

TDC-Board of Directors
December 17, 2015
Tiger Point Community Center
Gulf Breeze, Florida

Board Members present:

Vernon Compton
Liz Horton
Norm Crowder
Kyle Holley
Alan Lowery
Jack Sanborn

Attendees:

Julie Morgan
Shannon Ogletree
Nicole Dees
Al Wilson
Brandy Kea
Kate Fitzpatrick
Rob Johnson
Tina Fekula
Daniel Crowley
Brendon Quinn
Joe Castellaneta
Kylee Haggerty
Chanda Ryan
Dave Barnette

8:30 a.m. Call to Order – Vernon Compton

Holley moved approval of the agenda as amended. Sanborn seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Horton moved approval of the November 5, 2015 minutes. Crowder seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Santa Rosa Geocaching Trail

Morgan introduced Daniel Crowley to the board. She said Crowley is a student in the hospitality program at the University of West Florida.

Crowley gave a power point presentation to the board regarding the Santa Rosa Geocaching Trail project.

Morgan said it will cost approximately \$1,300.00 to begin this program.

There was further discussion.

Holley moved approval to recommend staff implement the Geocaching Trail. Crowder seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Tough Mudder

Ogletree introduced Kate Fitzpatrick and Tina Fekula of Tough Mudder to the board.

Fitzpatrick gave a power point presentation regarding the Tough Mudder organization and an overview of the event. She said this year the Tough Mudder event will be a two day event which will be held on April 9-10, 2016.

Sanborn asked if there is opportunity for the TDC to “set up” at the event. Fitzpatrick said yes. Sanborn asked if there is a cost for this. Fitzpatrick said not for Santa Rosa County. Sanborn asked if the TDC can put up signage at the entrance and exit point. Fitzpatrick said yes and Tough Mudder is happy to work with the county on this.

Morgan said last year Tough Mudder allowed the TDC to display a large banner. Holley said that is a requirement from the Florida Sports Foundation, for the funding the county is pursuing. He said in addition, he feels it is practical and team driven to have additional signage along Jeff Ates Road as a way to call attention to some of the properties represented by Santa Rosa County Economic Development.

There was further discussion regarding the projected attendance figures and dollars generated.

Lowery asked if Tough Mudder is working with any local charities. Fekula said for the alcohol permit Tough Mudder is working with the Santa Rosa County Veterans Foundation. She said this foundation will be receiving all of the profit from any alcohol sales on site. Fekula said the Santa Rosa County Fair Association will be assisting with parking operations and Tough Mudder will be making a donation to them. She said any opportunity that Tough Mudder has to work with the local community, makes it more a “unique event”.

Holley said he would like to see a targeted effort to help book the condominiums on Navarre Beach. He said he feels the condominiums have the ability to retain customers.

There was further discussion.

Sand Sculpting Festival

Ogletree said there will be a dredging project occurring on the beach starting the first week of April. He said he recommends pulling the sand sculpting festival and looking into either a future date or trying something new.

Morgan said Commissioner Cole recommended the county put an education spin on this dredging project. She said she has had conversation with DSB&P (advertising agency) in regards to this.

There was further discussion regarding the dredging project.

Tourism Ambassador of the Year/ Information

Ogletree discussed implementing a program which the TDC would recognize a tourism leader within the county.

Holley said he feels it is appropriate if this person is recognized at the Board of Commission meeting that the TDC is presenting its annual plan.

Sanborn made a motion to move forward with the tourism ambassador of the year program. Horton seconded and the motion passed unanimously

Lodging Tax Update

Morgan said in the month of October the county collected \$142,138.32 which is a 46.21% increase over last October. She said Santa Rosa County was the highest percentage increases compared with the neighboring counties in the panhandle.

Morgan said the bed tax report shows an early November payment of \$63.37.

DSB&P (Davis, South, Barnette and Patrick) Advertising

Dave Barnette (DSB&P) said the web traffic is up 40% over last year. He said an area of concern for DSB&P is the spring break and shoulder season. Barnette said DSB&P is working on a homeschool spring break event. He said in order to make this event a success, it is important to have special offers.

Morgan said the Tourist Development Office (TDO) will send an email out to all lodging partners asking if they can provide any specials.

North End requests – None

South End Requests – Sand Sculpting Recommendation

Morgan said this board voted to send the Sand Sculpting project back to the southend committee for input and review. She said the south end committee voted to partner with the Florida Edge (Marine Science Station). Morgan said the Sand Sculpting project has sense been cancelled.

Compton said he feels a regrouping effort needs to move forward on the festival.

Director's Report

Morgan said the TDO has been focusing on how to engage the snow birds and on the spring break campaign.

Discussion of the Agri-plex

Holley gave an update on the Agri-plex. He said phase one is the covered building and the second phase will be supportive structures to include a new exhibit hall. Holley said the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services staff ranked this grant application in the top spot again for the fourth year. He said the venues position is that we expect legislatures to respect the scoring of projects based on criteria that set out in statute. Holley said the request is for \$643,000.00.

Florida-Alabama Regional Ecosystem Partnership

Holley gave an update to the board regarding the Florida Alabama Regional Ecosystem Partnership. He said he has received maps from Escambia and Okaloosa Counties regarding their canoe/kayak trails. Holley said it is clear to him that the Bagdad area can be the center of the Blackwater exhibition activity. He said he is working on a map that he wants to present to the northend committee before he shares it to the regional partnership. Holley said he feels the TDC should include Blackwater exhibition canoe/kayak run in and combine it through Milton and into Bagdad. He said it would easily become the longest route in the three county areas and he feels the county will be able to leverage that to drive traffic into the region.

Other Business

Sanborn asked Ogletree if he is able to utilize the Florida's Playground brand with economic development. Ogletree said it depends on the market. He said a lot of the site consultants that he meets with come to Sandestin or Santa Rosa Beach. Ogletree said he does encourage the site consultants to visit Navarre Beach but his conversations are mainly centered on business location, business incentives etc. Sanborn asked if Ogletree uses the Florida Playground logo on fulfillment pieces along with other economic development logos. Ogletree said no.

Sanborn asked Ogletree for an update on the TDC planning session. Ogletree said he spoke with someone yesterday that is out of the Midwest and he is supposed to get back with him to discuss doing a Board workshop regarding roles, responsibilities and if the Board of Commissioners desires a strategic plan. He said he will bring back this information.

Holley said he will get Morgan the outline of the northend planning sessions and the southend planning sessions to integrate. He said he feels very strongly that the investment schedule has to be linked to the plan and it has to be in a way that people understand it.

Next Meeting

Compton said the next meeting will be at the Santa Rosa county Administrative Complex in the Board of County Commissioners meeting room in Milton on January 7, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. He said the meetings will be held here for the next six months and then will return to Tiger Point Community Center for the latter half of 2016.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board at this time, the meeting adjourned.