



Manatee County Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2024

Roll Call

Present

- Ray Turner
- Mayor Gene Brown
- Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant
- Norma Kennedy
- Dave Wick
- Jiten Patel
- Rahul Patel
- Eric Cairns
- Ed Chiles

Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance; Invocation by Pastor Dirk Rodgers, Roser Community Church

TDC Member Introductions

TDC Members introduced themselves.

Acknowledged elected officials attending the meeting - Mayor Dan Murphy, City of Anna Maria, Mayor John Chappie, City of Bradenton Beach, Dan Diggins, Commissioner City of Holmes Beach Debra Williams, Commissioner Town of Longboat Key and George Kruse, Commissioner Manatee County.

Minutes

A motion was made by Dave Wick, seconded by Mayor Bryant, to approve the April 15, 2024, TDC Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

- None

Water Ferry Marketing

Elliott Falcione, Executive Director, CVB

- Water Ferry running well – running Wednesday through Sunday though June 2024. Goal to run the ferry 7 days a week.
- Asking for \$75,000 additional funds for ferry marketing.
- Target marketing to East County and Longboat Key, including consumer surveys
- Additional enclosed third ferry going for approval to the Board June 11, 2024.
- **Recommendation by Mayor Brown, seconded by Jiten Patel to approve an additional \$75,000 in marketing funds for the ferry. Recommendation passes unanimously**

Convention Center Construction Update

Elliott Falcione, Executive Director, CVB

- Renovation of Convention Center is going well
- Marriott Resort and Spa scheduled to open later this month. Marriott to bring an additional \$5-7 million in tourist tax generation.
- When Convention Center renovation is complete (March/April 2025) will generate an additional \$30-40 million annually to the local economy
- Board of County Commissioners have approved a \$48 million construction budget
- Unforeseen circumstances: storm drain replacement, materials costs have increased 8% and construction design not included in original budget.
- \$3.6 million increase needs to be added to the construction budget
- Will take this to the Board for their consideration after the Commissioner recess
- **Recommendation by Mayor Bryant, seconded by Mayor Brown to approve an additional \$3.6 million to the Convention Center renovation. Recommendation passes unanimously**

Sixth Penny Ordinance

Elliott Falcione, Executive Director, CVB

- A couple months ago, this Board approved an additional 1% bed tax.
- State changed the law in 2023 requiring that any additional bed tax must be a referendum and not in the control of the Board of County Commissioners for super majority approval
- County attorney's office has revised the ordinance to apply the new state law. The additional penny conservatively will generate \$7-8 million a year for the community
- Amenities that serve the tourist and residents – Water Taxi, Beach Renourishment, SRQ, Premier Sports Campus
- Need recommendation to bring this to the Board of County Commissioners (late July) for their consideration to put the additional penny on the November ballot. Need to register with the Supervisor of Elections by August 19 to be on the ballot. If the Board chooses

not to put it on the ballot or if it does not pass, need to wait 2 years before it can be added to the ballot again.

- Need to educate the public that this tax is paid by the tourist NOT by the residents
- Staff is working on education platform to disburse the info to leaders in community if the Board approves to place this on the November ballot
- **Recommendation by Dave Wick, seconded by Mayor Bryant to bring the additional 1% tax levy to the Board of County Commissioners for placement on the November ballot. Recommendation passes unanimously**

Holmes Beach Grant Request

Elliott Falcione, Executive Director, CVB

Sage Kamiya, Superintendent, Public Work/City Engineer, City of Holmes Beach

- MPO and FDOT started PD&E (Project Development and Environment) studies for funding
- Looking for funding on Phase 1 (Marina Dr, Gulf Dr, and 65th St Paths) affects 2 beach access points of \$500,000.
- Commissioner Dan Diggins asked for the funds on behalf of Mayor Titsworth who was unable to attend the meeting.
- Mayor Brown feels that more information is still needed
- Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners to approve \$500,000 to fund Phase 1 of the road improvement project on Holmes Beach and collaboration with Holmes Beach for water ferry service.
- **Motion made by Dave Wick, seconded by Mayor Brown to bring the Holmes Beach road improvement and negotiate in good faith a pier for water ferry service in Holmes Beach to the Board of County Commissioners. Recommendation passes unanimously.**

State of Tourism Update

Anne Wittine, Research Data Services

- April 2024 – slight decrease in visitors 6.4% from 2023 (last year Easter was in April); decrease (7.9%) in overnight commercial lodging – compared to last year, but longer length of stay
- Economic impact down 6.9% increase over 2023
- Still up from 2019: visitation up 43.2%, room nights up 37.2%, and economic impact up 65.5%
- Occupancy down 3.4% from 2023
- Rev/Par down 5.3% from last year
- 12% increase in European visitors
- Larger party size and longer length of stay.
- Fiscal year to date – visitation down 3.3%, Economic Impact up.3% from last year due
- SRQ slight decline –down 1.8% after 19 months of steady growth
- Occupancy Barometer – bookings are up, Strong April, May slow – rates are down
- Water Ferry survey conducted over Memorial Day weekend at Bradenton Beach and Coquina Beach – 59.4% of respondents were aware of the water ferry - word of mouth was how most had heard about it. 34% of the respondents said they have used it.

- Elliott stated there were 42 days of suspended service due to water conditions. The additional enclosed boat should mitigate most of the suspended days.
- Expressed concern the water ferry was not running on Memorial Day. Going forward, when there is a national holiday, the water ferry will run regardless of what day the holiday falls on
- Elliott thanked the TDC Board and Board of County Commissioners for sponsoring the Concert Series at The Center AMI for the past 5 years.

New/Old Business

- None

Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 10:47 am.

These minutes are in DRAFT form until approved at the August 19, 2024 meeting.