

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
SUMMARY MINUTES
OCTOBER 12, 2006 – RESIDENCE INN BY MARRIOTT, ALTAMONTE SPRINGS

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sandra Carroll – American Automobile Association
Diane Crews – Sanford Airport Authority
Mayor Linda Kuhn – City of Sanford
Penny Leffel – SpringHill Suites Sanford
Jamie Ross – Hilton Garden Inn Lake Mary
Bruce Skwarlo – Orlando Marriott Lake Mary
Kathryn Townsend – Seminole Cultural Arts Council
Steve Wolfram – Council of Local Governments (CALNO)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Commission Chair Carlton Henley – Board of County Commissioners

STAFF PRESENT:

Suzan Bunn – Seminole County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Ann Colby – County Attorney's Office
Dave DiMaggio – Paradise Advertising & Marketing
Chris Fletcher – Seminole County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Carolyn Oehlerts – Paradise Advertising & Marketing
Fran Sullivan – Seminole County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Fran Vaccaro – Paradise Advertising & Marketing

GUESTS:

Christina Bolduc – Central Florida Scottish Highland Games
Candice Carsillo – Central Florida Hotel Lodging Association
Carlton Cook – Central Florida Scottish Highland Games
Cindy Collison – Homewood Suites Lake Mary
Chip Crawford – Central Florida Scottish Highland Games
Frank Fry – Holiday Inn Altamonte
Shonna Green – Central Florida Zoo
Dana Hirshburg – Hilton Orlando Altamonte Springs
Red McCullough – Stor-All Storage Systems
Sandy Noreen – Embassy Suites Altamonte
Steve Olson – Seminole County Community Information
Belinda Ortiz – Central Florida Hotel Lodging Association
Ken Perry – Holiday Inn Altamonte
Aaron Ranstrom – Homewood Suites Lake Mary
Jo Seiler – Hampton Inn & Suites Lake Mary
Ron Silveira – FPIS, Inc.
Max Stewart – International Council of Central Florida
Jason Weeks – Altamonte Sports

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Bruce Skwarlo, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. with a quorum present. A roll call followed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Steve Wolfram made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 2006 meeting. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Townsend and carried.

SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

Scottish American Society, Inc. (2007 Scottish Highland Games) – Rick Marshall addressed members and guests after brief introductory remarks from Chip Crawford, President,. He noted the Scottish Highland Games has become a signature event for Seminole County. This year the top two pipe bands in the world were invited to play. There will a special concert on Saturday night, and leading members of the bands will conduct seminars on Sunday. Without increasing the size of the event itself, these two events create the need for more room nights. Icelandair has agreed to provide ten complimentary tickets to fly in band members from Scotland and Ireland. Scottish athletes will be brought in for a competition with American athletes. Greater resources are needed for advertising. The Society is requesting funding of \$50,000. The number of room nights is anticipated to be 12,000. Bruce Skwarlo observed this is a drastic increase over past years. Mr. Marshall responded he is convinced this event's uniqueness to North America coupled with the quality of these two bands and Florida weather in January will dramatically increase room nights. Steve Wolfram doubted Seminole County hotels could provide that many rooms. Bruce Skwarlo reminded members of the current \$25,000 cap set by TDC policy. Diane Crews made a motion to exceed the \$25,000 limit and approve the request for \$50,000. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Townsend. Discussion followed. Bruce Skwarlo reminded members the TDC's recommendation is subject to final approval by County Commissioners. A vote was taken and the motion passed with one opposed.

PRESENTATION

2006-07 Marketing/PR/Sales Launch – Dave DiMaggio began the presentation with a summary of 2006 research findings and highlighted plans for future research and proposed creative direction. A key element for the year is the upgraded meeting planner packet which includes a new video on CD.

Fran Vaccaro continued with advertising goals and objectives, target markets and components of the advertising campaign. The four-hour drive market remains our primary focus. Examples of ads in each target market were shown. Cooperative advertising opportunities are available to partners.

Carolyn Oehlerts noted the agency's approach to public relations is an ongoing process. The PR plan's components incorporate advertising strategies and geographical targets.

Suzan Bunn gave an overview of the sales plan. Our corporate focus is the independent business traveler and small-to-medium-size meetings. We continue to emphasize sports and promote our natural side to the leisure market. The CVB has plans for more online advertising and is considering a quarterly e-blast and online trade show. Brian Hunicke and Chris Fletcher will combine attendance at trade shows with corporate sales missions within our sales plan area.

Chris Fletcher highlighted different strategies and opportunities to implement the marketing and sales plan. The strategic plan encompasses enhancing weekend business, increasing leads by 50%, improving hotel participation by 50% and raising awareness of CVB activity within Seminole County. Brian Hunicke works the sports market with Keith Station and also handles out-of-state corporate, SMERF (military and fraternal) and Florida associations. Chris Fletcher handles local corporate, SMERF (social, educational, religious) and the travel trade market. Chris concluded with an expression of appreciation to all our hospitality partners.

Members and guests viewed the recently completed destination video targeting the meetings market (approximately 4 minutes in length). Dave DiMaggio noted the CD is in production and completion of the meeting planner packet is just weeks away. Bruce Skwarlo commended the new sports brochure. Chris Fletcher stated the Director of Sales meeting is scheduled for October 24. Requests for a host hotel were sent out and location has not been finalized.

There was a brief discussion about public relations for the upcoming Sanford Bike Festival.

Suzan Bunn affirmed the CVB's emphasis on meetings business has significantly increased the number of leads. The CVB provides the leads to hotels, but it is up to them to book them. Kathryn Townsend requested a leads report and including the TDC in the e-leads distribution.

Each member received a copy of the 2006-2007 Advertising, Sales and Public Relations Plan.

At this time Steve Wolfram, Linda Kuhn and Diane Crews were excused.

NEW BUSINESS

Shonna Green announced the Central Florida Zoo is hosting Big Easy Casino Night on November 18, from 6:00 to 10:00 pm. Donation is \$25.00. She commended the CVB's concern and efforts for the good of industry partners and praised the new video.

Bruce Skwarlo informed members he was contacted the day before by organizers of Sanford Bike Fest about submitting an application for the event scheduled to begin on Friday. Ann Colby responded taking the application and granting funds in arrears is not part of our current policy. A strict time schedule was established to allow ample time to review each application and follow the process. Mr. Skwarlo noted he discussed the matter with event organizers two months ago, and Suzan Bunn added she met with them six months ago.

Ann Colby reported she recently became aware that Disney Reservations is actively but subtly discouraging use of Orlando Sanford Airport. They are giving potential customers and travel agents price quotes that favor using airlines that fly into Orlando International Airport and using Magical Express to Disney.

OLD BUSINESS

Florida State Babe Ruth Tournament Update – Suzan Bunn reported the County Manager asked her to brief the TDC on two expenditures made without sufficient time for TDC review and approval. The first expenditure was a \$5,000 bid fee with approval from the County Manager and Deputy County Manager. There were 1,650 participant room nights plus additional spectator nights in Seminole County hotels. The CVB has a list of teams that stayed in each of ten hotels used. Tournament packets bearing our logo and name were sent to out-of-area participants, and our logo and name were used on their web site. The event plans to return to Seminole County for the next two years.

Bruce Skwarlo noted the County Manager wants it understood the CVB is not setting a precedent of doing things behind the TDC's back. He affirmed his hotel benefited from the event, and he does not see a problem. He researched the statute and found nothing that prohibits the CVB from such action. The preferred practice is for everything to go through the TDC to discourage an illusion of favoring one event over another. Questions and discussion followed. Ann Colby remarked it was unnecessary to pay a bid fee for this event because it was already coming. Suzan Bunn responded a bid fee was required when the event became a state championship. Bruce Skwarlo added this was a 1,700 room night event for \$5,000 and most likely the TDC would have approved the request. He stressed this was not proper procedure regardless of whether it came from the Board of County Commissioners. Special meetings have been called in the past, and Mr. Skwarlo stated that would be his preference. Penny Leffel inquired why this is Old Business if this is the first time the TDC has heard of it. Mr. Skwarlo responded it was discussed at the August meeting as reflected in the minutes. Suzan Bunn needs additional information from the event organizer to complete the final report.

International Folk Festival – Bruce Skwarlo commented 136 room nights for an expenditure of \$3,000 was not a prudent investment. Suzan Bunn affirmed the expenditure was made with approval of the Deputy County Manager. Questions and discussion followed. Ms. Bunn informed members she urged both event organizers early on to submit their application, but both were received at the last minute. She will follow up today's update with a final report.

STAFF REPORTS QUESTIONS/DISCUSSIONS

Expenses for FY 2005-06 are being processed through November 2. Members will receive a final budget report at a future meeting. Money that is unspent goes into Reserves. Kathryn Townsend recalled an earlier discussion about reinstating the practice of putting aside \$12,000 per month. Suzan Bunn responded Reserves are already \$2.6 million. Penny Leffel emphasized the need for more advertising. Ms. Bunn responded we were asked to keep our budget flat in line with other departments. Fran Sullivan noted the revenue projection for 05-06 was \$2.4 million. Fiscal Services projects \$2.7 million for 06-07. Ms. Leffel noted her weekend business is soft. Revenue is up not because of increased occupancy but because rates are up. Suzan Bunn is willing to request increasing our 06-07 advertising budget based on a recommendation from the TDC. Bruce Skwarlo suggested postponing further action until after review of the final expenditure report.

ADJOURN – The meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 11:50 a.m.