

Tourist Development Council  
Pinellas County  
August 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.104, Florida Statutes, met in regular session on this date at 9:01 AM in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building, 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Kathleen Peters, Chair, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair  
Russ Kimball, Vice-Chair, Sheraton Sand Key Resort  
Dave Gattis, City of Belleair Beach Mayor  
Copley Gerdes, City of St. Petersburg Councilmember  
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.  
Chuck Prather, The Birchwood Inn  
Bruce Rector, City of Clearwater Mayor  
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry  
Dan Saracki, City of Oldsmar Mayor  
Brian Scott, County Commissioner (non-voting)  
Clyde Smith, Bilmar Beach Resort  
Mike Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Phil Henderson, Jr., Starlite Cruises

Others Present

Amanda Coffey, Managing Assistant County Attorney  
Brian Lowack, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO  
Kylie Diaz, Vice President of Community Engagement, VSPC  
Lisa Dozois, Film Commissioner, VSPC  
Steve Grimes, Chief Marketing Officer, VSPC  
Eddie Kirsch, Director of Digital and Data, VSPC  
Jason Latimer, Public Relations Director, VSPC  
Kathryn Reagan, Vice President of Business Development, VSPC  
Katie Poviones, Senior Board Records Specialist, Deputy Clerk  
Other interested individuals

*All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been filed and made a part of the record.*

## **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Chair Peters called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. At the Chair's request, those in attendance introduced themselves.

## **CHAIR COMMENTS**

Chair Peters provided an update regarding the TDC's funding recommendations for the Elite Event Funding Program, indicating that they were voted on by the BCC at its last meeting; that the BCC made some modifications to the recommendations, including decreasing funding for the St. Petersburg Powerboat Grand Prix in order to increase funding for the 2024 MLK Dream Big Parade; whereupon, she discussed efforts to ensure that updated information is provided by event organizers in funding applications next year.

*Mr. Williams arrived at 9:04 AM.*

## **APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES**

Mayor Saracki made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2024, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Gattis and carried unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one responded to the Chair's call for public comment.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### Marketing Update

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Marketing*, Mr. Grimes provided the following updates:

- "727 Day" was a success with 2,000 t-shirts distributed, great turnout at events held throughout the county, considerable local media coverage, and positive partner feedback.
- The television show *18 Holes* recently featured two Pinellas County golf courses and showcased downtown St. Petersburg and Clearwater Beach.
- Media advertisements have begun for campaigns in New York City and Greater Tampa Bay.

- VSPC's newly established Marketing Committee held its first meeting on August 7.
- The FunShine Savings Passport mobile web application will be launched in early September.

Responding to a query by Commissioner Scott, Mr. Grimes provided information regarding participation in the FunShine Savings Passport program; whereupon, Ms. Moore and Mr. Williams provided supportive comments relating to marketing efforts.

#### Destination Metrics

Mr. Kirsch referred to a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed metrics for June 2024, including statistical data and year-over-year comparisons of hotel and vacation rental occupancy, average daily rates, accommodation supply and demand, hotel performance, hotel inventory, and Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collections; whereupon, he responded to comments and queries by the members.

#### Quarterly KPIs Update

Mr. Lowack reminded the members of the establishment of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) earlier this year, indicating that goals were established for each KPI; and that KPI updates will be reported on a quarterly basis going forward. He requested feedback regarding the KPIs, including any not identified which the members believe should be tracked, and briefly discussed the goals and how progress is measured; whereupon, referring to a PowerPoint presentation, he reviewed Overall KPIs.

Mr. Grimes provided an overview of the Marketing KPIs and responded to queries by Commissioner Scott and Mr. Williams, with input by Mr. Latimer; whereupon, Ms. Reagan and Diaz discussed the Business Development and Community Engagement KPIs, respectively.

Following brief comments by Messrs. Smith and Williams, Mr. Lowack thanked the members and staff for their efforts related to the establishment and implementation of the KPIs.

#### Film Incentive Update

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Dozois reviewed changes to the current Film Incentive Program based on research of other state and local film incentive programs and different types of incentives, relating that changes include the creation of a committee and a rubric for reviewing and scoring applications; whereupon, she summarized the

application process and highlighted next steps, noting that applications for the new program will be accepted beginning October 1.

Thereupon, Ms. Dozois, with input by Mr. Lowack, responded to comments and queries by the members regarding the following topics:

- The program's competitiveness with other beach destinations around the country
- Efforts to solicit and obtain more press tours and junkets
- Review of applications
- Project payment schedules
- Measuring the program's success
- Qualification requirements

Commissioner Scott questioned whether a member of the TDC should serve on the committee that will review and score applications and whether the payment schedule should require TDC approval; whereupon, he requested that staff share the aforementioned rubric with the members once it has been created.

Mr. Lowack provided brief comments regarding the program, noting that, to avoid further backlog, agreements will be completed before projects begin filming; whereupon, Chair Peters requested that program updates be provided more frequently.

In response to comments by Chair Peters, Ms. Dozois discussed VSPC's sponsorship of the Sunscreen Film Festival and collaboration with Creative Pinellas; whereupon, Mayor Gattis requested that staff provide a monthly list of program applications received and their status.

## **VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO UPDATE**

Mr. Lowack provided the following updates:

- The BCC approved the Elite Event funding recommendations, as amended, the allocation of TDT funds toward the new stadium development in St. Petersburg, and an agreement with the Salvador Dali Museum.
- A request for Capital Project funding exceeding \$10 million will be presented to the BCC for approval at its September 5 meeting.
- VSPC staff will be attending the Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism in Tampa next week.
- VSPC will be receiving at least one Flagler Award.

- The Public Works Department will be receiving an award from the Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association for its prompt action relating to the dune restoration project.
- Requests for Proposals will be released relating to construction of a youth sports tournament facility on the Toytown site. State funding for remediation and pre-construction work has been received.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSION**

The members, with input by Mr. Lowack, discussed various topics, including beach renourishment, the effects on the beaches caused by the recent storm, continued efforts to resolve the impasse with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and beach renourishment funding; whereupon, Chair Peters suggested requesting that Public Works Director Kelli Hammer Levy or County Administrator Barry A. Burton provide a statement regarding the future of beach renourishment to provide more clarity regarding the topic.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Peters adjourned the meeting at 10:36 AM.