

**MINUTES OF MEETING
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
FEBRUARY 26, 2018
1:30 P.M.**

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present: Todd Hickey, Chair
 Irving Kass, Vice Chair
 Jay Morris, BCC Representative
 Nancy Shaver, Mayor, City of St. Augustine Representative
 Undine George, Mayor, City of St. Augustine Beach Representative
 Diane Mataraza, District 3
 John E. "Jack" Peter, District 4
 Danny Berenberg, District 4
 Michael Gordon, District 4
 Sindy Wiseman, Deputy Clerk

Also present: Tera Meeks, TDC Executive Director; Dena Masters, TDC Administrative Coordinator; and Regina Ross, Deputy County Attorney

(02/26/18 - 1 - 1:30 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Hickey called the meeting to order.

(02/26/18 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Peter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(02/26/18 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

3. ROLL CALL

Masters called the roll: All Council members were present.

(02/26/18 - 1 - 1:34 p.m.)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Hickey clarified that the bullets on Item No. 8 would be as follows: a) 2019 Arts Culture & Heritage (ACH) Grant Guidelines; b) Arts and Cultural Center Marketing Analysis and Feasibility Study; c) Discussion of existing service contracts and review of draft RFP scopes; and d) Discussion on implementing 5th cent.

(1:35 p.m.) **Motion by Kass, seconded by Morris, carried 9/0, to approve the Agenda, as amended.**

(02/26/18 - 1 - 1:35 p.m.)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- December 11, 2017
- January 22, 2018

Motion by Shaver, seconded by Mataraza, carried 9/0, to approve the minutes for the December 11, 2017, meeting as submitted.

Motion by Mataraza, seconded by Kass, carried 9/0, to approve the minutes for the January 22, 2018, meeting as submitted.

(02/26/18 - 2 - 1:35 p.m.)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Gene Goodwin, 1013 North Marsh Wind Way, spoke on the congestion on A1A, May Street, and San Marco Avenue. Shaver responded.

(1:42 p.m.) Martha Johnson, 130 South Serenata Drive, commented on the need for a long-term beach re-nourishment program; an off-shore source of sand; and the lack of TDC revenue being used for beach re-nourishment.

Ross noted that public wishing to comment on beach issues should speak under public comment for Item 8d.

(1:46 p.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Boulevard, requested funding allocation for crosswalk paint on A1A Beach Boulevard, additional crosswalks, and lighting.

(1:50 p.m.) Joe Honeycutt, 3001 South Ponte Vedra Boulevard, spoke on effect of the congestion on traffic and tourism.

(1:53 p.m.) Merrill Rolland, 6281 Old Dixie Drive, voiced his concern with the St. Augustine Civic Association.

(02/26/18 - 2 - 1:56 p.m.)

7. RECREATION AND LEISURE –Wil Smith (Action Required)

- Sports Marketing Funding Request
 - St. Augustine Half Marathon - \$7,500 recommended

Wil Smith, Director of St. Johns County Parks and Recreation, presented the details of the request for funding for the St. Augustine Half Marathon, including the economic impact and return on investment to the County. He said that should the marathon continue to come to St. Augustine, he would like to establish a contract between the event and the City of St. Augustine.

(1:58 p.m.) Berenberg commented on the number of applications and questioned the use of a Consent Agenda for reoccurring requests. Smith responded.

(2:01 p.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Boulevard, spoke in support of the funding request and commented on the outstanding leadership of Wil Smith.

(2:02 p.m.) Hickey questioned the number of spectators in the backup material. Smith responded.

(2:03 p.m.) Motion by Berenberg, seconded by George, carried 9/0, to approve the \$7,500 funding request for the St. Augustine Half Marathon.

- Florida Pro Redfish Series - \$5,000 recommended

(2:04 p.m.) Smith presented the details for the request for funding for the Florida Pro Redfish Series.

(2:06 p.m.) **Motion by George, seconded by Morris, carried, 9/0, to approve the \$5,000 funding request for the Florida Pro Redfish Series.**

(02/26/18 - 3 - 2:06 p.m.)

8. ADMIN AND SPECIAL USES

- 2019 Arts Culture & Heritage (ACH) Grant Guidelines

Meeks presented the details of the 2019 ACH Grant Guidelines, via PowerPoint.

(2:08 p.m.) Andy Witt, Executive Director of St. Johns Cultural Council, expounded on the increase, stating that the ACH Grant program had the most significant impact and Return on Investment (ROI). Additionally, he noted that in regards to the Demonstrable Methodology, they were reviewing the matrix and how the grants were handled and identified.

(2:12 p.m.) Mataraza asked about the number of applicants. Witt responded.

(2:14 p.m.) Shaver questioned the methodology for determining visitors. Discussion ensued on the methodology.

(2:19 p.m.) Meeks said staff would work on a one page document for the workshop to help applicants when they start their application.

(2:20 p.m.) Berenberg questioned why the valued in-kind service was continued. Meeks provided a history of the in-kind services. Witt provided examples of in-kind uses.

(2:22 p.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Boulevard, stated that his questions had been answered and expressed his appreciation for the presentation.

(2:25 p.m.) Albert Syeles, 83 Bridge Street, spoke on the St. Patrick's Day Parade, the Celtic Festival, and the Romanza Festival. He requested the ability to apply for an additional grant for a Harry Potter event. Additionally, he requested to reconsider in-County advertising.

(2:28 p.m.) George requested a response to the Syeles' requests.

(2:28 p.m.) Meeks responded that there was not a limitation to the number of grants one could submit, stating that the limitation was to the maximum award per organization. She stated that the interpretation of the Statute was that advertising was done outside of the County in order to bring people into the County.

(2:30 p.m.) Kass commented that he thought the Players Championship and the Celtic Festival fell on the same weekend and suggested reviewing whether two events, of thier size, should fall on the same weekend. Meeks stated that the scheduling was monitored.

(2:31 p.m.) Syeles responded that the Celtic Festival was generally scheduled the weekend before St. Patrick's Day and the Players Championship was the third weekend in March.

(2:32 p.m.) Meeks said that the recommendation was to approve the Grant Guidelines, as proposed, or with any revisions the Council may request.

(2:32 p.m.) Motion by Kass, seconded by Berenberg, carried 9/0, to approve the Grant Guidelines, as submitted.

- Arts and Cultural Center Marketing Analysis and Feasibility Study

(2:32 p.m.) Meeks presented the details of the Feasibility Study results.

(2:35 p.m.) Albert Syeles, 83 Bridge Street, thanked the Council for funding the Study.

(2:36 p.m.) **Motion by Hickey, seconded by Shaver, carried 9/0, to authorize the expenditure amount of \$83,500.**

- Discussion of existing service contracts and review of draft RFP scopes

(2:36 p.m.) Meeks presented the details of the service contract amendments for review.

(2:38 p.m.) Kass questioned how a negotiated price could be inserted into the agreement. Ross said she would review each of the proposed requested changes to the Cultural Council Agreement and the Council could make any additional changes. Discussion ensued on the requested changes.

(2:54 p.m.) Witt spoke on the separate category for museums and how they were defined.

(2:57 p.m.) Hickey requested more information on museum maintenance and operation. Discussion ensued on the definition of a museum and requested Meeks research the Statute to clarify the meaning.

(3:03 p.m.) Ross said she would remove that portion from the scope of services and have a broader discussion on how to define museums as a separate item; and reviewed each of the proposed requested changes to the Visitors and Convention Bureau Agreement. Discussion ensued on producing a video regarding the importance of tourism.

(3:16 p.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Boulevard, requested including Anastasia Island in any future advertising and promotions.

(3:20 p.m.) Albert Syeles, 83 Bridge Street, spoke on the importance of in-County advertising.

(3:23 p.m.) Ross commented on advertising restrictions. Goldman explained the restrictions on out-of County versus in-County advertising.

(3:28 p.m.) George voiced the importance of keeping the community educated and informed.

(3:29 p.m.) **Motion by Morris, seconded by Peter, carried 9/0, to accept the draft and move them forward with the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).**

(3:32 p.m.) Meeks explained that the two service contracts would be presented to the BCC for direction, with three options, 1) to renew, as is; 2) renew with amendments; 3) or move forward with an RFP scope. She said she would present to the BCC the recommendation by the TDC, to renew with amendments and would review the amendments with the Board. Discussion ensued on the RFP scopes.

(3:34 p.m.) Kass questioned why the TDC recommendation was not the only option sent to the Board for approval. Ross stated that should the Board decline the recommendation, the Council would not have enough time for an RFP process to negotiate a contract.

(3:36 p.m.) Kass commented that in the event the BCC rejected the recommendation, the contract could be extended, to provide enough time. Discussion ensued.

(3:44 p.m.) Motion by Morris, seconded by Kass, carried 9/0, to move forward with the recommendation of the contract with the amendments.

- Discussion on implementing 5th cent

(3:45 p.m.) Meeks presented the details of the recommendation to levy the 5th cent bed tax, how the revenue would be utilized, and referenced the table showing the allocation of the current 4th cent. She estimated that implementing the 5th cent would generate a revenue of \$2.57 million additional dollars annually.

(3:50 p.m.) Martha Johnson, 130 South Serenata, spoke in support of the 5th cent tax and suggested developing a long term beach re-nourishment plan.

(3:52 p.m.) Tom Reynolds, 880 A1A Beach Boulevard, spoke in support of the 5th cent tax and would encourage an increase until the maximum limit.

(3:56 p.m.) Tom Turnage, 2809 South Ponte Vedra Boulevard, spoke in support of an increased tax to protect the beaches.

(3:57 p.m.) Dick Williams, 193 Plantation Circle South, supported an increased tax to develop a long term beach re-nourishment plan.

(4:00 p.m.) Rita Clare Salzler, 405 12th Street, supported a 5th and 6th cent tax increase to develop a comprehensive coastal management plan.

(4:01 p.m.) Meeks clarified that Florida Statutes allow counties to levy up to the 6 cent, based on their eligibility, which St. Johns County was only eligible to levy to the 5 cent.

(4:01 p.m.) Guy Rasch, 2803 South Ponte Vedra Boulevard, spoke in support of the increase and the continued restoration and maintenance of the beaches.

(4:04 p.m.) Joe Bateman, 220 North Serenata Drive, spoke in support of an increased tax to restore and maintain the beaches.

(4:06 p.m.) Rod Morris, 1304 Hideaway Drive South, suggested a program to monitor the use of the bed tax and encouraged researching additional State funding.

(4:09 p.m.) Joe Honeycutt, 3001 South Ponte Vedra Boulevard, spoke on the continued erosion of the beaches and the need for a beach management program.

(4:12 p.m.) Merrill Roland, 6281 Old Dixie Drive, spoke in favor of taxing the tourists and suggested allocating funds for a new pier. Additionally, he spoke on researching whether local Airbnb's were paying the bed tax.

(4:15 p.m.) Albert Syeles, spoke in favor of the increase and suggested other uses for the revenue.

(4:16 p.m.) Elizabeth Russell, 313 Eleventh Street, spoke in favor of an increase to be used for beach re-nourishment. She questioned the limit of renters per unit. Meeks stated she would find out and get back with her.

(4:19 p.m.) Richard Goldman, 178 Water Oak Drive, spoke on marketing, in relation to the 5th cent tax.

(4:20 p.m.) Christy Austin, 629B Ponte Vedra Boulevard, provided a history of the beaches, including erosion, and the need for a beach re-nourishment plan.

(4:24 p.m.) Denise Velsor, 615 19th Street, spoke on the lack of access to the beach and supported the tax increase.

(4:26 p.m.) Gordon commented on the need to restore the beaches and requested staff meet with an engineer on the cost associated with the re-nourishment and review the uses of the 4th cent.

(4:28 p.m.) Shaver stated that the 1 cent increase would not solve the problem and spoke in opposition to levying a 5th cent.

(4:31 p.m.) Hickey questioned whether the funds had to be used right away or whether the funds could accrue for a period of time. Meeks said the funds could accrue.

Shaver left the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

(4:32 p.m.) Morris stated that he would not be in favor of the 5th cent, unless it was allocated exclusively for beach re-nourishment, to help start a re-nourishment program.

(4:36 p.m.) George spoke in favor of the 5th cent; however, suggested gathering data prior to allocating the funds.

(4:38 p.m.) Peter agreed with Morris and stated that he would support the increase, if it were allocated exclusively for beach re-nourishment.

(4:39 p.m.) Mataraza agreed with the increase; however, suggested reviewing the current appropriations to ensure the funds were allocated properly.

(4:39 p.m.) Berenberg voiced his concern with a long term increase and suggested approaching the State for immediate assistance to ensure public safety.

(4:45 p.m.) Kass stated that historically when an increase was implemented it continued indefinitely. He spoke on advertising, and the lost revenue to Airbnb. He stated that if the revenue was collected from the Airbnb's and spread between Category's 1, 2, and 3, of the budget, then he would support adding the 5th cent tax for beach re-nourishment.

(4:49 p.m.) Ross spoke on Airbnb collections and agreements. Kass commented on the number of Airbnb's in St. Augustine.

(4:53 p.m.) Hickey spoke in favor of the increase, stating that the County should be competitive with surrounding counties. He said the beaches were in critical need of help. Discussion ensued on direction for staff.

(5:01 p.m.) There was a motion by George to send a recommendation in favor of the 5th cent, with a caveat that there be additional time to make recommendations for uses.

(5:02 p.m.) Discussion ensued on revised language for the motion.

Motion failed for no second.

(5:14 p.m.) Discussion continued on revised language for the motion.

(5:15 p.m.) Motion by Morris, seconded by George, carried 7/1, with Berenberg dissenting and Shaver absent, to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners, levying the 5th cent and that it be used in total, or to the greatest extent possible, for beach re-nourishment.

(02/26/18 - 7 - 5:16 p.m.)

9. MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no comments.

(02/26/18 - 7 - 5:16 p.m.)

10. ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Council, Hickey adjourned the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

Masters informed the Council, after the meeting was adjourned, that the next scheduled meeting would be March 19, 2018.

Approved _____, 2018

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Todd Hickey, Chair

ATTEST: HUNTER S. CONRAD, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk