

# Leon County Tourist Development Council

## Minutes of the January 7, 2010 Meeting

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Russell Daws, Chairman  
Georgia Ackerman  
Chucha Barber  
Marc Bauer  
Mayor Marks  
Commissioner Thael  
Sam Patel  
Michelle Wilson  
Commissioner Ziffer

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**STAFF PRESENT:** Lee Daniel, Visit Tallahassee  
Kaye Strong-Hogan, Visit Tallahassee  
Wanda Barnard, Visit Tallahassee  
Brian Hickey, Visit Tallahassee  
Chris O'Brien, Visit Tallahassee  
Kerri Post, Visit Tallahassee  
Katie Kole, Visit Tallahassee  
Lorrie Allen, Visit Tallahassee  
Raymond James, Visit Tallahassee

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Rebecca Dirden-Mattingly, Creative Strategies Consulting  
Curtis Zimmerman, The Zimmerman Agency  
Bill Lickson, The Zimmerman Agency  
Alice Bonn, The Zimmerman Agency  
Mark Bonn, FSU  
Sean Chang, FSU  
Brian Rowland, Rowland Publishing

**Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 9:09 a.m. by Chairman Russell Daws, who extended a warm welcome to guests and TDC members. Chairman Daws welcomed Commissioner Cliff Thael, who was appointed by Chairman Rackleff as the county representative to serve on the TDC.

**Request for Additional Agenda Items** – Chucha Barber requested a discussion regarding funding for cultural and arts.

**Items for Consent** – Sam Patel requested to pull the financial reports for discussion. Chairman Daws called for a motion to approve the rest of the items under consent. Motion was made by Chucha Barber to approve the following items for consent.

1. November 5, 2009 Meeting Minutes
2. Direct Sales, Communication Services, Sports & Film Reports
3. Advertising/PR Activity Report
4. Marketing Research Report

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Thael and carried unanimously.

Lee Daniel reported that November bed tax collections are down by 36%. He noted that six properties have not submitted their collections at this time. After discussion, Sam Patel moved to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Thael and carried unanimously.

### **General Business**

- Bylaws Revision – Lee Daniel reported that revisions to the Bylaws were sent out in advance of the meeting. Marc Bauer moved to approve the revisions as presented. Motion was seconded by Chucha Barber and carried unanimously.
  
- Special Event Grants Committee Report – Lee Daniel reported that the American Cancer Society submitted a grant application for the Florida Division Advocacy Day. They requested funding in the amount of \$2,300 to be used to offset the cost of the hotel and associated expenses. Georgia Ackerman pointed out that they are applying for funds outside of the grant cycle and she would prefer to stick to the normal cycle. Commissioner Ziffer made a motion to approve the request for discussion. Mayor Marks seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Thael emphasized that applicants need to understand the cycle and when to apply. He expressed concern that if this application is considered for funding, then it will open the door for more requests. Chairman Daws entertained a motion to consider the request for funding. There was no motion and the request was denied. Lee Daniel was directed to contact the event coordinator.
  
- Proposed Website Advertising Policy – Lee Daniel reported that staff has been working with The Zimmerman Agency on a complete redesign of the [www.visittallahassee.com](http://www.visittallahassee.com) Web site. He noted that one of staff's other primary long-range goals is to develop a Visitor Guide that is a much better sales tool for the destination by offering more editorial "sell" copy and by becoming a more attractive, perfect bound publication. He reported that from meetings with staff, the Agency and Rowland Publishing, the plan is to accomplish this by changing the Visitor Guide to an annual publication that will substantially increase circulation per issue while cutting costs; offer a slightly higher advertising rate based on increased circulation, and allow advertising sales on the Visit Tallahassee site.

Brian Rowland was in attendance to answer questions. Sam Patel expressed concern that a partner must purchase advertising in the Visitor Guide in order to purchasing advertising on the Web site. He noted that for some of the smaller partners, this could present a problem. Other concerns about an annual publication were expressed by TDC members.

After discussion, staff was directed to address the concerns expressed by TDC members and come back with a proposal for consideration at the March meeting.

- Book Direct/Jack Rabbit Proposal – Lee Daniel introduced Terri Wainscott from Miles Media. Ms. Wainscott made a presentation to explain the program proposal and then answered questions from TDC members. She pointed out that two webinars were conducted with representatives from 24 properties participating and all unanimously supported Visit Tallahassee implementing this functionality on the new Web site.

Lee Daniel reported that staff recommends implementing the BookDirect/Jack Rabbit functionality on the new VisitTallahassee.com Web site and utilizing the DMO Lease Model to allow 100% of Leon County lodging partners to participate in the program without commissions, monthly or annual fees. He pointed out that the goal is to have the vast majority of commercial lodging establishments in Leon County participating in the program within the first six months after implementation.

After discussion, Marc Bauer made a motion to move forward with implementing the program and to revisit in a year in order to get feedback from the lodging industry. Motion was seconded by Michelle Wilson and carried unanimously.

- Group Ground Transportation Policy – Lee Daniel reported that due to the lack of a true conference center or convention hotel, Tallahassee is sometimes not considered as a meeting destination. He noted that meeting and convention groups typically prefer sleeping rooms and meeting space under one roof or within walking distance for both convenience and cost effectiveness. He reported that in order to potentially increase the number of larger meeting groups, a transportation fund of \$20,000 has been established in the FY 2009-2010 Visit Tallahassee budget to assist in transporting meeting attendees between lodging properties and public meeting venues, or between the accommodations and a local attraction for an off-site function. Groups would need to submit an Application for Transportation Funds that will be reviewed and verified by staff prior to approval. Funds will only be allocated to confirmed meetings and conferences and funds will be paid directly to transportation companies following receipt of an invoice and proof that the transportation was provided. Funds will be allotted by staff to groups based on the number of room nights booked.

After discussion, Commissioner Ziffer moved, seconded by Mayor Marks, to offer reimbursement of transportation funds to the groups that meet the criteria and then revisit the policy in a year and make modifications. Mayor Marks stated that he would like to hear feedback from the lodging industry regarding a Convention Hotel. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Director's Report**

- TDC Chair and Vice-Chair Election – Lee Daniel reported that for the past two or three years, the election of the TDC Chair and Vice-Chair was conducted at the March meeting. This item will be on the agenda for the March meeting.
- Tallahassee Area CVB Marketing Support Check – Lee Daniel expressed appreciation to Michelle Personette and the CVB Board of Directors for the smooth transition and the transfer of total and cash fixed assets of \$90,000, of which \$54,000 was cash. This item will be brought before the County Commission for approval to utilize the funds for marketing. A commitment was made to the former CVB Board that the funds would be used for marketing. There was consensus from the TDC to let staff determine priorities for utilization of the marketing funds.
- Advertising Agency Presentation Including Outdoor & Video – Bill Lickson from The Zimmerman Agency, presented the Outdoor Creative, shared some of the print advertisements and shared the Tallahassee Brand Video. Commissioner Ziffer expressed appreciation to The Zimmerman team for listening to concerns about the Outdoor Creative and coming back with an improved product. Chucha Barber stated that she would like for the billboard to show current exhibits at the Mary Brogan. Commissioner Thaell suggested promoting more outdoor and nature based tourism such as kayaking down the river.
- Marketing Research – Dr. Mark Bonn presented a power point presentation of the 2009 Tallahassee Leon County Visitor Research for Quarter 4 (October-December). He emphasized the need to be more effective with the advertising. He pointed out that for the first time Leisure Pleasure outranked Visiting Friends and Relatives which shows that we are doing a better job of telling our story.

Lee pointed out that he will be meeting regularly with Dr. Bonn and The Zimmerman Agency.

- COCA Re-Granting of TDC Funds - Chucha Barber stated that in the essence of time, this item will be discussed at the March meeting.

- Destination Development Committee - Lee Daniel reported that he spoke with Commissioner Ziffer about serving on the Destination Development Committee and he expressed interest in serving. Lee will follow-up.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.



Russell S. Daws, Chairman



Attest: Wanda Barnard