 450 surveys for the whole day, which obviously unhappy with. I thought we would have a lot more than that. Then again, you have to remember that a lot of them are there with their parents are there with kids and family. They are not really interested in giving us a lot of information. We did giveaway tickets for rides, for people that would feel out the applications and out of that 400plus we had 247 rooms that were booked and whether they were all booked in Gadsden County, is hard for us to do in Havana, ya'll need to find away to get us two or three hotels over there. A lot of times they go up the Interstate to 27 and stay there, but we are working on trying to do packages with the hotels here, so that we are sending out this on our websites; that they will have special prices to stay at these hotels, I think that will improve. Off that few surveys I was real impressed with the amount of people that did do it overnight even on a 1 day event.

**Commissioner Lamb:** Ron Sachs, Gene Morgan is our representative for this Board. He has responded back to us, with what was going on and I think he has represented the Board pretty good. Hearing the Commissioners I think they feel that too much emphasis is put on the old events, events that have been done in the past. You need to create some new events and put some emphasis on them on trying to accommodate the people from Florida A&M and Florida State, from what I've been hearing. I think by ya'll hiring this young man Ron Sachs, he must be good. I don't know him that well; he wouldn't be on board if we hadn't voted for him. I'm giving him a chance I think that's all I can do is give him a chance. He is going to help enhance the whole situation. We are looking forward to see what's going to happen. I just have to wait and see, from what Jeff is telling us everything is going pretty good. I hope to communicate with you guys from you more and hear from you all. We need to stay in contact, so you guys will know what's going on. We need to what you guys are doing, so we can answer questions that are asked of us.

**DuBree:** This meeting was an excellent idea, excellent avenue for that, great idea.

**Taylor:** This was something that, I'm glad my colleagues are here, because it was an issue that I saw because of the lack of understanding and your direction. I'm looking at this sheet you gave us there are different variables that drive these numbers. For example hotel rates for one year vary from year to year, so obviously that drives your number. My understanding from Mr. Kellum your marketing strategy really didn't get in place until June, July of this year.

**DuBree:** We are really still tweaking it. We have the budget numbers there, but really haven't as a body collectively fine tuned, we know where we kind of want to focus the dollar.

**Taylor:** So in essence the percentage here that we are looking at, the increase of 11.6% we can't really give that to what you have done. You said that your marketing strategy isn't really in place right now, so we can say that this increase obviously has some other driven variable that causing it to increase, it can be again room rates, obviously activities that are bringing people into the hotel and making them pay, such as sports events, concerts, so there are other variables that drive. I'm looking at specifically this 10-11, \$82, 389.00 there are some other things that have driven that which is why we have the 11.6%

increase. We can't really attribute this increase to what you put in place right now. You can't really measure because it has not been out there long enough.

**DuBree:** I agree

**Taylor:** You haven't been out there from one year to the other to see if what Mr. Sachs has come up with or what your vision has really caused a change in our revenue. To look at this, is really not an impact on what you are doing, so that needs to be clear. I've heard from my Commissioners around this Board and I've heard from you'll and what I'm hearing as far as events. I'll focus on one in particular. The Chairman is saying day to day is a good focus point, people coming in their everyday as often as possible. I'm hearing from one of the Board Members, Event driven; let's have the Pumpkin Festival it brings in \$15,000.00. I'm also hearing from FAMU and FSU and the Casino, let's capitalize off these opportunities. When you are over in Tallahassee after a FSU game, it takes anywhere from 1- 2 hours to go and eat at some of the local restaurants, that's your capitalizing opportunity. Have some kind of event over here, where we can feed folks as well or to at least advertise what's going on in our community. I've always thought events 5 or 6 of them a year, financed by the TDC gives us more of a focus group that's coming in to us 3 or 4 fishing tournament, treasure hunt over in Havana, and some community wide events. These are some of the things were I have seen, not the Board that we should do to bring in concentrated revenue. This thing that's going on in Gretna we know it's coming, everything is laid for it to happen, we should be designing some kind of tourism strategic to make sure we are ready to enhance off of it. So I what I'm saying is I see you are spending and obviously it's going to take time for you to collect data before you can see that's it working. I feel a little short and a little back when, we one of the Commissioners said what are you doing to measure it and then you begin to scratch your head like well, you didn't have anything to measure. We don't want to continue to throw money. I looked at your budget; it was \$30,000 increase, increase based on what, and increases if you are doing well decrease if you're not. I know you wanted to hire a person that was an idea a concept but the goal of this money was to bring more dollars in. You can't give yourself this 11% pat on the back just yet. In 11-12 that will be your baby whatever numbers come out that will be yours. I'm hoping it's just as big. That's where it stands with me. We are putting a lot of money into this marketing firm. To brand a name cost millions of dollars we aren't putting that in there for us to believe this name is being branded it's hard to believe that concept when you don't have enough to effectively brand E Gadsden all over these United States. I'm hearing you and I want to grab whole to you, but you don't have me there yet.

**Kellum:** Madam Chairman, may I address you for a second.

**Chair Taylor:** Excuse me, I'm not your Chairperson, this is your Chair. I'm going to give him the job of chairing this.

**DuBree:** I thought I was going to get the day off.

**Chair Taylor:** No, you're the Chairperson

**Kellum:** When we say events we forget about all we do during the year. Maybe you don't know what we do, we bring it before you. I would say one of the reason we have increased is there are several things.



Gadsden Arts has gotten more effective in doing shows which drives, not just for one day but for several weeks even a month or two. The Theatre has tripled in place they use to do one or two a year now they do five or six now and we funded those. Also we try to encourage Quincy and I know they are events that are in Chattahoochee that have been several years, but one of the things Havana and I have to talk about Havana because that's where I live that's where I'm from. One of the things that we do to drive business and to keep it coming back in Havana is our merchant's participant they give us dollars every month. We are always putting on TV ads and Newspaper ads all the time, that the TDC don't fund, but when we do major events it really helps us, not to dig into the little bit of reserve that we have, we advertise Havana and that's Gadsden County and if Quincy would do more of that and Chattahoochee would do more or that and Gretna maybe do more of that and Midway should be doing more than that, then that's going to drive everyday business and that's where you could see more than a 11% increase. It's that we aren't sitting on a dead rock we've been moving down a river. We are trying to do a big job with a little bit of money.

**Taylor:** Obviously there is something that has happened to cause the 11% increase. What I'm saying is it's not due to the marketing strategy by the TDC Board.

**Kellum:** I would like to correct you on that, because Ron Sachs, we haven't seen a full impact yet, but for the last five of six years I know these projects are being funded and be worked on trying to expand and I think that's why you are seeing an increase, when all the other counties are going down. When I travel throughout all these little towns they are gone, they are not on the map anymore.

**Taylor:** You just said a moment ago, that you are the only one that is pretty much as for as marketing outside is Havana.

**Kellum:** We know what we are doing; we have been trying to encourage Quincy and some of the other areas.

**DuBree:** Havana is very aggressive and very helpful to the whole community.

**Taylor:** The point of the matter is this, we need to be able to determine, how to gage, what variables make it go up, what variables make it go down. One has already given you a set target as to how you can increase it. I'm saying, I'm speaking primarily about the market strategy that you are going with now. What's happen in this year? What you are using now, the Ron Sachs marketing. You've said that it's not off the ground yet, so I'm saying that particular strategy has nothing to do with your increase.

**Kellum:** I agree with you.

**Taylor:** Over the years, you have deviated from what you were doing, because now you follow a strategic plan in the last two years. You aren't doing like you use to do. You are in Havana, but the TDC is doing a little different, they are pointing their money to a marketing agency now, not event driven. You still doing it, but the TDC is what I'm talking about and the marketing strategy is what I'm talking about specifically, not over what we've been doing over the last 10 years.

**Holt:** In your visioning statement you have local business development, you brought up a very important point, and you brought up Havana the Tourism Council is countywide. It's working in Havana. I would accept the Tourism Council to say what making it works in Havana; let's get with Quincy, because you're the Tourism Council. You get with the City of Quincy and say hey look ya'll our having this event and apply for money and say we model that in other locations. They may not know that you are doing all this over here and that's what I'm saying it's a good strategy, and then it should be out there that Gretna should be out there with that model, Chattahoochee, Greensboro and it may not be the exact model maybe they can tweak a little bit for their own particular area. I think that's a very important point that you make. If the Art Center is doing great and I see them do great. I've been in there last year, more than I ever have an I love it, but if they are doing good there, then maybe some other businesses will learn how to do it.

**Kellum:** I took on the Vice-Chair this year to try and help Jeff. We already talked to several leaders in the community. We are trying to have dates where we go and set up towards Chattahoochee and coming into Quincy to have forums and invite everybody, this are the things that we see being done in these areas. If you would just organize and become a business advertising organization that's a start, even if you give \$25.00 a month that's a start. They have they own meetings and Chattahoochee could do the same thing. We produce a paper that we send out to South Georgia and Tallahassee when we are doing things for 3 months. Every city should be doing that same thing. When they come to Havana, we give them a paper from Quincy or Midway or Gretna.

**Holt:** I'm just saying we need to use the model.

**Kellum:** The point is if we going to have the forums as the TDC to try to get folks to come so they can hear what's going on in other areas, to try to get them motivated to do something on their own.

**DuBree:** One of our primary goals is to try to bring the Community together and to get all our strategic partners involved in what the TDC is trying to do. With doing that you are going to have such things as the Havana Merchants are really well organized, if we can bring the whole community together also.

**Larry Edwards:** I want to apologize early for having to leave. One point that I wanted to bring up is pertaining to events. Havana and Quincy have major events the same time we have major events. We need to make sure that we coordinate on events especially on big events. Quincy- Fest, Blues & Bar-B-Que, you all had a great crowd and we had a great crowd, but what if we had held them on separate weekends.

**Kellum:** As TDC, we should have put that on the calendar and said one of you do it on this week and one do it on that week.

**Edwards:** I apologize I'm new, I'm coming on board & hopefully we can come up.

**DuBree:** Another option with that is to still have them on same week, but have some activities in Quincy on Friday Night and something in Havana on Saturday and maybe something on Sunday where it

involves a great reason to come here and spend the weekend, because there is something going on every day.

**Lamb:** The only thing that I would like to bring up is that these items were brought to my attention by some of the members too. If a vacancy come up on the Board the Tourism Board Chairman need to bring that to the attention of the County Commission, so we can feel that position and that was not done in your last appointment and we were kind of disappointed that it wasn't done in the correct way.

**DuBree:** I think what our approach was and you can correct us and tell us how to do it the next time. We were attempting to gather some names for you to make recommendation, not tell you who to pick, but make a recommendation. That's where probably the miscommunication came from. But if you prefer us not to do it that way, then we can just easily tell you when a vacancy is open, you would have to advise us there.

**Taylor:** It would be good to tell us the vacancy and what kind of position it is, so if it's a Tax Collector position then we know that's the kind of personnel we need to look for if it's a business owner and so forth. I understand that your Board is made up of 3 Tax Collector's, 3 Business Owners and 3 Citizens At-Large or Elected Officials. Let me back up a half a second, first of all I personally want to say thank you all for what you doing on our Board and for the work that you have done. We need to be able to, you just had a prime example just a moment ago of targeting in what we need to do to be more focused. TDC needs to know everything, to the best of your knowledge what's going on in this County, so that you can help advertise it. If you see a conflict coming then help us or notify us, notify the municipalities. We did that with this last Veteran's Day that ya'll did. One of you did the calling from Ron Sachs we heard about the difference, but we didn't hear anymore from Ron Sachs, luckily one was in the morning and one was in the afternoon, when you have the big Blues and Bar-B-Que and ya'll have your thing it would be best to do them on separate weekends, not in the same weekend, but separate because that even more money. I could see what you are saying to capitalize on the overnight deal, but you get more when you separate because now they are in there 2 weekends in a row instead of 3 days or 4 days. What I'm to you is this make sure that are scheduling is a good thing that we are not on top of each other. Capitalize off the events that are going on and let us know what we can do to help you get the word out or firm this strategic plan up so more focused and bring in the dollars. We just want to see it work. Commissioner Morgan says to us quite a bit, let's don't waste Tax Payers Dollars, let's make sure we are spending them and we are being very conscious of how we are spending them and we have tried to do that. If I'm going to put a \$130,000.00 in a budget, I what to make sure that he is doing a yeoman's job and if I could give him \$450,00.00 I would, that's what I want to make sure of. That's where I'm at try to capitalize off of the moment, so that we could get the best for our books.

**Holt:** One thing I would like to mention the Logo, that's not going to be on I-10 right, because you aren't going to read a cursive sign on I-10, when you have 5 seconds of drive time. When you see a sign you have 5 or 6 seconds if they can't read that sign they are going on. I asked about in our notes in the Commission Meeting, find a literature where you have time to pick it up and read it, but it needs to be clear enough and it's in cursive. I really don't think it's going to work on a stretch where cars are going. I would get off 95, 75 and I-10 and stop, but if I can't read I'm not going to stop. On paper or if you are

walking you have more time and that's my concern if you are going to put it up on highways. The everyday tourism I'm really concern with that, how do we get that everyday tourist? When I look at the numbers here, I look at by the month if it went down in a month from 09- 10, what was going on in that month. What made them come this time that didn't make them come before, you may have had an event or something there and I'm just saying whatever was going on if it work before maybe we need to look at doing it again or it didn't work and it went down, but you need to do something to improve it. If your numbers are here, is it a month to month thing.

**DuBree:** Maybe some of the data is there was an extra Saturday or Sunday.

**Holt:** You are right it could be that, Mr. Gardner a fellow asked me I was in Chattahoochee, for some reason ladies and gentlemen I love Chattahoochee; there is a pretty spill to that river up there. He asked me why don't they just rebuild the Old Fort down there by the bridge and do a replica of the Old Fort, you can do the Indians, the Black Soldiers, the English and the Spanish and you would get people every day. I said that I would sit right there and watch it, because I'm a history person, I love stuff like that. He had to kind of inform me, I remember I read about it some years ago but I haven't read about recently until he brought it up. I was up there getting gas, by Hardees and he was telling me all about it. Those kinds of things, what would make someone say they would like to put some tourism roads in at Lake Talquin and go around and view Lake Talquin, you have some people that just want to look for those of us that don't want to fish. Those are the kind of things the new things. I said before in Gretna at the Horse Track, the Creek Indians are already advertising the big events that they are having in Alabama and I'm sure they are going to do the same thing here. We kind of know our niche a little bit better than they do. They may have the money, but we have the knowledge about the area, we can kind of guide them and that helps us.

**DuBree:** One way that we can help focus on getting that business from Gretna just because what they are going to have to offer there is the same way we are going to try to bring people here every day. The Strategic Plan spells out 4 target markets that we recognize this County as having as being important reasons to come here as one is the outdoor experiences, because of the lakes , rivers, the farms, the culture art heritage, we have a pretty big business market . We have a lot business travelers that like staying in Gadsden County and some are doing business in Gadsden County, but a lot of them are doing business in Leon County, but they chose to stay. The same as in the football games some people don't like to be in the middle of everything, they like to be a little outside of everything, but close enough until where they can get there and that's a real strong market for us and that's something we are going to focus on. Some of those same business travelers are probably going to shoot on over to Gretna when that's completed. In our geographic location was sort of what I was referring to, focusing on those and marketing is going to help and taking advantage.

**Holt:** Commissioner Lamb mentioned about the appointments, We have other people that are asking to serve on Boards and we get the information before a recommendation then those people feel that they never had an opportunity to serve, it's not any one's fault. We just need to make sure we nail down our procedure as to how we are going to do it. I had some people to ask me about serving on different Boards and I appointed one to another Board, but didn't ask about this one. What happens is it throws

them off a lot of people retire and they come back here and they want to serve and help, and there is really no where to put them a lot of times.

**DuBree:** It's good to bring in fresh ideas. I don't think any of us plan on being on this Council forever.

**Garner:** You mentioned about river, there is nobody that has pushed that river more than 15 years that I have lived here. We are working with River Way South to Apalachicola for 6 counties and we just including Holmes and Washington County. Everything that we have is going east and west that river runs north and south, we are trying our best with the River Way South with Ron Sachs they have done a lot. There doing inventories that will be available to the Tourist Development Council to do the Three years ago we had the University of Georgia did the mock up for Chattahoochee and Sneads. The weekend after next we plan on having Jackson County and Gadsden County doing a joint River Fest that has River Fest 3 times in the park. We will have River Fest on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> of September and we didn't have all the fireworks this time, due to Greensboro. That was a comment that came up here with the Tourism Development Council, we are trying to have our fireworks on Labor Day in Chattahoochee this time and I hope we have 3 to 5,000 people in Chattahoochee for this River Fest on September 3, Labor Day. I envision this becoming one of the biggest events that, that could be a 3 day Labor Day Event in the next few years. I want to thank the behind the scenes stuff that Ron Sachs has done to promote River Fest, they have done a great job in doing this as a result the Tourism Development Council here and I want to thank them, but I want to invite everybody to come to Chattahoochee on September 3, I know that it's Labor Day, but come on out. It starts at 8:00am with 5k run, kayak, bands, food, and arts and crafts. When we have our next Council in September we will be able to approve the Development Plans for Old Marriotta plant in Chattahoochee, LLC so we can have those riverboats you were talking about. Then we could have some riverboat tours all up and down Chattahoochee, we are working on it. I want to ask TDC can you help us.

**Holt:** I'm going to go, but this is a great idea. The television cameras are in here on Tuesday nights, that's a good time to announce some of your events. Every other Tuesday night before we start our fight it's up here. You can up on Citizen's to be heard and you can announce what's going on. I would love to see when the Indians out there in Gretna get off that bus and they had on all the feathers the Cameras where just on them, they followed them everywhere they went. Can you imagine someone having an event like that and Blacks and Spanish dressed like the Old Fort, then coming here dressed like that what good press that would make for your event.

**Taylor:** The point I was making and she asked you a question that we really shouldn't be asking now. This event is less than a week or so away and that was what time. We should know this, that's part of getting the information out there, getting it advertised, putting it where people can get it and help you to disentailed.

**Garner:** It's out in several venues and next week it will be in Tallahassee Democrat.

**Taylor:** What I'm saying to you Mr. Garner is that we didn't know anything about until you just mentioned it and we should. We didn't know anything about and I'm glad to know now and I certainly plan on participating, but if marketing was at the level then we should have known, that's what I saying.

She just asked you what time because, obviously she nothing about the event. I'm hoping that we can get it out there so it can get the attraction that you are looking for. I am sure 5,000 plus will be there, but we want to make sure all sectors are familiar with activities that are going on up there.

**DuBree:** Grace Malloy wanted to speak to us all, today. Grace.

**Grace Malloy:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just briefly. I have been involved in marketing one time or another for the past 25 years and watched the TDC work since 2005 since I came. The last 2 years I seen the focus has been on a larger image for the County as a whole, creating the website, featuring everybody creating all the resources and creating a logo. Prior to that I did see, all the separate events in the different areas, they weren't as successful as they could have been because you didn't have a marketing professional like Ron Sachs promoting those events. My concern now though is that we not through the baby out of the back water, I thinking we are swimming with one type of activity, to all another type of activity and I think all of it needs to happen. We are on track this year to continue with Ron Sachs, they will share their expertise with us, we have a logo and we have a website. There are some additional plans in their contract and that's very helpful. They for the Gadsden Art Center got us a blog and it was very exciting, it was very upscale, creating a strong impression for our presentation. That's said as the Quincy Main Street, Chair and as someone who goes to Havana a lot. I know a lot of people who own local business and one thing that they have told me is that our community based events are really bread and butter for them. The things as simple as the fireworks in Greensboro, Boat Races, Quincy Fest and Festivals in Havana those our big days for locally owned business. They are in keeping with TDC goals, the purpose of the tax, is for people who leave outside, in neighboring county. The purpose of the tax is not directly to generate more hotel tax, although we all want more revenue, it is important, but not the first priority of that statue. It is to bring people into Gadsden County will, who like Jim said, will shop, go to those local businesses and keep those restaurants alive. As we move forward, I think the general approach for the county is valuable again I sticking with Bed Tax but as move forward in the long term refocusing and promoting our events is also important. They are really what make up our culture in our county. The events that our volunteers put together, our municipal governments that really illustrates how unique we are in our county, Gretna, Chattahoochee and so on we all have our own culture, each town has its own flavor. In those towns people really work to express those events, people are interested in that if they know about. All I'm encouraging in the long run is that we look at that. One thing that I have not seen a lot of marketing and coordinating calendars, marketing that would take all the events in the county that come up in any given month and present that very visibility. Present the new logo; drive the traffic the traffic to the Westside. The logo and website are great; one of the next steps is to drive the traffic to the Westside to get that logo seen. If we more a coordinated effort in designing and placing promotion we can more attention drawn to the west side logo. One long term idea may be a point person, part time person that keep up with all the events in any given month and promote those together, so if someone outside the county would come over night and say gee there more to offer in Gadsden County than I thought. That's the impression, there is a lot happening here, even in the situation where Quincy and Havana had the musical festival's on the same day, that was unfortunate and people had to chose, but if both were promoted together that might actual draw people to stay overnight to enjoy both in the same day, if not in the same weekend. Those

are the kind of things to be capitalized on. That's just my thought moving forward, is to take some of what was done before and some new and take advantage of all of it and carry forward. If I can be of any help in the long run, I would be happy to help, I've done a lot of marketing.

**DuBree:** Thanks for offering to help and we will probably take you up on that. I would like to reassure that is part of our plan we are not abandoning events. We plan on making it a strong part and do some of the exact same things that we are going to market to drive people to the website that's certainly one of our goals. This TDC hasn't done a lot of marketing from Day 1. All the marketing we have done is been through events, we've taken checks and written given them to Havana and marketed how they have chosen Quincy the Art Center and there is a disadvantage to that, some of the language in the Strategic Plan was to try to become more unified and to not have two events take place or to market them together, because the TDC would have kind of the call of how to do that rather of just funnel the money out. By no means are we giving up on events, it's going to be a viable part of what we are doing. The image, the positiveness to our residents it will expand out beyond our boundaries. One comment I would like to make about the Strategic Plan these state statues does say technical to be a tourist you have to be outside your boundaries. That's not to say that TDC couldn't expound upon that and most TDC's if you look at what their plans are they either have bed night criteria for given grants they have mileage for advertising. Realistic, when I drive to Tallahassee I don't consider myself a tourist. I'm not a tourist when I go shopping in Tallahassee now granted this county would love to see the money that Leon County could bring here. We would not want to encourage that, but really for a TDC we would have to look a little further out and most TDC's if you look at what they are doing and they own drive is, language and bylaws or their own Strategic Plans it's reaching a little bit further out than the county right next door.

**Malloy:** If I could add a little to that, In terms of Gadsden County if we know people are from Tallahassee and they do shop here and get our gas, that's revenue for Gadsden County or if they by meals that is helpful and that is needed. My comments are really for your 2012-2013 Budget Year, not to upset the path you are on now, but to plan on it in the long term as everybody talks to try to determine the long term view, as everybody figures out how to put all these pieces together. One thing of the things I see is that we are being introduced more too social media and that's great. That is cutting edge, being an old school person, In the long run media guys are going to be needed to get people more familiar with the Gadsden County logo and the slogan which is great. These comments are for the long term goals.

**DuBree:** I have one request from the TDC, I notice when I go to your website there is no link to the EGadsden Website. Your area where you have places to stay, there is nothing there, like a dead end, even by linking the EGadsden that would be helpful with us trying to work together.

**Malloy:** In our meetings in August, we put out an article about the new website and the logo.

**DuBree:** I notice that with the Art you have going on right now you don't list us as helping you either.

**Malloy:** We did, we listed Gadsden County, TDC.

**DuBree:** I'm sorry, I saw TCC and VISIT Florida across the banner, but I didn't see anything for Gadsden County, and could you add us to your link?

**Malloy:** I think the Banner went up prior to the June meeting, if you look in printed materials you are definitely in there. I have looked at those links in a while, so we will do that.

**Croley:** While, Grace is up and you're mentioning old school thoughts. Let me share something with all of you as I had mentioned here in the last County Commission Meeting. I attended the Regional Chamber Meeting as I frequently do that was held in Destin. Ron Sachs put on a great program and they talked about the impact of advertising and I don't think any of ya'll are quite on the mark according to what they had to say and there billings of \$147 million dollars a year, so I think they kind of know what they are talking about. You do need to do some combination, but what they pointed out was they are doing these videos that you can see of I Tube, which you can view on the county I Pad. It's not how much money you spend, but it's the creativity used in the ad. I just heard Lee Garner talk about his event. I'm sure it can be promoted in many different ways, but if you want to reach out and get a lot of people it starts with you being more creative and start thinking what supply around these county and other places as well. We don't think it's outside of the box, that's whatever is done in the past if that's what everybody what's to do, we keep doing the same stuff by expect to see different results. Greensboro and the fireworks, get on the modern media, it's not how much money you spend it's how creative you are. As a member and as a sponsor for my business, I want you linked to that. I'm telling your Board that, I don't want to give you money from the public and support you in that if you are going to partner with the other groups that are trying to promote the County. Quincy Musical Theatre, I sponsor some of your things, I'm expecting to see the same degree of cooperation. As a supporter and as a County Commissioner, TDC advocate or whatever this business about everybody mounting their horses and riding off every different directions, doesn't make a lot of sense to me, you need to pull it together. Midway has a lot going. Havana is a model, I don't think Mr. Kellum or the Havana Merchants Association and all the things they have done. They are constantly promoting themselves with that, but they are doing it with cooperation with TDC. It disturbs me when I hear some of the dialogue that has been going on. I'm going to come back and say 3 times a fellow Commissioner referenced certain racial groups that did not include everybody and I am offended. This is not a black county this is not a white county, it's not a Hispanic county, it's everybody's county.

**Taylor:** Let me say this real quick, to bring us all together. I called this meeting because I wanted exactly this good dialogue going on, so we can have a productive County and so we can capitalize off our resources to the best and that we work together as one. This is not dictatorship, this is a Board, we speak as one, but we speak from one being in majority vote, not one individual Commissioner. We each have our own opinion, but at the end of the day we come together and we speak as one. There is no dictatorship around here. We are intelligent enough to agree to disagree, but still keep in mind it's not about us, but about this County, but moving forward in a positive direction. I appreciate the Art Center, I appreciate you humbling saying, and we will fix the concern that the Chairman had. Thank you for doing that. I have never been raised with any kind basis, it does nothing but divide people, for reasons that have nothing to do with what's going on today. There are jobs, people losing their homes, today is poor health conditions, and today is just all kind of issues that have more profound impact on our lives



than black and white. It is not why we take on the responsibility, so I tend not to jump down in situations that have no real focus or impact. I leave those things to the side, it's what the majority of us what to see done and I don't think there is not one of us around this Board that does not want to see this County do well. Every entity that's seating here under the sound of my voice, what's to see us do well, otherwise I'm sure every one of us has something to do at twenty minutes after 5 than to seat here. All of us do, you are here today because you're passionate about what's in front of us. To work together is the most important thing we can do today, this is historic, in my opinion it is outside the box, because we are doing something we are talking, we are getting along, and we are getting dialogue. I think when we leave here today; you all are going to look at both marketing and events. You are going to look at seriously, because that's what came out of here. You are also going to look at scheduling and making sure there's no conflict, because that's what came out of here, you are going to look at budget; you are going to look at ways to make sure that the market strategy that you are using is working, because that's what came out of this meeting. So those are 3 things that came out of here that you are going to look at, this has worked for us. I don't get off into things that have no value, God knows I've been a target on so many different cases; it has no value, no true direction. We are going to stay focused on what it is that we need to do to promote, Gadsden County, if it is working let's duplicate it all over and let's talk and work together. That's the way we are going to go. One last comment and then we will adjourn if it's ok with you all. Again, those 3 things we need to focus on and I can see you all nodded and agreement and please don't get discouraged and think about leaving us, because we are not going let you get out of the agreement, that's not going to happen. Please stay, let's just work toward that, let's close this gap, let's close it and bring it together. I appreciate what you are doing and one last thing. We need to get the appointments, I know I'm going to have to reappoint one, but I'm going to put you back if you are willing to come back.

**DuBree:** I'm on a one-year, I'll be glad to continue as Chairman through this year and we will take it from there.

**Taylor:** We will take it from there, your name and some other name was on there for reappointment. If you want to stay, stay where you are. I appreciate what you are doing. I do have one that I need to address. We will address that particular one so, that you will have a full quorum when you do meet. Again, you got something out of this, would you agree that you received something out of it, was it worth the time.

**Knight:** Just before we dismiss. I'm new to this. I appreciate the opportunity to serve. I'm here to serve the Citizen's of Gadsden County and I have served my best diligently. I thanked we are on the right track, especially when we develop some KPI's to determine how we are doing, with the survey, etc. That is one step forward to making sure we have a way of measuring, to make sure we are doing a good job. I just would like to thank you for the opportunity.

**DuBree:** Meeting adjourned.

**Adjournment**

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

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Sherrie Taylor, Chair of Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Muriel Straughn, Deputy Clerk