

**TDC-Board of Directors
November 5, 2015
Tiger Point Community Center
Gulf Breeze, Florida**

Board Members present:

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

Attendees:

Julie Morgan	Dave Barnette
Nicole Dees	Don Davis
Al Wilson	John Lewis
Margie Baldwin	Larry Sims
Mary Peterzen	Chanda Ryan
Brandy Kea	Nathan Ford
Meredith South	Liz Jacobi
Jerry Foster	Tiffani Bageant

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

Approval of the agenda

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

Approval of the minutes

Sanborn moved approval of the September 16, 2015 meeting minutes. Holley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Gallup moved approval of the October 1, 2015 meeting minutes. Crowder seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Florida Alabama Regional Rural Ecotourism Partnership (FARREP)

Compton gave an overview of the FARREP. He said this partnership is creating a rural ecotourism partnership and a plan to highlight both land and aquatic based resources. Compton said some of the initial items discussed included a regional paddle, canoe, kayak tour route and a geo cash trail, in identification of land based anchor sites. He said the immediate goals are to develop a regional plan approach, increase awareness of the project and potentially seek funding sources. Compton said the short term request for each county is a letter of support, identification of a key contact, identification of resources that can be provided and any additional feedback or ideas.

There was further discussion regarding the Bagdad Mill Site Park.

Holley said he would like more information from the partnership. He said he is willing to participate to protect the interests in Santa Rosa County.

Compton said maybe the best initial step is to have a seat at the table and explore the concept a little more.

Sanborn said this also falls in line with the Blackwater Trail.

Holley moved approval of an initial letter of short-term support from the Tourist Development Council. Sanborn seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

TDC Lower Blackwater Expedition Report

Compton said the purpose of this expedition was to try to find a longer route down Blackwater River. He said himself, Holley, Sanborn and Aaron Little (Santa Rosa Press Gazette) participated in this attempt. He said the group only made it through a portion of the river due to log jams.

Holley further discussed the details of the expedition. He said there needs to be continued exploration.

Beach Beautification Committee

John Lewis (Beach Beautification Committee, Chairman) said the Beach Beautification Committee is asking for the TDC's support for an ADA accessible boardwalk on Navarre Beach. He gave a power point presentation regarding an overview of this project. He said he has two bids estimating the cost of the boardwalk at approximately \$41,000.00.

Larry Sims gave a power point presentation regarding the need for a pedestrian crosswalk on Navarre Beach and more trees.

Gallup said Navarre Beach is the county's major economic driver in the southend and the beach gets no government support. She said this group should not have to address the safety issues on the beach that should be done by the county. Gallup said she does not feel the TDC taking over what the county needs to be doing, is a good use of tourism funds. She said the TDC needs to recommend the county put in the crosswalks at the three dangerous areas. Gallup said there also needs to be a sidewalk on the south side of Gulf Boulevard.

Compton said there are great opportunities with the RESTORE funding and the connection to helping to recover tourism. He said these seem like great RESTORE proposals for the beach area that was highly impacted by BP.

Sanborn said the TDC Board of Directors need to lobby our commissioners and the new administrator.

Horton moved approval of letter of support from TDC for Beach Beatification Committee project. Crowder seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Florida Okinawa Kenjinkai

Margie Baldwin said she apologizes for being late on this application. She said she thought that the Santa Rosa Arts and Culture Foundation were going to present this project and they did not. She further discussed the scope of the Florida Okinawa Kenjinkai project.

Holley asked Baldwin what the requested funding will be used for. Baldwin said the funding will be to offset costs for event. Holley said he is interested in knowing the cost of converting the county auditorium for not just this event but for similar events. He said he may be interested in recommending a pre-set package that groups can use to cover the cost of converting the auditorium in order to facilitate these kinds of events.

Holley moved approval to allocate \$5,000.00 to the Arts and Culture Foundation for this event. Gallup seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Sand Sculpt Discussion

Morgan said the TDC is under a time restraint in regards to the sand sculpting event. She said herself, Williamson, and South have worked to get accurate figures, regarding the past participation of the event, before presenting a recommendation again to the Board of Commissioners. Morgan said she feel this will be a successful event. She said she is proposing to spend \$55,000.00 and make this a two day event, the third week in April. Morgan said she received two letters of interest from those potentially wanting to partner this event. She said one letter is from the Navarre Area Chamber of Commerce and one is from the Pirates on the Panhandle. Morgan said if the TDC decides to coordinate with the Fun Fest then the event will be the last weekend of April. She said if the TDC chooses to coordinate with the Pirates of Panhandle the sand sculpting event will take place the third weekend in April.

Morgan further discussed the idea of having a “ticketed” evening event with a sit down dinner.

Jerry Foster (Pirates of Panhandle) gave an overview of the Pirates of Panhandle’s involvement in the community and said he would be happy to work with the TDC on this event. He said any funds generated at the event by the Pirates of Panhandle would be given to the Marine Science Center on Navarre Beach.

Gallup said this is the first that she has heard of this proposal. She said the southend committee had a meeting two days ago and there was no presentation. Gallup said she feels this needs to be discussed at the southend committee meeting before it gets to the Board of Directors.

There was further discussion regarding past board decisions and discussions regarding the sand sculpting event.

Gallup moved approval that this idea goes back before the southend committee for discussion. Sanborn seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Tough Mudder Discussion

Morgan said the Tough Mudder local event marketing application is included in the board's packet. She said Tough Mudder applied for \$120,000.00 of funding. She said Williamson and herself have had several conference calls with this organization. Morgan said Williamson's suggestion was a direct spend of \$80,000.00 with Tough Mudder paying for the economic impact study and hosting a pre event party and packaging this together with Santa Rosa County's lodging facilities and also apply for the Florida Sports Foundation grant of \$30,000.00.

Holley said he will not vote on Tough Mudder decisions because he is close with the landowners. He said the venue will work together to provide good service if the Tourist Development Council and the Board of County Commissioners want Tough Mudder to return.

There was further discussion regarding Tough Mudder grant application and the venue agreement.

Sanborn made a motion to cap funding at \$20,000.00 for this event. Gallup seconded. The motion passed with Gallup, Sanborn, Crowder, and Horton voting in favor. Lowery opposed. Holley abstained.

Lodging Tax Update

Morgan gave an update regarding the lodging tax report. She said the revenue for September came in at \$175,174.33 which is a 14% increase over the previous year therefore we should close out the fiscal year totaling approximately \$2 million. Morgan said this is the first time Santa Rosa County has collected this in a fiscal year.

There was further discussion regarding the accuracy of the bed tax collection numbers.

Gallup said the report states that June was up 23% and there was a decrease of .2% in July. She said Navarre Beach was packed this summer and there is no way, there was a decrease in July. Gallup said she suggests staff contacting some of the neighboring counties in regards to what programs they use to capture these numbers. Morgan said she will contact the other counties.

DSBP (Davis, South, Barnette, & Patrick) Annual Plan Presentation

Barnette and South gave a power point presentation to the board regarding DSBP's annual marketing and public relations plan for the TDC.

South further discussed the idea of having a "lunch and learn" event to discuss digital marketing and invite partners in the county.

Holley said he would like to know if there is access to some economic development dollars to boost the overall advertising of the county as a whole.

Sanborn asked Morgan if Shannon Ogletree (Economic Development Director) uses the “Florida’s Playground” brand in any of his promotions. Morgan said she does not know. Sanborn said he feels this should be encouraged.

North End requests

None

South End Requests

None

Director’s Report

Compton and Morgan both thanked Karen Harrell for all of her hard work and dedication to the “Beaches to Woodlands Tour”. Morgan said the “Beaches to Woodlands Tour” will move forward next year under the direction of the TDC department, due to Harrell’s retirement.

Morgan said she recently meet with the City of Gulf Breeze Mayor and Assistant Manager. She said the City of Gulf Breeze expressed their interest in becoming more involved with the TDC.

Morgan said she will be going to California next week to attend the digital roadshow event. She said she is excited for the opportunity to be visiting and learning from Google, Facebook, Twitter and TripAdvisor.

Morgan gave an update regarding the “Country on the Sound” event. She said the event holders have already expressed interest in booking the Navarre Marine Park, for a week, next year.

Other Business

Morgan said the Santa Rosa County Visitors Center is now a Visit Florida Certified Tourism Information Center.

Morgan discussed a one year ad buy for an exterior display at the I -10 Welcome Center. She said the display will be a statute of choice that would be graphically designed to represent Santa Rosa County, displaying the “Florida’s Playground” logo. She suggested a turtle for the statute. She said the statute would be utilized at the Navarre Visitors Center after the year display. She said the total cost would be a little less than \$5,000.00.

Horton moved approval for the funding of a turtle statute to be placed at the I-10 Welcome Center. Crowder seconded. The motion passed with Compton, Crowder, Holley, Horton, Lowery and Sanborn voting in favor. Gallup opposed.

There was discussion regarding the need for an RFP to hire a firm for the TDC facilitated planning session meeting.

Sanborn moved approval to recommend an RFP for hiring a firm to facilitate the TDC's planning session meeting and produce an outcome report. Holley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

There was continued discussion regarding this recommendation being placed on the next meeting agenda of the Board of Commissioners. Morgan said it is past the deadline for items to be added to the Board of Commissioners agenda for November. She said she will communicate this to Ogletree and Williamson if see if this item can be an add-on.

Holley said he will send Morgan an outline of goals and objectives for the strategic planning meeting.

Beach TV

Morgan said after looking at the Beach TV advertising, she does not feel it is feasible, at this time. She said Beach TV will need to come back with a better orchestrated plan.

Discussion of reserves

Gallup said staff needs to make sure that the 5th cent that is being set aside for beach restoration is separated. She said last year, the TDC budgeted an exceeded a certain amount of money, so there will be excess funds. She said the TDC needs to know that amount and subsequently what the TDC is going to do with it.

Compton asked that this detailed information is provided by the next set of committee meetings.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.