CITRUS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
Lecanto Government Building Room 166  
3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL 34461  
November 14, 2018 – 1:00 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Ronald E. Kitchen, Jr.  
Vice-Chairman Michael Mancke  
Councilmember Mike Gudis  

Councilmember Jacquie Hepfer  
Dr. Paresh Desai  
Mike Engiles  

Mike Shoemaker  
Daryl Seaton  
Gene McGee

Council Members Present:  
Chairman Ronald E. Kitchen  
Vice Chair Michael Mancke  
Daryl Seaton

Council Members Absent:  
Mike Engiles  
Mike Shoemaker  
Gene McGee  
Jacquie Hepfer  
Dr. Desai  
Mike Gudis

County Staff Present:  
Marti Spewock, Miles Saunders, Randy Oliver

Public in Attendance:  
Dave Burnell, City of Crystal River

Call to Order:  
The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am. There were three members present which did not make a quorum. The board decided to listen to the Director’s presentation and hold a small discussion. No motions/votes can be taken at this meeting.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Chairman Kitchen welcomed Dave Burnell from the City of Crystal River and asked if their new board member will be appointed by the next TDC meeting on December 12th since Mr. Gudis is no longer on the council. Mr. Burnell addressed the board with an update on the Three Sisters. The funding they received from the State will be used to complete the road, complete and ADA path, upgrade the utilities for rest rooms, an a couple smaller items. They are working in concert with Fish & Wildlife. Today at 1:00 pm is the unveiling of the trolley with the new wrap. Additionally, they also purchased a new 15 passenger vehicle with ADA compliant loading for smaller groups which helps lower the cost of operation. The wrap company is on the advertising for two years which essentially paid for the wrap. They are now trying to participate with all local vendors in advertising internally on the trolley. They have hired a new manager to handle just the trolley system and Three Sisters Springs. The city will be looking into kiosks at their welcome center for possibly next year.

Chairman Kitchen asked for an update on the boardwalk. Progress has been made. Dave met with Steve Spence and partners on the Hampton deal to work out the dock arrangement which is going well. They met on Monday with some of the Crystal River Area Council members and they are ready to submit permits for all the dock relocations. It is moving forward. They also met with the engineering firm and finalized Bay View Apartments’ dock relocation.

Chairman Kitchen provided that the County has received money from BP to the tune of $1.3 Million which has all been allocated to Crystal River. We have money in the bank, when are you going to be prepared for us to give it

NOTE: If any person decides to appeal any decision made by the Tourist Development Council with respect to any matter considered at this public meeting or hearing, he or she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which record shall include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Any person requiring reasonable accommodation at this meeting because of a disability or physical impairment should contact the County Administrator's Office, 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto, FL, (352) 527-546, at least two days before the meeting. If you are hearing or speech impaired, use the TDD telephone: (352) 341-6580.
to you and move forward? The application is getting prepared for submittal to the County. Meetings are scheduled with State Parks after the Thanksgiving holiday to relocate the boat ramp that is being closed.

Chairman Kitchen asked if the management plan with FWC was going well. It is, however, the contract has not been signed yet, but they meet monthly to develop a plan of operation.

Chairman Kitchen asked about the new board members and if Dave thinks they will affect the tourism flow as it is now. The people elected are all for tourism, but with different points of view on the subject. We have to be a tourist community because of the assets we have and the lack of industrial assets in the City/County. As much as some of the residents don’t care for tourism, they get better restaurants and other things that they don’t recognize as being the importance of tourism and what it brings to the county. He feels the new guard will continue to focus on tourism and the benefits it brings. Daryl Seaton feels that it would be beneficial to have the appointed TDC member well versed in tourism and related topics.

Randy Oliver provided that they are including a PDA application on the new website and suggests that the City may want to work with us and provide the website address for total access.

**PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 2019 MEETING**

Discussion ensued to change the June date to the 5th and it will be updated on the proposed schedule to be proposed at the December meeting. Additionally, there will be two workshop dates added to the schedule.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Germany Road Show Motion: as a formality, a motion is needed for this item which will be carried over to the December meeting agenda.

Scope of RFP for Ad Agency – Randy Oliver would like to get this process moving ahead. This project has already been approved but more information was being provided to the board. The VCB is recommending expanding the range to allow the ad agency to handle the out of country advertising as part of our contract. We are also recommending that the public relations in the scope can be handled in-house or they can sub-contract so as not to limit our contract by requiring them to be in-house. The website will be handled separately so any reference to that will be removed from the scope. We are suggesting an initial two-year term with three one-year renewal options. Section C will be taken out so we can see what the vendors think it will cost and get more input from them. Michael Mancke asked if we had a range budgeted for this. There will be flexibility in this but the range would be around $100,000 to $125,000 plus the placement ads, Gosh PR, Lieb Mgmt, etc. Michael feels this is a lot of money for this item considering how small our budget is in total. A media buyer could buy everything we want for 15%. The way the contract is written, the media buys are at cost and are to be included in the base fee.

Chairman Kitchen felt that the know proposal seemed to have them doing less. Randy agreed in that the web segment was pulled out but other things will now go in, Gosh PR, Lieb Mgmt, etc. We are looking for more innovative and targeted marketing within the United States and want to bump that up. The current contract expires in September, 2019 – the new vendor will start 10/1/18. We want to have the awarded vendor assist with the marketing plan and numbers for the budget. Daryl wants to see who else is out there and the different approaches to the RFP. Chairman Kitchen really likes Evok but looks forward to seeing different ideas.
General Discussion
Michael Mancke had budget questions for Randy Oliver and usable money available. The fiscal year budget is $1.25 Million. The changes decided at the October meeting ($192,000) have not been added to the numbers yet nor has the True Up been completed. We collected $1.9 Million through September, if we take out one of the pennies for Capital, that’s still $1.61 Million and yet our budget, without the True-Up. The County does not go as aggressively as other organizations. We don’t use prior year budget because you can have a very bad year or a very good year. The money doesn’t go anywhere, it funnels into the one account and we can continue to transfer the funds when needed. We can use it as a buffer for bad times. Daryl Seaton agrees that if we move the money this year we have it to spend next year. Michael just wants to get as much money to spend as is possible to spread the word about Citrus County. Everyone agrees that we need to build the shoulder seasons!

We need to really be specific in the RFP that we need to build the shoulder season; our peak seasons are already full. Michael feels that we have to find a marquee event to create compression for a shoulder event(s) and lure in a contractor to come up with such an event to make it happen. We cannot create our own event with the existing staff. We can incorporate this in the RFP also and see what shakes out. It can start small and build up every year.

The Manatee Festival started off to build business for the community. This started off small and became a week-long event with 5K races, paddle races, juried art shows, etc. It used to be free to get in. It became the #1 fund raiser for the Chamber. Can we leverage our dollars to expand an existing event? The problem with the Manatee Festival is it comes during peak season when it really isn’t needed.

DIRECTORS/MEDIA REPORT
There were about 25 meetings held in London at WTM that provided great marketing potential for advertising opportunities. The Visit FL Guide for Europe will be translated and printed in four different languages. They made a lot of media contacts for future FAM tours.

Destination Update: the STR report shows a -15.3% decrease in occupancy for September 2018 over September 2017; a 0.1% growth in ADR and a -15.2% decrease in RevPAR. The YTD results show the same Occupancy, a 3.8% growth in ADR and a 3.8% growth in RevPAR for the fiscal year comparison. Michael Mancke commented that all the counties have been affected by the hurricanes (Hermine, Irma and Michael). It shows a significant amount of business can be generated for counties not hit by them.

Tourist Development Tax Collection: we show an increase of $17,554 from September 2017 to 2018, or a 12.24% upturn. YTD shows an 11.30% growth or $162,395 for the Fiscal Year, a total collection of $1,599,565.

Leads: a total of 192 leads were generated in October with three International leads. We have added another 107 emails to our listing.

Citrus Being Social Update:
- Facebook showed growth to get to 160,500+ page likes.
- The Facebook page for Fishing in Citrus County shows a steady growth with 6,150 page likes, exceeding our goal of 5,000. Our new goal is 10,000 and to be the dominant Facebook page for Citrus County.
- The Citrus County Tourism Advocates page is getting great engagement with partners with 700 Likes.
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Instagram: 7,894 followers. We added 114 followers in October. Our goal is to reach 10,000.
Twitter earned 3.0K impressions over the last 28 day period.

Familiarization Tours – November

FAM Tours have been at capacity. We almost don’t have the staff to manage the people we have coming in. Better to have too much business than not enough! Visit FL Europe, China and Domestic have been very busy setting up these groups for us. Visit FL really embraces our product and wants us to be included in the product they are marketing to the world. The eelgrass is spreading and is all around the Bay. Things are looking great and this should have a positive impact on our business; where there is eelgrass there is really clear water!

Nov 1-2    Ellen Alpsten, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (Germany)
Nov 4-6    Visit FL, NA Travel Writers
Nov 8-10   4 Travel Agents, La Route des Voyages (France)
Nov 9-10   10 Travel Agents, Travel Trend (Netherlands)
Nov 9-11   Sasha van Zonsbeek, Reishonger.nl (Netherlands)
Nov 15-17  Elstner’s Travels, ARD Network – Primetime (Germany)
Nov 16-18  Wolfgang Greiner, Road Trip America (Germany)
Nov 17-19  Julia Schaffner, Des Belles Choses (Germany)

OTHER BUSINESS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Randy Oliver introduced Jim Mallon, the new Assistant County Administrator, who hails from Ocean City, NJ. He has a Master’s degree in Business Administration from Rutgers. Mr. Mallon was confirmed by the BoCC on Tuesday, November 13th.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting ended at 10:05 am. The next regular meeting is Wednesday, December 12th at 9:00 am in the same location.