

**West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 21, 2021**

MEETING MINUTES

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

Remote: Bryn Adams, Susan Elliott

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

Also Present: Laura Coleman, Volusia County Assistant County Attorney; Greg Otte, Brenda Sidoti and Jamie Alexander, Benedict Advertising; Yvette Gonzalez Ferrell, Courtyard Marriott DeLand Historic Downtown; Christina Crowley, Holiday Inn Express DeLand; Julie Roth, Magnolia Company

Call to Order: Mr. Little called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

Mr. Arney made a motion to approve that Ms. Adams has a concern and the Board agrees that it is an exceptional circumstance and that she be allowed to participate remotely today, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

Mr. Arney made a motion to approve that Ms. Elliott has a concern and the Board agrees that it is an exceptional circumstance and that she be allowed to participate remotely today, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

Nomination of WVTAA Board Officers:

Ms. Sullivan made a motion to nominate Mr. Little for Board Chair, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

Mr. Little nominated Cindy Sullivan for Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

Mr. Little nominated Sara Patel for Treasurer, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

Call for Public Participation:

Julie Roth, owner of Magnolia Company introduced herself and talked about her company and what they do.

Chrisina Crowley, new Director of Sales for the Holiday Inn Express DeLand introduced herself.

Yvette Gonzalez Ferrell, new Director of Sales for Courtyard by Marriott DeLand Historic Downtown introduced herself.

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

January Financials: Ms. Patel gave the January financial report. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

February Financials: Ms. Patel gave the February financial report. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Arney and approved unanimously.

Reinstatement of part-time employees at WVTAA: Ms. Turner told the Board that she wants to bring the part-time employees back to work on an as-needed basis instead of every Saturday as before the pandemic. Mr. Wilson made a motion to give a “vote of confidence” for Ms. Turner to make the decision of when to hire them since there is money in the budget, seconded by Ms. Sullivan and approved unanimously.

Update from Benedict Advertising:

Mr. Otte reported on the top visited pages on the website which included the pages on farmer’s market; directions/resources; latest travel information; what to do; events; recreation/attractions. 89.5% new; 10.5% return visitors.

Mr. Otte stated the Google search for March generated 26,420 impressions, 894 clicks resulting in a CTR of 3.38%. The CoolCraft Trail display campaign in March generated 74,081 impressions, 4,765 clicks resulting in a CTR of 6.43%.

Mr. Otte presented an overview of website traffic and traffic by device with mobile users as the leading category. As for social media, Facebook is highest driver to the website.

Mr. Otte provided an update on the Enewsletter focusing on April events. There were 1,803 total opens, open rate was 14.4% with 189 secondary actions. Top clicks in order were 5th Annual 5K and 10k river run; 2021 Tomoka takes a field trip marathon, half marathon and 5k; 12th annual DeLand craft beer festival; 9th annual DeLandapalooza; and 16th annual Spring Frolic at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement.

Public relations included an article in Orlando Attractions and WVTAA mentions in The West Volusia Beacon.

Mr. Otte said the Benedict team is working on digital and print initiatives with Flamingo and direct mail piece targeting senior market in Lake County/The Villages.

Executive Director’s Report: MARCH - APRIL 2021

MEETINGS: VISIT FLORIDA Board Meeting in Orlando; Black Bear Scenic Byway meeting; Rep. Webster Barnaby office grand opening; Twinka Tison regarding Wellness packages; River of Lakes meetings; Lodging Hospitality Assn. meetings; DeLand Chamber BAH at The Nest and Abbey Bar; Southeast Tourism Society Domestic Discovery; Florida Tourism Day/Advocacy Summit (virtual); new rep. for Orlando Sentinel Amy Moon; Volusia Days with Daytona Chamber; spoke to DeBary/Deltona Rotary; Tony Abbott at Enterprise Museum; MainStreet promotions committee meetings; Orlando Architect Foundation re: tours of DeLand; travel writer Vikki Moran from New Smyrna Beach; Volusia Today radio show; VF Marketing Council; MPI Global Meetings Industry Day at Daytona International Speedway; met with Dr. Chris Roellke via Zoom; Virtual SATW Eastern Chapter meeting; LHA at Dave & Buster’s; Bid on POMS; WedPros meetings; Florida Main Street and Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Joint Conference in July – August 2022. David attended the West Volusia Chamber morning meetings as well as their Network at Night at Holiday Inn Express in DeLand. He also serves on the DeLand Chamber social media committee. Kristine is on the West Volusia Historical Society Board and attends their meetings.

WEBINARS: Expedia; SATW on Wellness and Tik Tok; Southeast Tourism Society Simpleview webinar; Florida Public Relations Assn. 2-week PR Forum with a variety of webinars; VISIT FLORIDA Chats with Brenna Dacks and Data Webinar; STS Webinar on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; West Volusia ECHO/Volusia Program; VF Influencer webinar; Main Street USA Virtual Conference.

EVENTS: Love is Love DeLand Pride event; “Mamma Mia” at Athens Theatre; Florida Wedding Expo in Orlando; World of Outlaws race at Volusia Speedway Park (bonus); DeLand Indie Market; Drive Thru Travel Show in Viera; Wildflower Festival and Outdoor Art Festival; Grand Opening at Legacy at Oak Meadows; Enterprise Chili Cookoff; DeLand Craft Beer Festival.

OTHER:

Ms. Turner announced that Benedict Advertising won two Silver Addy Awards for WVTAA, one for the CoolCraft Beverage Trail brochure and one for the Baggage Claim signage at Daytona International Airport.

Ms. Turner also mentioned that a Domestic travel agent and tour operator FAM Trip is scheduled for April 25-26.

General Discussion:

Discussion and explanation of current state legislation that would impact the use of tourism development tax and convention development tax that would allow counties to authorize these funds on flood mitigation projects or improvements. Ms. Turner will keep the board updated on this bill.

Adjourn: With no further business; Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Arney. The motion passed unanimously at 10:14 a.m.