

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 15, 2020**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Doug Little, Cindy Sullivan, Sara Patel, Susan Elliott, Pete Arney, Dave Wilson

**Staff:** Georgia Carter Turner, Executive Director; Kristine Spence, Marketing Manager; David Swanberg, Marketing Coordinator

**Also Present:** Laura Coleman, Volusia County Assistant County Attorney; Brian Rothwell, Volusia County Activity Project Manager; Greg Otte and Brenda Sidoti, Benedict Advertising; Alina Lane and Scott Overton, Holiday Inn Express and Suites Deland South; Brenna Dacks, VISIT FLORIDA

**Absent:** Bryn Rawlins-Adams

**Call to Order:** Ms. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**Call for Public Participation:** Scott Overton, General Manager and Alina Lane, Director of Sales, for the new Holiday Inn Express South DeLand introduced themselves and gave an overview of the new hotel with 92 rooms, expected to open on August 12, 2020.

**June Minutes:** Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Patel and approved unanimously.

**June Financials:** Ms. Elliott made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Wilson and approved unanimously.

Ms. Patel stated June collections were \$25,053.00 and that we have been doing a good job watching expenses and cutting advertising expenses for now. Ms. Turner did mention that we did give back \$5,000 to Benedict Advertising as of the last board meeting to use toward digital marketing. Ms. Patel said there is about \$250,000 on hand to carry through. Ms. Turner reported May collections were higher than expected, and June and July were fair. Ms. Turner also stated WVTA has received refunds from event registrations due to being canceled as well as credits towards travel and wedding shows which canceled but will be able to apply to future shows.

Ms. Sullivan inquired about rack service fees that were paid in full for brochures distribution at the four VISIT FLORIDA welcome centers and if there would be any credit issues due to the closures of the welcome centers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Dacks with VISIT FLORIDA addressed this concern that even though they proceeded with distribution renewals that they will work to credit or extend out enrollments with the timeframe each welcome center was closed.

**Budget FY 2020-21**

Ms. Turner presented the PowerPoint draft for the budget that she will present to Volusia County Council on August 24, 2020. The key points for 2020-21 will be 1) COVID-19 Recovery; 2) audience segmentation; 3) digital marketing to include: search, social media and public relations in Florida; and 4) travel partnerships. Marketing will be focused on the four main audience segments of Outdoor Enthusiasts; Arts, Culture and History; Health and Wellness; and Weddings. Mr. Little made the motion to approve the budget presentation, seconded by Ms. Patel and approved unanimously.

## **Update from Benedict Advertising:**

Mr. Otte provided an update on the July Enewsletter. There were 2,549 total opens, open rate was 18.5% with 168 secondary actions. Top clicks were the \$99 for 99 days promotion, new kayak launch, Stetson Mansion and the tattoo exhibit at the Enterprise Museum.

Mr. Otte stated they restarted the Google search trails campaign which generated 2,000 clicks in 14 days.

Public relations activity was picked up from Traveling Mom Blog; Travel Writing 2.0 Blog: The Future of Press Trips; WKMG Orlando, Volusia County Hotel Bed Tax Update and Garth Brooks Virtual Concert at Epic West Volusia; New Kayak Launcher at De Leon Springs State Park picked up by Daytona News Journal and The West Volusia Beacon.

## **Executive Director's Report:**

Ms. Turner stated the majority of this month has been spent on working on the budget and concluding the County's internal audit. It was a compliance audit and Jonathan Edwards with the county hopes to have the results by the end of the summer. Some small issues were:

- The policy manuals of the three ad authorities are similar but do have some different information. Updating them will probably be a recommendation.
- Recommendations: make a deposit once a week; have duplicate receipts for map sales to match deposit slips; date stamp invoices when received and pay in 45 days; don't pay sales tax (at Walmart, etc.); have a form for entertainment expenses; get detailed receipts for entertainment.

Ms. Turner mentioned she has been working with Randy Knapp, a developer who's hoping to purchase Blair's Jungle Den this year. He asked her to attend the county planning commission meeting with him next month. They're looking to have 400+ RV spaces and 32 hotel rooms, clubhouse, swimming pool, camp store, 4,500 square foot restaurant, lazy river, zipline, corn hole, pickle ball and volleyball courts. They expect a Dec. 1 closing.

WVTAA staff met with the new staff at Holiday Inn Express South DeLand. Their opening date is planned for August 12, 2020.

WVTAA staff continues to do a lot of virtual meetings as the world is reopening.

Meetings Attended: Tropical Nights/Days rebranding meetings; PIN Network calls; West Volusia Chamber morning meeting; Bicycle Tourism Network webinar; county press conferences; Main Street Board and Reopen DeLand Fun Crew; WV Historical Society board; River of Lakes Board; ICAST virtual meeting and seminars. All WVTAA staff met with Laura Coleman to review the Sunshine Law and Public Records requests.

Ms. Turner stated her excitement about being appointed to the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors, effective July 1. She attended the last meeting of the old board as well as an international update.

Other: Ms. Turner was a guest on the Big John Show; David Martin from Good Day Orlando came to the tattoo exhibit at Enterprise Museum; ribbon cutting and press event with DeLeon Springs Community Association to reveal the new kayak launcher at DeLeon Springs State Park.

Mr. Swanberg has been visiting hotels, campgrounds, attractions and distributing brochures and maps. He assisted Benedict Advertising in putting together a video for social media about cleanliness and safety at hotels and attractions. Mr. Swanberg's main focus this summer continues to be on developing the Cool Craft Trail concept, but he also wrote blogs for Orlandoattractions.com and VISIT FLORIDA as well as working on information for the GeoTourist app that

features River of Lakes. He also joined the Volusia Chamber Alliance to assemble PPE kits at the Ocean Center. Mr. Swanberg and Ms. Spence helped distribute the kits to local businesses at a drive-through event at the Sanborn Center.

WVTAA opened the Visitor Center this week as an experiment to see how many people would come in. The door is locked and visitors are asked to tap on glass or call, and come in one person at a time with a mask.

Ms. Turner talked about the ACED (Arts, Culture, Entertainment District) DeLand group that has created miniature artwork throughout downtown DeLand, and are now publishing a collective brochure of the locations of each of them. WVTAA contributed \$500 towards printing the brochure which will include the WVTAA logo.

**General Discussion:**

Mr. Arney asked about DeLand being more forward thinking than the other communities in West Volusia during this time. Ms. Turner explained how the downtown business owners and MainStreet DeLand Association came together to implement new ideas to keep their businesses moving forward, as well as how the other cities and organizations such as DeLeon Springs Community Association are being innovative during the pandemic.

**Adjourn:** With no further business; Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Arney. The motion passed unanimously at 10:04 a.m.