

GADSDEN COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR
Monday, March 16, 2015
Regular Meeting: 5:00 pm

Present:

Keith Dowdell, City of Quincy Commissioner, Chair of TDC
Clarence Jackson, City of Gretna, Vice – Chair of TDC
Matt Thro, H & H Furniture
Peter Patel, Hotel Industry
Jeff DuBree, Sportsman’s Lodge, Bed Tax Collector - Lake Talquin
David Knight, Midway Councilman
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:

Lee Garner, City of Chattahoochee Manager and Tax Collector

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

Keith Dowdell, Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **Amendments to and Approval of the Agenda – No new items**

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AS PRINTED.

3. **Approval of Minutes – February 2, 2015**

The meeting minutes from February 2, 2015 were amended to reflect workshop.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 8 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2015 WORKSHOP MINUTES.

Mr. Thro arrived at this juncture at 3:35pm.

UPON MOTION BY MR. HOLT AND SECOND MS. BADGER, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 2, 2015 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES.

4. **General Business**

a. **2015 Memorial Weekend Bicycle Race**

Pete Butler, a member of the Red Eye Cycling Team came before the Council to discuss the possible funding for a Memorial Weekend Bicycle Race. He said they have a native of Gadsden County on the cycling team, James Thompson who gave the push to take this event to Gadsden County that would draw hundreds of cyclist and the community together. He said they've met with the City and the Commission and they both are on board. He said they encourage and promote healthy living. The event would be Memorial Weekend May 23-24, 2015 and included a 5K race, Cycling and Downtown Activities. He said it would be a lot of people from out of town, a lot of hotel nights. He said they need support in marketing and asked the Council for \$5,000 to support that endeavor. He said child obesity is also something they aim to halt, getting the young ones active. He stressed the importance of the County's support.

Mrs. Holt asked was he the one that came 3 year ago.

He said he was not. Top You Sport did the last activities that came to the County..

Mrs. Holt spoke about how it was so nice; she recommended a 2 year contract or some type of commitment to get them to come back next year.

Mr. Knight asked about numbers for bed nights.

Mr. Butler said he would have to get the information. He said Tim with Top You Sport can also assist.

Mr. DuBree commented they had room nights all the way in Lake Talquin due to the local hotels being booked.

Mrs. Holt said this event keeps growing and they spend money while they are here.

Mr. Thro asked how they would start the communication to make this annual event.

Mr. Butler asked the Council for \$5,000 for marketing and he said they are already trying to make this event.

Mrs. Gutcher said the assistance given to this is sort alike that of the Crappie Tournament and that they would be involved.

Chair Dowdell called for public comment.

Joe Monroe, Executive Director for Quincy MainStreet commented that it is huge market and encouraged them to do it annually. He proposed an idea that next year it be in conjunction with the Quincyfest and it could include the Quincy Music Theater and Arts Museum.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. KINGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR MARKETING FOR THE 2015 MEMORIAL WEEKEND BICYCLE RACE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000.

b. Adoption of the Strategic Plan

Joe Bouch, Chisano Marketing Group commented on the 2015-2016 Strategic Plan Elements. He recommended 2015-2016 Strategic Plans as written.

Mrs. Holt asked about the bed nights. She discussed the accountability and mentioned they ask with the cards why they are here. She would like to collect data to help make better decisions. She also, asked about how much funds can be dispersed.

Mrs. Gutcher said it was a part of the application not the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Bouch said funding is not included, that would be something they need to discuss based on points.

Mr. Weiss said there are a couple of things that should be added, where the statute doesn't specify what has to be included in the Plan. Items listed were an Anticipated Tax Revenue for the next 24 months, tax district, list of uses and revenues (spending allocation). He said this is a document that is subject for review and will probably change. He said it requires a majority plus 1 vote on the County Commission. He said with the grant application procedure he would recommend an Ordinance. He said the Ordinance would include a lot of things that were left out of the Plan.

Chair Dowdell asked did he feel the Strategic Plan was ready for a vote.

Attorney Weiss commented as long as the three items he previously mentioned are add you could proceed. But, he suggested they wait until the Ordinance was ready to go along with the Strategic Plan to BOCC.

Mrs. Holt said she was not in favor of an Ordinance. She said ultimately if anything goes wrong it falls back on the County. She said it is too difficult to change something in a Ordinance once it's been approved.

Mr. Patel gave for example for year we give them first year some incentive but, you need to bring some bed nights back to us. He said the bed nights should have some attachment. He said the money comes from the bed tax that they would use to disperse funding.

Attorney Weiss said a lot of it is a policy level decisions in terms of whether what you want to require of your grant applicant. There are a lot of items included that says you have to meet certain criteria, you can only spend funds in certain locations. He stressed if you get rid of those things they will be gone. He said the rules should be consistent and that you as a Council follow the rules. He said the current Plan had too many restrictions.

Mr. Thro added as an additional option it sounds like with a 24 month budget we address a lot of this, budget how we allocate the money. How we want to break it up over the next 24 months and a revised application could be attached. If we go down the track and not necessarily approve the Strategic Plan and at the next meeting they bring back those two things, you could review prior and let us know if there is anything that has to happen.

Chair Dowdell said before the vote on anything it should first go to the Attorney. He will vote yea or nay. Therefore, it should be taken back to the table and there are certain things that should be addressed. He said they want to send a good document to the BOCC. He said they could have a special meeting.

Attorney Weiss asked for direction with the bed nights and when the document needs to be voted up or down.

Mr. DuBree said they could direction at this meeting.

Mr. Bouch said this plan was created in the middle of a fiscal year. He said they have discussed the budget for 2015-2016.

Chair Dowdell said in approving the Plan they aren't approving the expenditures.

Mr. Bouch said that was correct.

Mrs. Gutcher said they should take the Strategic Plan and make an Action Plan and prioritize how they want to accomplish the Strategic Plan, having it a 1 or 2 year basis and then you can assign some dollars to those actions. Then you can adopt your budget based on your Action Plan that is based off of your Strategic Plan. You be more proactive than reactive to citizens coming to the podium asking for funds. In discussing funding related to the Strategic Plan they generally work with the budget revenue they had the previous year and increase by 3%.

Attorney Weiss stated the statutory requirements are that you have Anticipated Net Tourist Tax Development Revenue for the next 24 months; Taxing District, where the tax is implemented; and List of proposed uses of revenue, with the projected cost. He said he was uncertain how specific it needed to be but, generally the more specific the better. He said they could put a dollar amount that would be the preferable way to do it. He said the document is close it wouldn't take a lot. He said if they want to have more direction (standards) in the Grant Application. He said it could be approved once the additional items were added.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO TABLE THE ADOPTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN.

c. Approval of Logo – Do Something Original

Joe Bouch, Chisano Marketing Group spoke on the logo choices and chose font that has historical look and the 3 stars are that American feel. He proposed all 3 logos that could be used differently and the Do Something Original Stamp. He said they have already secured "Do Something Original.com".

UPON MOTION MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. JACKSON, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF LOGO THAT CAN BE USED DIFFERENTLY 3 WAYS AND THE DO SOMETHING ORIGINAL STAMP.

d. Travel Approval for Joe Bosch, Chisano Group

Allara Mills - Gutcher, Planning Director/TDC Administrator asked that travel be approved for Mr. Bosch for March 23 Workshop and two more times.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 - 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL FOR JOE BOSCH OF CHISANO GROUP ON MARCH 23 AND TWO MORE TIMES BEFORE THE APRIL 20 MEETING.

e. Presentation of the status of the mobile app.

Joe Bouch, Chisano Marketing Group presented the status of the mobile application. He said their desire is to create a website bug, talk about what they are doing in the realm of tourism. It would be placed on business partner's websites and would be a direct link to Gadsden County. Additionally, it would create awareness and pride in the county. He asked for approval of the bug and that no dollars are involved. He said they want to create window sign clings that would be placed on business partners' storefronts and have a direct link to Gadsden County website via QR code, T-Shirts, Town Posters and Tourism Ruler that creates awareness in the community. He gave ideas that included an option for all county workers to wear t-shirts as uniforms. He said he did a number of things, but the two he focused on were awareness and pride in the county.

UPON MOTION BY MR. PATEL AND SECOND BY MR. THRO, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 -0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE WEBSITE BUG FOR THE GADSDEN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL.

f. Hospitality Training Workshop 2015 (Recommendation of two attendees)

Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning Director/ TDC Administrator discussed the Hospitality Training Workshop 2015 that RiverWay South is sponsoring this event at 3 different locations and times. The one which she was interested in is scheduled for April 15, 2015 in Marianna, FL. She noted that they would be giving out a couple of scholarships and that they are committed to providing quality education and training for the region's tourism industry professionals. Applicants must be prequalified to qualify for the scholarship. She said she would like to reach out to the people that have hotels.

UPON MOTION MR. THRO AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 9 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO SUPPORT THE HOSPITALITY TRAINING WORKSHOP 2015 IN MARIANNA, FL WITH REGISTRATION FOR TWO ATTENDEES AT \$50 EACH.

5. Report (s) from County Attorney - David Weiss

There was no additional comment by the County Attorney.

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

Mrs. Holt spoke on vacancies that come before the Council; she said she would like to see them advertised to the public. She recommend it be placed on the agenda for April 20 TDC Meeting. She also discussed the possibility of local companies doing the t-shirts for the County.

7. **Public Comment**

Bernard Piwah, Building and Planning Director for the City of Quincy, commented this place has unique historical assets. A welcome center in Gadsden County would be beneficial to all who visit the County. He asked that it be placed on the agenda for discussion. He said that Regina Davis, Quincy CRA Director and Joe Munroe, Quincy Main Street are people you really need to know.

Regina Davis thanked the Council for approving the Bike Race. She added with the 5K race the funds raised through registration would be used for the Quincy Relay for Life.

8. **Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING
ADJOURNED AT 5:03 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FL

KEITH DOWDELL, TDC CHAIR

ATTEST:

BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK