

**Tourist Development Council  
Pinellas County  
October 26, 2022**

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, met in regular session on this date at 9:08 AM in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building, 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater, Florida.

**Present**

Charlie Justice, Chairman, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chairman  
Russ Kimball, Vice-Chairman, Sheraton Sand Key Resort  
Phil Henderson, Jr., Starlite Cruises  
Frank Hibbard, City of Clearwater Mayor  
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.  
Melinda Pletcher, City of St. Charles Prather, The Birchwood Inn  
Clyde Smith, Bilmar Beach Resort (late arrival)  
Kenneth T. Welch, City of St. Petersburg Mayor  
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

**Not Present**

Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor  
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry

**Others Present**

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO  
Tony Armer, Film Commissioner  
Rosemarie Payne, Leisure Travel Director  
Michael A. Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney  
Katie Poviones, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk  
Other interested individuals

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Justice called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

**CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chairman Justice congratulated Ms. Moore, Mayor Bujalski, and Messrs. Kimball and Henderson for their reappointment by the County Commission for another term on the TDC and thanked them for their time and efforts to serve on the Board.

## MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2022 REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Hibbard made a motion, which was seconded by Mayor Welch and carried unanimously, that the minutes of the September 21 meeting be approved.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS – NONE

## CAPITAL PROGRAM DISCUSSION

### The Dali Expansion Update

Salvador Dali Museum Executive Director Hank Hine and trustees Bryant Jones and Tim Bogott referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *The Dali Museum Expansion Update* and discussed the global recognition of the museum and its economic impact on the area, plans for the proposed expansion and its benefits to the community, existing space limitations, and the funding request, and responded to queries by the members, highlighting the following:

- The museum houses a premier collection of Salvador Dali's artwork, attracting visitors from around the world. It has contributed approximately \$1.2 billion to Pinellas County over the past 11 years, and the proposed expansion is projected to add three billion dollars of economic activity to the area.
- Through innovative uses of artificial intelligence and technology, the museum has become a leader in creating exhibitions that allow visitors to better understand art.

*Mr. Smith arrived at 9:14 AM.*

- Proposed new museum spaces include a dome to house the projection exhibitions and a 60,000-square-foot building that would accommodate projections, digital exhibitions, and conference space.
- The expansion is projected to provide 1.7 million room nights, \$1.8 billion in economic impact, and 5 million visitors to the county in the 10 years following the project's expected completion in 2025.
- While the cost of the updated expansion design was relatively the same to the original plan, factors such as cost inflation and increased material and labor costs have increased the estimated project cost from \$35 to \$68 million.
- The funding request is for \$34 million, which is 50% of the project cost per the TDC's Capital Program guidelines, to be disbursed throughout the construction process.

- Next steps include acquiring the approval of voters to gain a small parcel of land necessary for construction in the upcoming November election, the confirmation of TDC funding and opening of the interactive dome in 2023, and the completion of the project in 2025.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Hine, with input from Mr. Bogott, elaborated on the museum's capital campaign, economic impact studies, and value engineering, emphasizing that the museum's space needs are constantly being re-examined; that with the removal of the parking garage from the project, the museum will continue to rely on city parking structures; that while construction has not commenced on the dome, the software development portion is in the planning stage; and that the museum will also request funding from the State.

Mr. Bogott referred to the PowerPoint and discussed the 10-year incremental impact of the museum's expansion, highlighting that the projected economic impressions are likely on the conservative side; and that the expansion is expected to generate the requested funding amount in tourist development tax (TDT) dollars within approximately 25 years; whereupon, discussion ensued regarding the expansion, geographically equitable spending of Capital Program funds, and remaining cognizant of upcoming Capital funding requests.

During discussion and in response to queries by the members, Mr. Hine related that the proposed expansion includes approximately 20,000 square feet of convertible space that can alternate between conference and artistic uses, and Attorney Zas clarified that it would be most appropriate to provide an update on the museum's expansion at a BCC meeting, at which point the Chairman could mention if the TDC had come to a consensus of whether to support the funding request or not.

#### Discussion on Guidelines (Funding Standards & Rating Criteria)

Mr. Hayes related that the members should have received a document detailing proposed changes to the Capital Guidelines rating criteria and thresholds for funding consideration and provided an overview of the modifications. He highlighted that the rating criteria will be organized on a 100-point-scale and divided into five sections with different point allocations, including the following:

- Annual economic benefits to tourism over ten years (30 points)
- Tourist room nights, annual tourist attendance and growth rate (25 points)
- Marketing and sponsorship benefits (20 points)
- Addresses strategic outcomes or contributes to the tourism strategic plan (20 points)
- Achieves geographic distribution of funding throughout the county (5 points)

Mr. Hayes discussed the review and approval process for applications to the program, noting that staff and a consultant would review them before presenting scored applications to the Board so that it may make a recommendation for funding to the BCC; whereupon, discussion ensued regarding the BCC's role in the program's process, reviewing performance of previously funded applications, allowable uses of TDT monies, and other topics, with input from Mr. Hayes and Attorney Zas.

During discussion, Mr. Hayes indicated that the minimum score for an application to be considered is 70 points; and that he will work with staff to incorporate a review of deliverables for projects that have previously received funding into the application process. Thereupon, Mayor Hibbard made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Henderson, to approve the proposed guidelines.

Mr. Hayes provided information regarding modifications to the thresholds for funding consideration, explaining that the numbers are the same as what exists in the current guidelines; that applicants will now be expected to meet the minimum attendee and annual tourist room night requirements to be considered for funding; and that projects seeking more than \$5 million will be required to project or maintain twice as many attendees and annual tourist room nights as projects seeking less than that amount. Upon the Chairman's call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

## **INDUSTRY UPDATE**

### Creative Pinellas Update

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Creative Pinellas September/October Update*, Creative Pinellas Executive Director Barbara St. Clair discussed the agency's recent tourism-related endeavors, including the following:

- Cultural planning progress
- The inaugural ART'N Month
- 2022 Arts Annual festivities, such as the Beyond the Walls – Art in Hotels program
- Arts activations with VSPC in Atlanta and Orlando
- Murals at St. Pete/Clearwater International Airport

## **DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

### Europe/UK Market Update

Ms. Payne provided an update on international markets, relating that Tourism Economics' travel forecasting model projects international travel to remain resilient despite high

inflation; that international inbound travel is making a big comeback; and that a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels of tourist volume and spending is expected towards the end of 2023. She shared reports from VoX International and Rooster Creative as VSPC's representation in Canada and the United Kingdom, respectively, including information regarding statistics on visitation to the United States, economic impacts of inflation on travelers, and relaxed COVID-19 regulations.

In response to a query by Mayor Hibbard regarding how familiarization, or FAM, tours are planned, Ms. Payne related that staff strives to show participants as much of the county as possible in an effort to showcase not only the beaches, but also arts and culture, restaurants, and lesser-known communities; and that community partners offer considerable support to ensure that there is lodging and transportation available, thus allowing the tours to happen.

#### M&C Advertising Update

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *2023 Meetings & Conventions Media Plan*, BVK Vice President Carmen Boyce provided information regarding advertising for meetings and conventions and discussed goals and strategies, strategic partnerships, and both new and returning facets of this year's media plan. She emphasized that click-through rates for co-op programs offered for partners exceeded industry standards; and that VSPC's 'Let's Shine' brand campaign is being utilized to invite meetings and conventions to the area. Responding to a query by Mr. Kimball, Mr. Hayes related that he is working to facilitate more conversations among hoteliers involved in the meetings and conventions market.

#### Department Reports

The item was not addressed.

### **VSPC PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT**

#### Destination Metrics

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Pinellas County Tourist Development Council Meeting*, Mr. Hayes reviewed the August 2022 statistical data regarding TDT collections, including hotel and vacation rental occupancy, average daily rates, and visitor profile metrics. He highlighted that almost \$90 million in TDT has been collected so far this year; and that most cities in the county have reported double-digit increases in TDT collections in comparison to the same time last year.

In response to a query by Ms. Moore, Mr. Hayes explained that there is currently a 30% response rate to data requests of vacation rental companies; that VSPC is working with Key Data to create a co-op program to incentivize companies to share their metrics via discounted participation; that a webinar is being planned to discuss the program with vacation rental companies; and that the goal is to increase the sample size of vacation rentals to 70% of the market.

#### Hurricane Ian Recap

Mr. Hayes discussed VSPC's preparation and response to Hurricane Ian, highlighting that evacuating residents were provided with lodging availability based on properties that were in non-evacuation zones; that staff is working to improve future communications of lodging availability during and after storm events; that Clearwater is included in a campaign by VISIT FLORIDA to showcase cities throughout the State that were not dramatically impacted by Hurricane Ian; and that the area has recently received more business as a result of the storm.

#### Joint BCC/TDC Meeting

Mr. Hayes related that the joint BCC/TDC meeting is scheduled for November 10 at 9 AM at the St. Petersburg Marriot Clearwater on Roosevelt Boulevard; that the meeting's agenda includes a discussion on the updated Capital Program guidelines and a presentation from a sports facility company regarding existing and new facilities; and that the intent is to allow for more time for discussion and less time for presentations.

#### VSPC Staffing Update

Mr. Hayes indicated that as an adjustment to VSPC's organizational alignment to better facilitate the execution of strategic outcomes, nine departments are being consolidated into the following pillars:

- Marketing (advertising, communications, digital/web, social, and research)
- Business Development (meetings, sports/events, global travel, and film)
- Community Engagement (community relations, chambers, activations, elite events, and capital program)
- Finance/Administration (accounting and operations)

Mr. Hayes related that VSPC's current employment vacancies are in various stages of the hiring process, including one position that will begin on November 11; and that Mr. Armer recently submitted his resignation but has committed to stay at VSPC through the end of the year to facilitate the procurement and potential training of his successor; whereupon, Mr. Armer elaborated on the position he accepted and thanked the TDC, BCC, and VSPC for their support over the years.

Thereupon, the members thanked and congratulated Mr. Armer. In response to comments made by the members, Chairman Justice related that the BCC could discuss modifying VSPC's salary structure at a future work session to improve employee retention.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS**

Mr. Hayes explained that he recently attended the World Route Development Forum in Las Vegas with staff from St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport; that the event hosts airline network planners to determine the future placement of aircraft; and that there are promising opportunities of bringing additional airlines to the destination following great conversations with Swoop Airlines, Allegiant, and others.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM.