

Leon County Tourist Development Council

Minutes of the March 4, 2010 Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Russell Daws, Chairman
Georgia Ackerman
Chucha Barber
Marc Bauer
Commissioner Cliff Thael
Sam Patel
Michelle Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor John Marks
Commissioner Gil Ziffer

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

GUESTS PRESENT: Richard Long, The Zimmerman Agency
Alice Bonn, The Zimmerman Agency
T.J. Aseltyne, The Zimmerman Agency
Brian Rowland, Rowland Publishing
Bernie Waxman, Tallahassee Sports Council
Peggy Brady, Council on Culture & Arts
Jan Wiley, Mission San Luis
Carrie Blanchard, Mayor's Office
Linda Powell, Tallahassee Magazine

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chairman Russell Daws, who extended a warm welcome to guests and TDC members. Chairman Daws requested self introductions for TDC members, staff and guests.

Request for Additional Agenda Items – None

Items for Consent –

Chairman Daws called for a motion to approve items under Consent. Commissioner Thael moved approval of the following items under Consent.

1. January 7, 2010 Meeting Minutes
2. Direct Sales, Communication Services, Sports & Film Reports
3. Financial Reports: January/February 2010
4. Total Year-to-Date Bed Tax Collections
5. Advertising/PR Activity Report
6. Marketing Research Report

Motion was seconded by Sam Patel and carried unanimously.

General Business

- Annual Visitor Guide and Visittallahassee.com Advertising Policy – Lee Daniel reported that the proposal that was presented at the January TDC meeting was fine tuned over the past 60 days. He pointed out that he is seeking TDC approval to authorize staff and Rowland Publishing to produce an annual Visitor Guide with delivery in late September as outlined in the proposed policy. He also asked for TDC approval to allow Rowland Publishing to offer full-page, 2/3-page, 1/2-page and 1/3-page advertisers in the Visitor Guide “added value” exposure on the new web site as outlined in the proposed policy. He noted that both representatives from Rowland Publishing and The Zimmerman Agency are available to answer any questions and provide an update on the “trial” added value offered for the Spring 2010 issue of the Visitor Guide. He stated that the goal is to have a 76 page perfect bound booklet with 50/50 Editorial/Advertising Page Ratio.

He pointed out that following the production of the first annual Visitor Guide, Visit Tallahassee staff will develop, in cooperation with the Leon County Purchasing Department, a Request for Proposal that will be publicly advertised for consideration by other publishing companies potentially interested in producing future issues of the Visitor Guide.

Chucha Barber moved approval of the policy. Motion was seconded by Marc Bauer and carried unanimously.

- COCA Re-granting of TDC Funds – Copies of the COCA Cultural Grant Guidelines and Application for Fiscal Year 2011 were provided to TDC members for review in advance of the meeting. Peggy Brady distributed copies of a three page hand out outlining the structure of COCA and provided a summary of the COCA Cultural Grants Program from 1996 – 2011. She also provided a summary of questions that she felt might be asked, as well as other frequently asked questions. She emphasized that she appreciates working with Lee Daniel and feels that together they can make a difference.

Chucha Barber stated that the new process for COCA grants creates an opportune time for discussion. She pointed out that these are

extraordinary times for non-profit entities. She noted that the COCA grant application is a 36 page document and so far without beginning the process one and two staff people from the Brogan have attended meetings to prepare for filling out the application. She emphasized that every one hour spent writing a grant is an hour that she can't spend fundraising. Ms. Barber also pointed out that the Brogan is restricted from applying for capital funding because the building is owned by TCC. She noted that at one time they were a line item in the City and County budgets and received funding in a lump sum. Since the new process, they have never adjusted and have lost \$100,000 per year. She pointed out that she does not see a solution regarding the cash flow of the Brogan. Ms. Brady stated that COCA represents the entire community and not just one entity. Ms. Barber strongly emphasized the need to re-visit the process with TDC representation.

- TDC Chair & Vice Chair Election – Lee Daniel reported that traditionally in March, the TDC has elected a Chair and Vice Chair, as reflected in the TDC By-Laws. Marc Bauer commended Chairman Daws for the excellent job of serving as Chairman and moved to have him continue as Chair for another year. Motion was seconded by Michelle Wilson and carried unanimously.

Chairman Daws stated that he strongly believes that all entities whether public or private need a rebirth. He emphasized that he loves this organization and what it does for the community, but indicated that he is not comfortable going beyond one more term. He stressed the need to have a strong Vice Chair who is willing to step forward next year. He stated that he would feel comfortable chairing for another year if Marc Bauer would be willing to serve as Vice Chair. Mr. Bauer stated that he would be honored to serve. Chairman Daws nominated Marc Bauer as Vice Chair of the TDC. Motion was seconded by Sam Patel and carried unanimously.

- Local Community Awareness Campaign – Lee Daniel reported that the County Administrator wanted more focus on a local awareness campaign. In looking at research, he noticed that more than 40% of overnight visitors are staying with friends and family. He noted that the perception is that Tallahassee is a destination for legislative session and football. He pointed out that the "Get Out and See Tallahassee" campaign has been very successful in educating the community about what there is to do and see in Tallahassee and he would like to see the campaign extended beyond one weekend during the year. He requested The Zimmerman Agency to work with staff and come up with ideas to extend the campaign.

Richard Long provided an overview of the campaign to build resident and business awareness of Tallahassee as a legitimate and desirable destination for Leisure, Conference, Sports and Film travel. The goal is to

enhance resident and business awareness, appreciation and support of the TDC, Visit Tallahassee and the Visitor Industry of Leon County, as well as strengthening the destination brand identify and awareness.

T. J. Aseltyne presented the Visit Tallahassee T.O.U.R. Guide campaign. The T.O.U.R. acronym, standing for "Tourism is Our Unlimited Resource," is a six-month program offering free admission to select local attractions on the third Saturday of each month. He provided examples of the custom decals that people can collect and upload on their Facebook page. The goal is to spread the message at no cost and start some competition among friends to collect them all.

Alice Bonn reported that ads will run in the *Tallahassee Democrat* and on Clear Channel. In addition, media briefings will be conducted and County Commissioners will be invited to get involved and come out to support the campaign.

Michelle Wilson stated that she would like to see the front desk hotel staff involved in the campaign and educated on what there is to do and see in Tallahassee.

Chairman Daws reported that he is pleased to see that we are looking to our local residents to promote the Tallahassee area as a destination. He encouraged working with all attractions to leverage their Facebook and Twitter. He stated that he looks forward to a report on the success of the campaign. Richard Long stated that he expects to see a big increase in Facebook fans.

Georgia Ackerman suggested making the schools aware of the campaign. She also suggested that future campaigns include hotels providing reduced rates and special summer rates.

- 2nd Cycle Sports Grants Recommendations – Lee Daniel reported that the Sports Council met and reviewed the Sports Grant applications for the 2nd cycle. The Sports Council recommended approval of 13 events totaling \$14,900. He noted that Brian Hickey and Bernie Waxman are available to answer questions. Sam Patel moved to approve the recommendations of the Sports Council. Motion was seconded by Chucha Barber and carried unanimously.

Sam Patel suggested that room data be provided.

- 4-H Day at the Capitol Out-of-Cycle Grant Request – Lee Daniel reported that the University of Florida 4-H Youth Development Program submitted a grant application requesting \$1,200 to be used to subsidize t-shirt costs. He noted that the applicant was made aware that it would require a super majority vote of the TDC to consider the grant out-of-cycle. Chairman

Daws asked if there was a motion to consider the request. There was no motion and the request died.

Director's Report

- FY2011 Budget Process– Lee Daniel reported that he has requested staff to submit preliminary sales plans, budget and travel plans by March 12. He noted that the budget has to be presented to the Office of Management and Budget by March 19. As part of the new committee structure the plans will be approved by the various committees who will make recommendations to the TDC on May 6.
- TDC Committee Retreat Date – The Retreat will be held on Monday, May 3, from 9 – 2 p.m. A working lunch will be provided and the location will be announced as soon as one has been secured.
- FSAE/TSAE Research Project – Lee Daniel reported that \$15,000 has been set aside for special research. He recently learned that the City of Tallahassee is considering selling the piece of property across from the Civic Center to the CRA. The property was originally dedicated for a Conference Hotel. Mr. Daniel pointed out that research is needed to see if there is hard data to determine if the associations would support holding annual meetings in Tallahassee and how much meeting space would be needed. The cost for the research would be \$4,000 to \$5,000 and he would like to move forward with the research taking the money out of the \$15,000.

There was consensus of TDC members to support the research. Michelle Wilson expressed concern with the FSAE ad. She felt the ad was drab and did not tell a story to entice meeting in Tallahassee. She indicated that she had some concerns, but supports the research.

- Update on Destination Development & Community Relations Committees - Lee Daniel reported that he feels it is important to have an elected official on the Destination Development Committee. He noted that Chucha Barber has agreed to chair the Community Relations Committee.
- Update on Special Event Grants Process – Lee Daniel reported that he has been meeting with Georgia Ackerman who chairs the Special Event Grants Committee. They are in the process of tweaking the policies and will bring back recommendations at the May 6 meeting of the TDC.
- Update on Web Site – Lee Daniel reported that staff continues to work with the agency and hopefully will have the new web site up on April 1.
- Good of the Cause - Chucha Barber invited TDC members to attend a meeting about the status of LeMoyné Art Foundation this afternoon at 5:30

at St. John's Church. She shared that as of yesterday morning; she was made aware of three not-for-profit organizations that will not make payroll. She suggested that the TDC take a leadership role and work with Peggy Brady to revisit the cultural plan. She emphasized that new organizations and old organizations are struggling and it is more important than ever to revisit the cultural plan.

Commissioner Thael added that we are in the worst of economic times and it might be a good time to rethink how services are provided with less funding. He pointed out that if there is a pot of money that does not grow and more organizations are coming to the table, it might be a good time to evaluate the operational mode of all not-for-profit organizations and not just cultural. He stated that it could require a moratorium on new organizations coming into existence that are seeking public support. He emphasized the need to look at existing resources and how they are provided and ways to deliver the same level of accountability with a different model. Chairman Daws pointed out that this is not just an issue locally, but nationally as well. He noted that there have been a lot of expansions nationwide, which are now closing.

Marc Bauer inquired about the upcoming NCAA Women's Basketball Championship and what the plan is for marketing the destination. Lee Daniel reported that staff has met twice with ISP Sports and the TDC is providing funds through the Sports Council identifying the markets. He noted that staff will survey the hotel community for packages that can be posted on Visit Tallahassee. He also reported that he is working with Ron Sachs Communications to help sell tickets.

Michelle Wilson requested that in working with hotels for packages, to make sure it is spread around and not just focused on the downtown area. She also emphasized the need for Dr. Bonn to get a true and accurate county of hotel rooms when he conducts his research. Lee Daniel reported that he has met twice with the Tax Collector and she has been very helpful in trying to match our data base with hers.

Chairman Daws announced that the Mary Brogan Museum's Wine Festival is scheduled for March 19 and 20, and the Tallahassee Museum's Jazz and Blues Festival and Pioneer Breakfast is March 13 and 14.

Georgia Ackerman announced that Wilderness Way is partnering with Maclay Gardens for a Demo Day planned for March 21.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.



 Russell S. Daws, Chairman



 Attest: Wanda Barnard