

# Leon County Tourist Development Council

## Minutes of the March 17, 2009 Meeting

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Russell Daws, Chairman  
Commissioner John Dailey  
Chucha Barber  
Georgia Ackerman  
Sam Patel  
Michelle Wilson  
Mickey Brady

**STAFF PRESENT:** Ken Morris  
Kaye Strong-Hogan

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Sharon Liggett, TACVB  
Stephanie Reaves, TACVB  
Brian Hickey, TACVB  
Carrie Blanchard representing Mayor John Marks  
Marc Bauer, Hotel Duval  
Pace Allen, Paden Properties, LLC  
Denise Allen, Paden Properties, LLC  
Lois Griffin, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra  
Bill Mattox, Interested Citizen

**Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Chairman Russell Daws. Chairman Daws extended a welcome to TDC members and guests. Chairman Daws requested self introductions for the record and for guests attending the meeting for the first time.

**Request for Additional Agenda Items** – Chairman Daws called for additional agenda items for consideration and discussion. Mickey Brady stated that he would like to add two items for discussion: 1) the consideration of the proposed 5<sup>th</sup> penny levy, and 2) allocation of funding by the Leon County Commission.

**Items for Consent Approval** – Chairman Daws called for a motion to approve items under Consent. Chucha Barber requested an amendment to the January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. Under the discussion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Penny Tourist Development Tax, p. 5, "Chucha Barber reported that no one has seen a business plan from the Performing Arts Center. She noted that it was called the "Cultural Plan" and it has been a long time since anyone has seen the plan. She stated that she would like to re-evaluate the whole mix of how bed tax dollars are spent."

Statement amended as follows:

"Chucha Barber reported that it has been a long time since the Business Plan for The Performing Arts Center was shared with the Leon County Board of County Commissioners. There are many changes to what were cited as funding sources, including, but not limited to, state grant opportunities. The "Cultural Plan" was submitted for City and County approval in June, 2003. It would be prudent for the Community to revisit that effort and re-evaluate how bed tax dollars are spent."

The motion was moved by Mickey Brady and seconded by Sam Patel to approve the following items for Consent. The motion carried unanimously.

1. January 27, 2009 Meeting Minutes, with revision.
2. Direct Marketing and Convention Services
3. Financial Reports January, FY2009/February FY2009
4. Total Year-to-Date Bed Tax Collections

**General Business** – Chairman Daws requested overview of the Special Events Grants for Sporting Events from Brian Hickey. Mr. Hickey gave an overview of the grants for the Second Cycle of the fiscal year. Grants were reviewed and approved by the Tallahassee Sports Council and is forwarding their recommendation for consideration and approval by the TDC. Total recommended amount - \$19,200. The motion to approve was made by Chucha Barber and seconded by Michelle Wilson. Motion passed unanimously.

Sam Patel inquired about the recent FHSAA Cheerleading event. Mr. Hickey responded that the event was successful with approximately 166 teams totaling 3,500 visitors (2,500 athletes with an additional 1,000 visitors). He further informed the TDC that they are currently going through the process of tracking the information on economic impact and room night production. Information should be available in the next report to the TDC.

Chairman Daws inquired about the Florida Sports Foundation (FSF) and the Sunshine State Games. Brian Hickey reported that more information would be available at the close of the legislative session as Florida's Sunshine State Games and the FSF are being looked at closely.

#### Committee Reports

**Program Review Committee** - Mickey Brady reported that the committee is still working to finalize the report and should be ready to make a presentation at the next TDC meeting.

**Finance/Policies and Procedures Committee** - Mickey Brady reported on the January/February 2009 Financial Reports. He reported that expenditures were on budget except for revenues. Revenues are down 8% compared to last year.

**Special Event Grants** – Michelle Wilson reported that the Special Event Grant Committee has completed revamping the grant application. The committee is reviewing the inclusion of a transportation grant as part of the Special Event Grant application. Staff has identified some samples from other counties and is continuing to look for more. The committee is in the process of reviewing information.

**Update on Executive Director Selection Process** – Ken Morris reported that approximately 83 applications had been received for the Executive Director position. Most of the applicants were from the tourism and hospitality industry. The list of applicants had been shortlisted to ten applicants having superb experience and knowledge in the industry. This list will be further refined to four applicants who will be telephone interviewed. A decision on the selected applicant should be made in the following weeks.

**Funding Request for Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra** – Chairman Daws recognized Lois Griffin of the Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Griffin presented her request for funding in the amount of \$5,000 for the *Pops in the Park* event. The event is scheduled for May 16, 2009.

It was noted that the event would take place during the same week as the "Get Out and See Tallahassee" campaign coordinated by the CVB. Ms. Griffin informed the Board that TSO is currently working with Peter Mitchell who is the organization's advertising agent. The TDC requested that TSO along with Peter Mitchell collaborate with Sharon Liggett and her staff (CVB) to maximize the effort in promoting the event. After discussion, the TDC approved \$2,000 for expenditure specific marketing. The motion made by Michelle Wilson was seconded by Mickey Brady.

**Executive Director's Report** – Ken Morris presented an overview and analysis of the Tourist Development Tax which explains how the tax should be used according to Florida Statutes 125.0104. The proposed 5<sup>th</sup> penny consideration will be discussed under Additional Agenda Items.

Mr. Morris presented reports received from Florida A&M University and Florida State University on the marketing grant. Chucha Barber expressed concern and commented that follow-up is needed. A meeting with representatives of both schools should be arranged to convey TDC's expectation regarding reporting of how marketing funds were utilized. She stated that a better understanding is needed on what the TDC expects and how the funds are to be expended.

Mr. Morris also presented a report from the Council on Culture & Arts (COCA). The Board expressed that more detail should be provided on the funding of the organizations.

It was requested that representatives from reporting organizations be invited to the next TDC meeting to answer any questions that the TDC may have.

**Additional agenda items** – Chairman Daws called for discussion on additional items. Mickey Brady opened discussion on the proposed 5<sup>th</sup> penny levy expressing concern that the proposed 5<sup>th</sup> penny would increase taxation to hotel consumers to 12.5%. Chucha Barber expressed concern over the Cultural Plan and that it should be reviewed. She also expressed to the Board that the distribution of the tourist development tax, how they are being spent, should be re-evaluated.

Commissioner Daily commented on the proposed use of the 5<sup>th</sup> penny and expressed support on bringing the discussion back before the TDC to determine how the penny should be used.

Mr. Marc Bauer commented that a statement from the TDC should be provided to the County Commission for consideration. After discussion, the TDC consented to the following statement on the consideration of the proposed 5<sup>th</sup> penny:

*"Should the Board pass the leverage of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cent for Tourist Tax collections, the TDC looks forward to working with the BCC to ensure that the funds are utilized to promote a sustainable tourism economy"* The motion, made by Michelle Wilson and seconded by Sam Patel, carried unanimously.

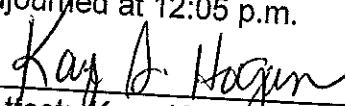
Mickey Brady expressed concern over the expenditure of tourist tax funds without the consideration, review and approval of the TDC. He cited recent examples of expenditure of funds by the County Commission without input from the TDC. Recent examples include the additional allocation of funds to Springtime Tallahassee and the Renewable Energy and Sustainability Conference.

Commissioner Daily commented that many of the organizations are experiencing an increase in costs due to services that once were provided by City of Tallahassee are no longer being offered as an in-kind service. He suggested that follow-up should be done with the City to determine which services are being removed that may affect whether or not an event takes place.

**Election of Chairman** – Chairman Daws passed the election of chairman to Mickey Brady. Michelle Wilson nominated and motioned for Russell Daws to continue as Chairman for remainder of FY 2008/09. Motion was seconded by Mickey Brady. Motion passed unanimously. The election for Vice Chairman would be deferred until the next meeting of the TDC.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

  
Russell S. Daws, Chairman

  
Attest: Kaye Hogab