

**MINUTES OF MEETING
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA
APRIL 19, 2021
1:30 P.M.**

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the Tourist Development Council (TDC) of St. Johns County, Florida, held in the auditorium at the County Administration Building, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, Florida.

Present: Michael Gordon, Chair
Joe Finnegan, Vice Chair
Paul Waldron, BCC Representative
Nancy Sikes-Kline, Vice Mayor, City of St. Augustine Representative
Don Samora, Vice Mayor, City of St. Augustine Beach Representative
Diane Mataraza, District 3
Danny Berenberg, District 4
Michael Wicks, District 4
Troy Blevins, District 5
Sindy Wiseman, Deputy Clerk

Also present: Tera Meeks, Tourism and Cultural Development Director; Dena Masters, TDC Administrative Coordinator; and Regina Ross, Deputy County Attorney

(04/19/21 - 1 - 1:30 p.m.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Gordon called the meeting to order.

(04/19/21 - 1 - 1:32 p.m.)

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Michael Wicks led the Pledge of Allegiance.

(04/19/21 - 1 - 1:33 p.m.)

3. ROLL CALL

Masters called the roll. Council members Michael Gordon, Joe Finnegan, Paul Waldron, Nancy Sikes-Kline, Don Samora, Diane Mataraza, Danny Berenberg, and Michael Wicks were present. Troy Blevins was absent.

(04/19/21 - 2 - 1:33 p.m.)

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Wicks, seconded by Waldron, carried 8/0, with Blevins absent, to approve the Agenda, as submitted.

(04/19/21 - 2 - 1:33 p.m.)

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Regular Meeting March 15, 2021

Berenberg requested for the objection from the public speaker regarding the extended time allotted to Phil McDaniel, public speaker, at Berenberg's request.

(1:34 p.m.) Motion by Berenberg, seconded by Mataraza, carried 8/0, with Blevins absent, to approve the minutes for the March 15, 2021, meeting, as amended.

(04/19/21 - 2 - 1:36 p.m.)

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

(04/19/21 - 2 - 1:38 p.m.)

7. MUSIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STUDY

Meeks introduced Kate Durio, Sound Diplomacy, US Senior Project Lead, who presented the details of the Tourism Study, via PowerPoint, through zoom.

(1:38 p.m.) Durio presented a detailed summary of the results from the Tourism Study, including the music ecosystem, ecological impact assessment, stakeholder engagement, quantitative research, key findings, and recommendations to move forward. Discussion ensued on who initiated the study and how it was funded; a music hub; night life initiative; developing a website for music in St. Johns County; merging ongoing efforts with current organizations; and creating an agent of change policy.

(2:12 p.m.) Berenberg spoke on performing studies without a specific funding source to move forward. Discussion ensued on moving forward from studies performed and periodic updates on progresses made as a result of studies performed.

(04/19/21 - 3 - 2:24 p.m.)

8. TDT 5TH CENT DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Meeks provided an update on the recommended 5th cent discussion. She provided the proposed modifications to the categories to incorporate the 5th cent, which included: 1) Modify Category 5, Tourism Assets, to create a category specifically for beach expenditures; 2) Modify the Category 3, Leisure and Recreation, definition to remove all beach related services and functions; 3) Modify the Category 3, Leisure and Recreation, definition to include new language specifically referencing the use of funds for boat ramps, park capital improvement projects, and the pier; and 4) Modify Category 4, Admin and Special Uses, definition to specifically reference expenditures for parking and transportation improvements/management. She provided the results of the survey regarding support and non-support for levying the 5th cent. Additionally, she said that the City of St. Augustine sent a letter to the County requesting that half of the 5th cent be allocated to fund an independent study to develop a comprehensive transportation and parking master plan for capital improvements, *Exhibit A*.

(2:30 p.m.) Waldron requested a breakdown of who was surveyed in the survey performed by the Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB).

(2:32 p.m.) Berenberg suggested sending the 5th cent to the BCC for allocation.

(2:34 p.m.) Richard Goldman, CEO of the Visitors and Convention Bureau, provided the breakdown of stakeholder's support/opposition of the 5th cent. Discussion ensued.

(2:41 p.m.) Finnegan spoke on the small businesses being dependent on the marketing.

(2:42 p.m.) Meeks referred to the chart in the PowerPoint of the allocations to each category.

(2:43 p.m.) Barbara Blonder, City Commissioner, spoke on mobility in the County and requested that half of the 5th cent go toward mobility in the County.

(2:45 p.m.) Phil McDaniel, 7 Milton Street, spoke on the history of the original taxes levied and on the importance of advertising and marketing.

(2:49 p.m.) Elaine Ashourian, 315 Ponte Vedra Boulevard, showed several videos on her iPad of Mickler's Beach during a Nor'easter and spoke on the lack of access for residents as well as emergency vehicles.

(2:53 p.m.) John Valdes, City Commissioner City of St. Augustine, spoke on importance of the City of St. Augustine to the County tourism, and preserving the visitor experience,

which had the history that drew visitors to the County. He requested that the parking issues be address.

(2:56 p.m.) Christina Parrish-Stone, Executive Director of the St. Johns Cultural Council, spoke in support of levying the 5th cent and provided statistics of allocated taxes for other tourism states. She advocated for additional allocations for Category 2, to return the allocation to its' 2019 amounts.

(2:58 p.m.) Lori Moffett, 917 Ponte Vedra Boulevard, spoke on the importance of investing in Ponte Vedra beach and was in support of allocating a portion of the 5th cent to renourish Ponte Vedra's beach.

(3:01 p.m.) John Reagan, City Manager for the City of St. Augustine, spoke on building satellite parking and supported infrastructure that supports tourism.

(3:04 p.m.) Sikes-Kline, suggested that the Categories be restored to what their 2019 allotments were before reallocating. Discussion ensued on restoring advertising dollars, infrastructure, traffic, lifeguarding, sports tourism, ecotourism, Ponte Vedra Beach, and making responsible allocations. Wicks suggested that everyone was in support of levying the 5th cent and suggested a default of spreading equally across the categories if the Council could not agree on specifics.

(3:25 p.m.) Motion by Sikes-Kline, seconded by Gordon, carried 8/0, with Blevins absent, to recommend levying the 5th cent tax.

(3:27 p.m.) Sikes-Kline advocated to restore categories 1-4 to the pre-allocation amounts in 2019, and the additional .3 cent toward mobility improvements. Discussion ensued on redefining the categories and adjusting the allocations.

(3:34 p.m.) Motion by Sikes-Kline, seconded by Finnegan, carried 8/0, with Blevins absent, to recommend the BCC to adopt the recommended revisions/definitions of the categories, as presented.

(3:45 p.m.) Discussion ensued on revising the categories.

(3:57 p.m.) Phil McDaniel, 7 Milton Street, expressed his appreciation to the Council for restoring the categories to their 2019 allocations.

(3:59 p.m.) Motion by Sikes-Kline, seconded by Samora, carried 7/1, with Berenberg dissenting, and Blevins absent, directing staff to bring a red-lined version of the ordinance, which reflected the levying of the 5th cent, which restored the pre-

allocations of funding made in 2019, as well as, a prioritization of the beach renourishment and transportation components.

(04/19/21 - 5 - 4:15 p.m.)

9. CULTURAL COUNCIL PROMOTION PLAN WORKSHOP

Christina Parrish-Stone, St. Johns Cultural Council, provided the Cultural Tourism Budget draft for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, *Exhibit A*. She spoke on planned changes, implementing the cultural tourism plan, the objectives, goals, and timing of the plan. She spoke on new target markets, turning cultural assets into tourism drivers, environmental scan, strategies, cultural brand promise, and current budget modifications. She requested the Council allow the use of the returned Category 2 funds, for the requested \$100,000 to the current budget, from grants that were not utilized. Discussion ensued on how the Cultural Council and the Visitors and Convention Bureau were intertwined, the new targeted visitor base, and grants program.

(4:41 p.m.) Motion by Sikes-Kline, seconded by Mataraza, carried 8/0, with Blevins absent, to award \$100,000 in returned grant funds, to supplement the FY 2021 budget, as presented.

(4:42 p.m.) Parrish-Stone explained the line items on the FY 22 Cultural Tourism Budget.

(04/19/21 - 5 - 4:47 p.m.)

10. VCB PROMOTION PLAN WORKSHOP

Richard Goldman, President and CEO of the St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, and The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau (VCB), spoke on the results from the VCB promotion plan workshops and stated that he was available for any questions.

(04/19/21 - 5 - 4:50 p.m.)

11. MONTHLY REPORTS PROVIDED IN PACKETS

(04/19/21 - 5 - 4:50 p.m.)

12. MEMBER COMMENTS

Berenberg expressed his appreciation to the BCC for forgiving the VCB CDD loan.

(4:51 p.m.) Waldron commented that the unemployment reports showed unemployment at 3.3 percent and stated that the population had grown by 110,000 to 115,000 over the past 20 years. He spoke on the importance of helping with transportation.

(04/19/21 - 6 - 4:51 p.m.)

13. NEXT MEETING DATE

May 17, 2021, at 1:30 p.m.

(04/19/21 - 6 - 4:52 p.m.)

14. ADJOURN

With there being no further business to come before the Council, Gordon adjourned the meeting at 4:52 p.m.

Approved _____, 2021

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Michael Gordon, Chair

ATTEST: BRANDON J. PATTY,
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT & COMPTROLLER

By: _____
Deputy Clerk