

**Franklin County Tourist Development Council  
Board Meeting  
Franklin County Courthouse Annex  
Wednesday, April 3, 2013  
3:00 P.M.**

**Minutes approved 5/8/13**

In attendance: Chair Pinki Jackel, Cal Allen, Alice Collins, Frank Cook, Beverly Hewitt, Paul Parker, Rex Pennycuff, Diana Prickett, and Chester Reese.

Recording: Curt Blair, Fran Edwards

Guests: Cindy Clark, Jennifer Daniels, George Floyd, Ken Ford, Caty Greene, Anita Grove, JR Holland Tommy Holland, Jim Kemp, Tana Kendrick, Linda Miniciello, Dixie Partington, Kathy Robinson, Royce Rolstad, Lois Swoboda, Joe Taylor, Suzanne Zimmerman, and Augusta West, Charles Wilson.

Call to Order: Chair Jackel called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Amendments to Agenda: Chair Jackel requested if there were any amendments to the Agenda; Blair requested two items be added under Continuing Business of the April Geiger Reception and Lois Swoboda to speak about geocache.

Minutes of March 6, 2013 Council Meeting: Motion to approve Minutes as presented:

Motion: Reese; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cook, passed unanimously

Committee Report of March 20, 2013 – no action required

**Administrative:**

**Reports:**

Collections – Blair reported collections are up 11% over last year and up \$133,000 for previous fiscal year

Financials – Blair confirmed that expense detail was emailed to the board for review

Media/Web Stats – Blair reviewed the current media report from Bay Media and web statistical info from 2Kwebgroup

BP Grant Application follow up – Blair stated the BP Grant had been mailed and had confirmation it was received

2013-14 Budget – Blair requested a motion to approve the draft 2013-14 budget in order to have it ready to send to County Finance in the near future.

Motion to approve the 2013-14 Budget as presented:

Motion: Collins, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Parker, passed unanimously

TDC Coalition Meeting – Blair informed the board he had attended the NW Florida Coalition of TDCs meeting, that Dawn Molitinaro had resigned and Dan Rowe from Panama City had been voted as her replacement. He indicated that the Coalition is putting proposals together for the new BP \$.

**Committee Reports:**

**Marketing:**

Plan Development – 2% to 4% was discussed under Continuing Business

**Grants:**

2013 Small Grant Advertising – Prickett confirmed that the new Grant proposal will be presented to the FCBOCC on April 16<sup>th</sup>. If the proposal is not accepted, this item will be on the agenda for the TDC Committee Meeting April 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### Visitor Centers: Workshop –

Signage – Hewitt suggested that “signage cure” could be that all Visitor Centers have identical signage. This suggestion was tabled for discussion at the next committee meeting. Reese suggested that the current SGI Visitors Sign be allowed to remain, but remove the conflicting language at the bottom.

Motion to leave sign as is but remove conflicting language at the bottom:

Motion Reese, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Allen,

Yes-Allen, Hewitt, Jackel, Pennycuff, Prickett, Reese; Nay-Collins, Cook, Parker; passed

Visitor Guide Distribution policy - Pennycuff and Reese reviewed input received at the workshop on the 28<sup>th</sup> pertaining to changes in distribution of information of tourist related business at the visitor centers. Reese reviewed a recap of suggestions which basically indicated that the tourist related businesses, no matter which area of location, wished to be represented and promoted fairly and equally by all three visitor centers. Refinement of this information to be discussed further meetings.

#### Continuing Business:

RESTORE ACT – Parker reported he had attended the County’s first orientation meeting of the RESTORE COUNCIL. He said that the meeting items consisted mainly of housekeeping issues, organization, financial disclosures. Parker thinks the TDC should refine their plan and proposal in advance so as to be prepared for submittal when requested.

Eastpoint Visitors Center – Chair Jackel reported that title to this property from the state is anticipated within thirty days. County Attorney Shuler is handling the matter.

Tourist Tax Levy – Jackel reviewed that over \$2 million of TDC funds has been distributed to non-profit within Franklin County. That the BP \$ for TDC had boosted the economy because it allowed increased promotional venues to expand the territorial advertising. She addressed the audience and Board with the importance of communication that we should listen more, understand the complexities of situations; that the Board is interested in what you have to say and that we should all work together and with everyone. Parker explained that a tax levy would increase \$ to Visitor Centers, to promote tourism, aid infrastructure such as the Coombs Convention Center, upgrade beach amenities with restrooms and lighting, and construct more water access. Chair Jackel explained a referendum was not required to pass a 2% increase but that a majority vote by the County Commission was required for the second 1%.

Chair Jackel requested each board member to state their position as to whether they supported the 2% tax increase:

Collins: Yes, she has been supportive of a tourist tax from the very beginning and has never had complaints from customers regarding the tax percentage; she feels the county needs this 2% increase to allow funding to market Franklin County internationally.

Prickett: Yes, in total agreement with Collins; we need more \$ to support tourism, with advertising.

Hewitt: Yes, in support of increase, suggests more \$ to Visitor Centers.

Allen: Yes, in support; we have to compete with internet marketing; Franklin County appeals to certain types of persons and he would like to promote to that area; Allen also supports the local collection of bed tax.

Pennycuff: Yes, (not usually in favor of any type of tax increase), but the 2% increase is paid by tourists not locals, and he feels the increase is beneficial to his business as he knows the present promotion is working as he has seen a large increase from people from Michigan and Wisconsin. The increase would allow the TDC to move forward with major projects to promote tourist related business in the county by advertising them.

Reese: Yes, all will benefit, although he indicated all not of his area of the county is for the increase because they are not aware of what it would do for their small business. He feels it is important for the resort community to understand the benefits it will bring to their business.

Cook: Yes, most people don't ask the tax amount, nobody pays attention to the tax and it would not impinge on Franklin County public uses.

Parker: Yes, I'm a numbers guy – the current annual collection of \$916,000 represents an economic value to Franklin County of \$46 million dollars just from tourism. Parker suggests the majority of the increased tax dollars should go toward promotional expense; that it is not a coincidence that the BP \$ expended for promotion by the TDC resulted in locals receiving the benefit.

Motion to recommend a request for a 2% tourist tax increase to the Franklin County Commissioners at their May 6, 2013 meeting:

Motion: Prickett, 2<sup>nd</sup> Parker, passed unanimously

At this time, Jackel motioned to extend the meeting beyond 5:00 P.M. So moved.

#### Reports by Local Government Representatives:

Franklin County: Jackel had previously stated the Eastpoint Building acquisition was being handled.

City of Apalachicola: Cook reported that public restrooms construction at the Cotton Exchange are underway as well as improvements at Mill Pond.

City of Carrabelle – Allen reminded and invited the Board and audience to "Pirates of Carrabellan" riverfront festival April 25-26 in Carrabelle.

#### New Business:

Themo Patriatis - Kayak Summit – Patriatis addressed the board with a request to support a "2013 Kayaks in Apalachicola" Summit in September or October. This is expected to be a very large event and that they would be partnering with Florida Seafood Festival organization.

Motion for TDC to participate and support the event:

Motion: Hewitt, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Collins, passed unanimously

(Jackel indicated the TDC Administrative Committee should review policies in connection with this event.)

\$500 Grant Request: SGI Lighthouse Assn – Civil War Living History Weekend, Apalach –

Motion to approve \$500 to SGI Lighthouse Association for "Island Light" Vignettes:

Motion: Collins, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cook, passed unanimously

\$500 Grant Request: Florida Wild Mammal Assn – Golf Gone Wild, Lanark

Motion to approve \$500 to Florida Wild Mammal Association for this event held in Franklin County:

Motion: Prickett, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Parker, passed unanimously

#### Public Items for the Good of the Order:

Wednesday April 17, 2013 1:30 P.M. Committees, City of Apalachicola Meeting Room

Wednesday May 1, 2013 3:00 P.M. TDC Board, Franklin County Courthouse Annex

Adjourn: Chair Jackel adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.