



DeSoto County

Tourism Development Council

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

1:30 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The Tourism Development Meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m. by Chair Trent Anthney.

Present: Trent Anthney, Zac Varner , Meagan Joseph, Pam Ames, Daniel Sutphin and Sondra Guffey

Excused: Jerod Gross, Ashley Harn, Judy Wertz-Strickland and Summer Lempenau

Absent: Sanjay Patel

MINUTES APPROVAL

Minutes of June 18, 2024

[24-366](#)

Vice Chair Varner made a motion to approve the minutes for June 18, 2024. Ms. Joseph seconded the motion. All approved.

REGULAR BUSINESS

Tourism Development Revenue Update

[24-371](#)

Ms. Guffey presented a tourism development revenue update. Numbers were up for both April and May, 2024. In April 2024, the revenues were \$13,594.49 compared to \$12,317 in April 2023. For May 2024, the revenues were \$13,393.31 compared to \$10,677.83 in 2023.

Ms. Ames stated that a new local brewery called Three Trees Brewery Co. was in the works for a location in the downtown area.

Ms. Guffey mentioned the recent opening of Broken Spur Diner at 10 Polk Ave, Arcadia, FL, in the space previously owned by Mary Margaret's Tea & Biscuit.

Ms. Ames stated that Arcadia Main Street will have a "Back to School Bash" set for September 14th, a Block Party, with Food Trucks. She added that they have Bike Fest planned for November 2nd. She stated that they are adding a beer walk for Friday night, November 1st, to test if they will stay.

Vice Chair Varner questioned the meaning of that statement.

Ms. Ames said that they find that past April they had 4,600 people in the downtown area for bike fest, but the hotels are not full. So, visitors are just day tripping. Ms. Ames said that Arcadia Main Street wants to figure out a way to get visitors to stay overnight.

Chair Anthney and Vice Chair Varner both suggested using Facebook advertisements to push events.

Chair Anthney asked if most Arcadia Main Street event visitors are day trippers?

Ms. Ames said that day trippers are generally the case.

Vice Chair Varner stated that part of the problem for tourism in the downtown area is that most people don't stay overnight. He added that "our big things" (locals) are to go out of town to eat or take part in tourist activities.

Ms. Guffey stated that the county's tourism department markets with Sarasota and Charlotte Counties because if we can keep visitors for an extra day, or if DeSoto County tourism can bring visitors over for an extra day, we can try to bring those visitors into DeSoto County.

Mr. Anthney stated it's beneficial to piggy back on neighboring counties tourism efforts.

A motion was made by Mr. Anthney to approve funding more tourism advertising through avenues such as the Farm Guide published "Edible Sarasota" magazine. Ms. Ames seconded the motion. All approved.

Discussion of TDC member terms ending

[24-367](#)

TDC term memberships ending were discussed. Members expressed wanting to remain on the Tourism Development Council. Ms. Guffey suggested members email her with their request to remain on the council. To do so, each member must email a statement as to why they want to remain on the council, along with a form of resume.

Discussion of FAQs from tourists and visitors for website

[24-368](#)

Mr. Sutphin asked TDC members what questions they often receive from guests and/or visitors to the county for a Frequently Asked Question page on the county's tourism website.

Mr. Anthney stated that he typically gets questions involving water level, green algae, red tide, where to eat, and the presence of alligators.

Mr. Varner added that he often receives questions regarding food destinations and other activities for families.

Ms. Ames stated that she typically receives questions about retail and dining.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

n/a

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Regarding the Tourism Development Marketing Matching Grant, Chair Anthney suggested applicants provide information showing that their entity has proof of recognition by the State of Florida to do business in Florida and be FEI certified.

Ms. Guffey agreed to add the statement to the ongoing revisions to the grant.

Mr. Anthney made a motion to approve the additional grant revision language, Ms. Joseph seconded. All approved.

STAFF COMMENTS

All staff-related comments were discussed during other agenda items.

ADJOURN

Chair Anthney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:41pm. Vice Chair Varner seconded. All approved.

NOTE: For quasi-judicial matters, any party desiring a verbatim record of the proceeding of this hearing for the purpose of an appeal is advised to make private arrangements for the production of a record and anyone wishing to present documents or other written evidence to the Board must provide eight (8) copies of the written material. If special accommodations are required in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, individuals should contact the County Administrator's Office by calling 863-993-4800 at least forty-eight hours prior to the hearing.