

**GADSDEN COUNTY**  
**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES FOR**  
**Monday, February 2, 2015**  
**Regular Meeting: 5:00 pm**  
**(Promptly after Strategic Planning Session)**

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**Present:**

**Lee Garner, Chair of TDC, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector**  
**Matt Thro, Vice – Chair of TDC, H & H Furniture**  
**Jeff DuBree, Sportsman’s Lodge, Bed Tax Collector - Lake Talquin**  
**David Knight, Midway Councilman**  
**Keith Dowdell, City of Quincy Commissioner**  
**Clarence Jackson, City of Gretna**  
**Brenda Holt, BOCC**  
**Lynn Badger, Bed Tax Collector – Havana**  
**Joe Bouch, Chisano**  
**Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant**  
**Allara Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator**  
**Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk**

**Absent:**

**Peter Patel, Hotel Industry**

**Call to Order:**

Chair Garner called the workshop to order at 3:30 p.m. He then yielded to Joe Bouch of Chisano for the remainder of the meeting.

The Strategic Planning Session was facilitated by Joe Bouch. He presented the 2015 Strategic Plan Executive Summary. One point of focus was signage leading into the different cities and what they have to offer. “We must get towns and cities excited about tourism in the County.” He also commented the website was nice, but it is missing a lot of information.

*\*For the entire workshop presentation, you may visit the Clerk’s website or the TDC Administrative Assistant to receive the package from that meeting.*

He said ultimate success will be dependent on a number of factors:

- Leadership from both the public and private sector
- Cooperation between city/county government and the business community
- Creation of a “tourism” infrastructure
- Tourism education
- Co-operative In-kind contributions

Four barriers to keep in mind include

- Not having a clear, unified vision of what the Gadsden County has to offer.
- Lack of in – county support for tourism.
- Infrastructure – preparing the touch –points that are viable “visitor” points now.
- Overall awareness of the destination.

### **2015 Plan Recommendations**

- **Approve a Mission Statement**  
The Mission of Gadsden County's Tourism Development Council is to foster, develop and promote a sustainable tourism product, thereby bringing more people (visitors) to the area, getting them to stay longer, and to spend money.
- **Approve a Vision Statement**  
The Gadsden County Tourism Development Council envisions a tourist destination that showcases the values, heritage, culture and natural beauty of the County.  
As well, the TDC looks to foster a spirit of partnership within the county to develop and implement innovative and effective programs/initiatives that will not only grow our tourism industry, but increase economic impact and jobs, resulting in a greater tax base for localities and the county.

In his Situation Analysis he pointed out that if 2015 is to represent a pivotal "tourism" crossroads for Gadsden County, it will be critical that we start over in assessing what our "visitor" DNA looks like.

More specifically, while the county has done much to explore and improve its messaging components over recent years, and clearly has much that would attract tourist to the area, we see four major barriers that will need to be addressed before we can begin a positive turnaround in visitor activity.

1. The need to establish a clear, unified mission and vision of what the Gadsden County "tourism product" should be.
2. We create a cast of tourism ambassadors.
3. Infrastructure
4. Awareness

Mr. Bouch pointed out the strengths and weakness he felt Gadsden County had: Strengths - Unique History; Landmarks/Architecture; Agri-Tourism; Arts-Culture –Antiques; Outdoors; Celebrity; Personality – Character; And more....Weakness/Opportunities – A true understanding of what Gadsden County's Tourism Brand is – The brand DNA – The Brand Platform; Sense of Arrival; Unique and planned visitor/vacation navigation touch-points – a well-planned "tourism" delivery system; Lack of "tourism" knowledge among Gadsden County stakeholders; A well – defined target focus; Limited Marketing Budget to tell the Gadsden County Tourism story; Capitalizing on past recognition; Outdoor Recreation and Trails.

### **Preparing for the bigger picture:**

Tourism, particularly within the State of Florida, is a highly competitive discipline. With so many going after the same visitor, it is easy to get lost in the noise. Worse, the "noise" is often compounded by the fact that the messaging being communicated to the outside world has not been first embraced by the stakeholders within that particular jurisdiction. This is minimally a missed opportunity, and potentially a big mistake; particularly when you are one of the small players and budgets are tight.

### **2015 Plan Recommendation**

- Putting the puzzle together
- Defining and uncovering
- Then develop the plan.

- Mission – The Mission of Gadsden County’s Tourism Development Council is to foster, develop and promote a sustainable tourism product, thereby bringing more people (visitors) to the area, getting them to stay longer, and to spend money.
- Vision – The Gadsden County Tourism Development Council envisions a tourist destination that showcases the values, heritage, culture and natural beauty of the County.
- Brand Promise - Gadsden County, where visitors can Do Something Original.
- Messaging -
- Creative components
- Road show
- Launch

Chair Garner mentioned partnering or meeting with Riverway South. He said they have done a lot of this work dealing with the entrance ways.

Mrs. Gutcher said that’s true they need to meet with them, but we need to find our own identity.

Mr. Chisano commented yes it’s been done, but hasn’t been done right. This group of people craving out visitation touches points. Challenge this group to come up with history, etc.

Mr. Dowdell commented one of the best ways to get it done is by allowing each municipality to come up with a committee to help with the strengths within each municipality and they could also facilitate a tour.

Mr. Jackson said I think it is a simplified process because with committees it would never get done. He said he was in favor of the Celebrity Tie In – Sports, Annual Campout with the Noles. He said begin to create events while we are creating touch points. He mentioned focusing on the identity of the County.

Mr. Thro mentioned the Coca – Cola start in Gadsden County was an important part of the County’s history.

Mrs. Holt said she was not sold on the branding part but, mentioned going after historical monies.

Mr. Chisano said the identity comes from Gadsden County you can do something original. It won’t come overnight. He said approval is needed on the mission statement, vision statement, and brand platform. Do Something Original; Residents and Business owners need to become the mouthpiece, start talking about Gadsden? Posters that partners can put up and expound on the county. Touch point 1 or 2 for next meeting; run-offs. He said his job is to keep Council focused.

Mrs. Holt discussed a new working group within the County and one of the questions posed is what would make you want to stay in Gadsden County. She said one the concerns of the group were customer service, she felt being excited about the product or the charge would help in this area.

**Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE WORKSHOP ADJOURNED AT 4:51 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FL**

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**Lee Garner, TDC Chair**

**Attest:**

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**Beryl H. Wood, Deputy Clerk**

**GADSDEN COUNTY  
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**Present:**

**Lee Garner, Chair of TDC, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector**  
**Matt Thro, Vice – Chair of TDC, H & H Furniture**  
**Jeff DuBree, Sportsman’s Lodge, Bed Tax Collector - Lake Talquin**  
**David Knight, Midway Councilman**  
**Keith Dowdell, City of Quincy Commissioner**  
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**Brenda Holt, BOCC**  
**Lynn Badger, Bed Tax Collector – Havana**  
**Joe Bouch, Chisano**  
**Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant**  
**Allara Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator**  
**Beryl Wood, Deputy Clerk**

**Absent:**

**Peter Patel, Hotel Industry**

**1. Pledge of Allegiance/Roll call**

Lee Garner, Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The roll was called by the deputy clerk and stated above.

**2. Amendments and Approval of Agenda**

Mrs. Burns asked that they pull 4e from the agenda; it would not be presented at this meeting.

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO PULL 4E: FUNDING REQUEST, FROM THE AGENDA AND APPROVE THE REMAINDER OF THE AGENDA AS PRINTED.**

**3. Minutes Approval – November 17, 2014**

**UPON MOTION BY MR. THRO AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 - 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 17, 2014 MINUTES WITH THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS.**

#### 4. General Business

##### a. Selection of New Chairman/ Vice-Chair and Selection and Approval of New Member



Sonya presented the reappointment of council members/ candidate selection approval and added it would be placed on the agenda for the February 17, 2015 BOCC meeting.

Mr. Garner stated he would like to make a motion for Clarence Jackson to be the new chair.

Mr. Jackson gracefully declined.

Mr. Thro nominated Mr. DuBree failed for second.

Mr. DuBree nominated Mr. Thro failed for second.

Mrs. Holt nominated Mr. Dowdell it was seconded by Mr. Jackson for Chairman of the TDC Council for the 2015 year.

##### Chairman

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO MAKE KEITH DOWDELL CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2015 TDC YEAR.**

##### Vice – Chairman

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO MAKE CLARENCE JACKSON VICE – CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2015 TDC YEAR.**

##### Approval of New Member

**UPON MOTION BY MR. GARNER AND SECOND BY JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO FORWARD BOTH NAMES OF PAT HAYES AND CAROLYN FORD TO THE BOCC FOR APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL MEMBER ALONG WITH THE REAPPOINTMEN OF MATT THRO, CLARENCE JACKSON AND JEFF DUBREE.**

##### b. 2015 Emergency Management Summit Funding Approval - \$3,500.00

- ◆ Sonya Burns, Gadsden County TDC, commented the \$3,500 is for printed material. She mentioned they used 200 bed nights at the last Summit. She said they would use majority of the funds for promotional items that would belong to the TDC.

Mr. Jackson said he likes to hold everyone accountable, he asked for itemized list.

- ◆ TaShonda Whaley, Gadsden County Sheriff Department, presented an invoice from Target Copy for 400 Programs – 12 page self cover booklets at \$520.00 total.

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. GARNER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE 2015 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SUMMIT FUNDING APPROVAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,500.**

**c. Approval of TDC Mission Statement, Visioning Statement and Brand**

- ◆ Joe Bouch, Chisano Marketing Group, Inc presented the TDC Mission, Vision and Brand to the TDC Council.

**Mission:** The mission of Gadsden County’s Tourism Development Council is to foster, develop and promote a sustainable tourism product, thereby bringing more people (visitors) to the area, getting them to stay longer, and to spend money.

**Vision:** The Gadsden County Tourism Development Council envisions a tourist destination that showcases the values, heritage, culture and natural beauty of the County.

As well, the TDC looks to foster a spirit of partnership within the county to develop and implement innovative and effective programs/initiatives that will not only grow our tourism industry, but increase economic impact and jobs, resulting in a greater tax base for localities and the county.

**Brand Promise:** Gadsden County, where visitors can DO SOMETHING ORIGINAL.

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. GARNER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE TDC MISSION STATEMENT, VISIONING STATEMENT AND BRAND PROMISE.**

**d. Travel Approval for Joe Bosch, Chisano Group**

- ◆ Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator  
Mrs. Gutcher asked for travel approval for March 16, 2015 Travel - \$300 and also for today’s meeting, since there was no meeting in January to submit approval.

**UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR TRAVEL APPROVAL FOR BOTH FEBURARY 2, 2015 AND MARCH16, 2015 MEETING IN THE AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING \$300 FOR EACH MEETING.**

**e. Funding Requests – (Current Balance \$22,000.00) OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Burns explained this item was pulled because we can’t fund, due to bed nights under the current plan.

Attorney Weiss stated they are required to work under the current plan until it is amended.

**Rocky Comfort Farms - \$3,000.00**

- Pumpkin Patch and Hay Rides

**North Florida Education Corporation - \$2,500.00**

- Diversity Day

**Havana Merchants - \$5,000.00**

- Pumpkin Festival - \$2,500.00
- Lawn Mower Parade - \$2,500.00

**5. 2016 Crappie Tournament – Lake Talquin, Quincy, Florida**

- ◆ Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator, gave update on Crappie Tournament, which was held January 2015 at Lake Talquin. She said the event was well organized and went well. She stated they were given \$10,000 in FY 14/15 by the TDC to conduct this past event. A total of fifty – four (54) boats competed in the 2015 event. A lodging report was not available at the time of this report. She commented they have submitted a quote for the same tournament at the same amount for 2016. She asked the Council to vote and take action allowing the Chairman to sign the attached letter of intent to Crappie USS for the 2016 Crappie Tournament on Lake Talquin reserving specific dates and accepting the fee, with conditions, if they so desire.

Mrs. Holt asked why they had not advertised since they were dealing with tax payers dollars. Recommend that they advertise.

Mrs. Gutcher stated per the Gadsden County Procurement Policy, they only need two or more competitive quotes from two or more vendors.

Mr. Garner said as long as it is advertised then it's done its due diligence.

Mr. DuBree commented the event was great and mentioned the kayak division, which was new and it brought about free advertisement. He said around marinas it was 93 rooms used from the event, in the future they would need to get documentation forms ahead of time to the hotels.

Mr. Garner thanked Jeff, Allara, Stacy, Sonya, and David for all the hardwork. It was nice and the support from county was great.

Mrs. Gutcher said it was nice and could grow to be something nice for the County promoting tourism.

Attorney Weiss pointed out this was not the actual contract that they are signing. It's only a Letter of Intent to accept the bid and reserve the dates of January 28 and 29, 2016. With the following conditions: No other bids are received for a two-day



tournament for less than \$10,000 fee before April 1, 2015, at which time the TDC will close out the informal bidding process; The Board of County Commissioners approves the TDC 2015/16 budget with at minimum \$10, 000 included in the budget for a crappie tournament; The Board of County Commissioners enters into a contract with Crappie USA no later than October 1, 2015 for said tournament, at a price not to exceed \$10,000.

**UPON MOTION BY MR. THRO AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 6 – 1, BY VOICE VOTE, TO ALLOW THE CHAIRPERSON TO SIGN THE LETTER OF INTENT TO CRAPPIE USA FOR THE 2016 CRAPPIE TOURNAMENT ON LAKE TALQUIN FOR JANUARY 28-29, 2016, RESERVING SPECIFIC DATES AND ACCEPTING THE FEE WITH CONDITIONS. (Mrs. Holt opposed the motion and Mr. DuBree abstained from voting, due to the tournament being held at Lake Talquin.)**

**6. Report(s) from County Attorney**

- ◆ David Weiss, BOCC Attorney – No additional items.

**7. Items of discussion from Council members (no vote items)**

- ◆ Mrs. Holt mentioned the focus group that is with the County. She would love for them to meet with TDC on different ideas.
- ◆ Mr. Garner mentioned the Letter of Intent date needed to be changed.
- ◆ Mr. Thro commented he was excited about the presentation for Chisano.

**8. Public Comments**

- ◆ Bob Lauther, Havana Merchants Association, said he would like to talk to Mr. Bouch of Chisano without generating a bill if possible. He said he was seeking permission from the Council.
- ◆ Ben Chandler, Main Street Chattahoochee, said they have completed the visioning document of how they want the community to look moving forward.
- ◆ Carolyn Ford, NFEDC, commended the Council on the hiring of Mr. Bouch of Chisano. She reminded the Council that the community also included the black heritage which is rich in the county and must not be left out when discussing what Gadsden has to offer.

**Upcoming meetings:** March 16, 2015 at 3:30 P.M.

**Notes:** Florida Tourism Day March 11, 2015. Mrs. Burns asked how many would like to attend. Reminded notice will be sent, need to know by end of week, who all would like to attend.

**9. Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING  
ADJOURNED AT 5:56 P.M.**

**GADSDEN COUNTY, FL**

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**KEITH DOWDELL, TDC CHAIR**

**ATTEST:**

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**BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK**