

**GADSDEN COUNTY
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR
Monday, August 17, 2015
Meeting: 3:30 pm**

Present:

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

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

Keith Dowdell, Chairman of TDC called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum present and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Deputy Clerk conducted the roll call.

2. **Amendments to and Approval of the Agenda**

 **To add Brenda Holt’s request: St. Petersburg Experience travel - under 3. G**

**UPON MOTION BY MR. DuBree AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0,
BY VOICE VOTE, TO ADD BRENDA HOLT’S TRAVEL “THE ST. PETERSBURG EXPERIENCE”
UNDER 3G TO THE AGENDA.**

3. **General Business**

a. **Riverway South Presentation – RWSAC - Pam Portwood, Project Manager**

Mrs. Portwood gave a presentation on Riverway South and what they offer. It is a team of northwest Florida counties bordering the Apalachicola and Choctawhatchee Rivers. The counties have joined together to create a regional tourism destination. She mentioned the self

– guided itinerary and website. She presented a resolution that they will ask BOCC to sign at the August 18, 2015 meeting designating the month of October, 2015 as “Explore our Florida” Month. She asked that they continue the partnership as previous years in the amount of \$5,000.

Mrs. Holt asked how we evaluate the program. She asked for proof of what they are doing. She suggested they work with the County Marketing Firm.

Ms. Portwood said right now you can use your website. She said in the future they will do visitor research. Education wise they have approved 3 scholarships. She said they are the only highlighted resources currently in the County.

Mr. Knight asked was there different levels of partnership.

Mr. Thro said it was a great organization. He praised her for being a great grant writer.

Mr. DuBree asked Joe Bouch was this aligned with TDC goals.

Mr. Bouch said it had a lot of directional components.

Ms. Portwood said they complement some of the things TDC does, but we try to enhance. She said they will need letters of commitment in October and invoicing of funds in January.

UPON MOTION BY MR. DUBREE AND SECOND BY MR. KNIGHT, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, TO APPROVE THE RIVERWAY SOUTH MEMBERSHIP AT \$5,000 AND APPROVE THE RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER “EXPLORE OUR FLORIDA” MONTH TO BE FORWARDED TO BOCC FOR SIGNATURE.

b. 2016 Crappie Tournament Presentation

❖ **Larry Clark, Event Organizer**

He recapped the event from last year. He highlighted there were 53 teams from last year and 13 states were represented. He said as far as room nights Talquin Lodge 143/Whippoorwill 25/Ingram 55. He said as far as hotels he couldn't get factual numbers. He encouraged Commissioners to visit website. He asked for the same thing they asked for last year. He said they also bring the social media piece now. Still offer full page color ad for brochure and they will bring weigh team.

Mr. Knight commented on the 53 registered teams. Inquired about registration process.

Mr. Patel said they need a better way to get proven bed night stays. Mr. Patel said Hampton Inn has a process, they do ask questions.

Mr. DuBree said on behalf of TDC, 3 weeks after the event he did call around and the numbers are pretty consistent. He also discussed moving the tournament to February 5-6, 2016.

Mr. Thro asked could the TDC prepare form to do room nights. He asked are there links for accommodations on the website when they register on the website.

Mrs. Holt stated usually the organization that sponsors the program keeps up with the room nights. She said cards should be at each venue and any lodging. She also mentioned the other group with Crappie Masters.

Clarence Jackson left at this juncture of the meeting.

Mr. Clark commented he knocked on Gadsden's door because he wanted to do business. He feels they would do the best job.

Mr. DuBree mentioned Sarah Johnson from Ingram's Marina and that maybe she could give some feedback.

Mrs. Sarah Johnson came before the Commission and commented on bed nights. She said if they do a questionnaire they would need to play a better role in collecting data if they know ahead of time. She said she was in favor of keeping Tournament at Ingram's and Whippoorwill instead of Pat Thomas Park.

Mr. Thro asked if they could do a 3 year contract bid to get continuity for the County. He said it would be needed to see success in the tournament.

Attorney Weiss said they could.

Mrs. Holt said if they do 2 years that would give him 3 years.

Chair Dowdell asked if they could have a special meeting to prepare language for the RFP for the 2016 Crappie Tournament.

c. **Chisano Marketing Group (Contract Renewal)**

❖ **Joe Bouch, President – Chisano Marketing Group**

Mrs. Holt mentioned the mural presentation in St. Petersburg. She asked how effective it is.

Mr. Bouch said if you have large traffic in your area it's a huge boost. He stated some can fit the decor of the City and it is a great thing to do. He said they are working on next years plan. He said this year they focused on getting the goods. He introduced the media person from Chisano. They have great things planned. He said they are putting together a FAM trip from the Villages from Sumter County, Florida. He said if they like what they see they will come the 2nd week in October, 3 day trip (Mid – Week Rooms).

Mrs. Holt said she was in favor of this happening.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COMMISSION VOTED 6 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL ON THE CHISANO MARKETING CONTRACT RENEWAL.

d. **Suggested Event Committee Meeting (September 15, 2015 @ 3:30pm)**

❖ **Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant II**

Ms. Burns said this particular meeting would entail reviewing all applications from this (FY 15-16) fiscal year and bringing suggestions back to the Council. She said they would have to advertise meeting and asked that they please let us know if this date (September 15, 2015 @3:30 p.m.) is not feasible in a timely manner.

e. **Approval of Funding Requests (FY 2014-2015 Current Balance \$17,184.00)**

❖ **Sonya Burns, TDC Administrative Assistant II**

Havana Merchants Association Marketing Funds - \$1,600.00

Ms. Burns said the Havana Merchants have provided all documents needed for payment. She said this request is for Havana Days. She said originally they didn't submit an application, but they did submit reimbursement documentation. They needed an application on file to receive payment and now they have submitted it and you are now able to approve for payment.

Mr. Patel asked could they be reimbursed without an application being submitted first.

Attorney Weiss said this is based on reimbursement status.

Mr. DuBree asked about the Council decision for the dollar amount.

Chair Dowdell asked what this is based off.

Ms. Burns said they didn't adopt bed nights in new Strategic Plan. It was the language adopted from Sumpter County Strategic Plan.

Mr. Thro said it is in the application and not the Strategic Plan.

Attorney Weiss said the Event Committee should review. He said you don't have to fund anything. Bed nights would be taken into consideration.

Mr. Bouch said in theory there will be events that aren't going to have bed nights. He said they would have a point system and at the top is bed nights, someone can come and apply, they would get blank amount of money. It would be done in the Event Committee, a teared system.

Chair Dowdell asked which pot would the funding came from.

Attorney Weiss said there is nothing that says it has to be bed nights, it must promote tourism.

Mr. Thro commented he was in favor of approving the payment. The process has been simplified.

UPON MOTION BY MR. PATEL AND SECOND BY MR. DUBREE, THE COUNCIL VOTED 4-1, BY POLLED VOTE, TO APPROVE THE \$1,600 HAVANA MERCHANTS. (Mrs. Holt opposed the motion and Mr. Thro abstained from voting.)

f. Task Order Approval #1 (Website Design, Copywriting: Beta Testing, etc.) - \$5,000
❖ **Allara Mills – Gutcher, Planning and Community Development, Director**

Mrs. Allara said this task order will cover the design and development of a new "Do Something Original" website.

Mrs. Holt asked would the ethnic side be touched such as Indians and African – Americans. How do we advertise to groups?

Mr. Thro mentioned the old website creating a new one was the most cost effective. He asked could it be promoted as a developing website.

Mr. Bouch said Social Media is the best way and word of mouth.

Mr. DuBree said they need to promote assets in the County.

UPON MOTION BY MRS. HOLT AND SECOND BY MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTED 7 – 0, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR APPROVAL OF THE TASK ORDER FOR WEBSITE DESIGN, COPYWRITING AND BETA TESTING, ETC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,000.

g. Commissioner Holt's Travel

Ms. Burns commented on Mrs. Holt's travel to the St. Petersburg area. She said the amount needed for Mrs. Holt's travel was \$358.00 for travel on August 29, 2015. She is going to a tourism event and we need to pick up for room night. She will be visiting the Mural Tour located in St. Petersburg along with a host of other activities. She will stay on and go to the Governor's Conference on Tourism. She said this tourism and economic development experience with the City of St. Petersburg. The additional cost will cover hotel and car rental.

Chair Dowdell asked what did this have to do with the TDC.

Ms. Burns said it was a tourism event and it falls up under the TDC. If she stays on we must pick up the bill for that room night.

Mr. DuBree inquired about the Governor's Conference he thought it was previously stated they wouldn't pay for any travel.

Ms. Burns stated they are only paying for the room night that would include 2 nights.

Mrs. Gutcher noted this is separate from the Governor's Conference.

UPON MOTION BY MR. KNIGHT AND MR. PATEL, THE COUNCIL VOTE 4 – 1, BY VOICE VOTE, FOR HER APPROVAL TO TRAVEL TO ST. PETERSBURG IN THE AMOUNT OF \$358.00. (Mrs. Holt was absent from this vote. Mr. DuBree opposed the motion.)

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

Mr. Thro commented on providing data for good fishing spots in the County. He mentioned that Lake Talquin was on Garmin.com and as well as others and what it ensures is that they navigate and find good fishing spots. He stated a lot of lakes in Gadsden County don't have data. He said data is there on USGS sites and all they have to do is plug it in. If we can work with them to retrieve data from the surrounding lakes it would be great and beneficial to the County.

5. **Public Comments Maurice Grant**

Mr. Grant spoke on the Caribbean FAMFEST Festival he made presentation for October 3, 2015 10am- 8pm at the 5F Farm Event Center 8701 Salem Rd. Havana, Florida 32352. He said what they do from the festival is they give back to TMH Foundation Diabetics and Childhood Diabetics. He asked for the support of the Council.

Information only:

- ❖ **Current Expenditure Report**
- ❖ **Staff Reports**

6. **Adjournment**

**THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, THE CHAIR DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED
AT 6:04 P.M.**

GADSDEN COUNTY, FL

KEITH DOWDELL, TDC CHAIR

ATTEST:

BERYL H. WOOD, DEPUTY CLERK