

**Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting  
August 3, 2011**

**Present:** Susan Danis (9/11); Jay Schrock (11/11); Richard Bradshaw (11/11); Commissioner Joseph Barbetta (8/8); Paige Hartmann (10/11); Larry Fineberg (8/11); Trent Young (9/11); Kumar Mahadevan (9/11); Christopher Rolle (3/5).

**Excused Absence:** Mark Becker (10/11); Laura Williams (10/11); Michael Klauber (5/11).  
Unexcused Absence: Scott Busby (3/5); Leslie Power (8/11).

**Staff in attendance:** Virginia Haley, Stephanie Grosskreutz, Anne Zavorskas, Erin Duggan, Jason Puckett, Bob Horn, Lynn Hobeck Bates and Janis Holland.

At 8:04 AM Susan Danis, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order, noting that she is sitting in for absent Chair Becker and that there is a large Consent Agenda to consider this month.

**Consent Agenda:**

Vice Chair Danis asked for questions or comments regarding the Consent Agenda. Trent Young, Chair of the Governance Committee, said that the committee had used the matrix and has the following suggestions for new Board members. With Richard Bradshaw, a small hotelier, leaving the Board, the committee recommends Maria Bankemper of the Holiday Inn Express Sarasota Siesta Key as a replacement small hotelier. In an effort to enhance the Communications sector, Peter Norden of Clear Channel Communications is recommended for a Board position. Finally, Steven High, Executive Director of The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art is recommended for a Board position. Mr. Young indicated that a person from South County still is needed and the Governance Committee will talk to Mindy Pieper of Venice MainStreet about service on the Board. The Board slate will be presented at the next Board meeting.

Next, Richard Bradshaw discussed the issue of the County contract, noting that Virginia Haley has done a huge amount of work proactively for the upcoming County contract. On August 10 there will be a meeting with the County regarding the final contract. Mr. Bradshaw suggests that the Executive Committee be empowered to sign off on the final County contract.

Virginia Haley called the Board's attention to the Meetings Sponsorship Policy and Application. Ms. Haley suggested that instead of approval being up to her, she would recommend that the Marketing Committee should make final decisions on Meetings Sponsorship Applications.

Vice Chair Danis asked for any other discussion. Virginia Haley noted that the first sole source exemption (\$25,000 or over) was included for Board approval, and that it is from Mote Marine for Beach Conditions Reporting.

Trent Young moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Richard Bradshaw seconded the motion. A vote was taken. Kumar Mahadevan abstained from voting. The motion passed.

### **President's Report:**

Virginia Haley noted that the STR and quarterly dashboard are included in the Board packet. Sarasota has the highest RevPAR growth of its competitive set, which is excellent news. Since there are no Siesta Key properties reporting on STR, this growth is even more impressive.

Ms. Haley also talked about the emergency meeting of the Florida Association of CVBs(FACVB) in Auburndale earlier in the week to discuss the introduction by Jacksonville of a local bill that would establish a monetary assessment for local tourism businesses. This has been done in California by creating tourism districts, driven by hotel properties, with assessments being used to fund tourism marketing. There are pluses and minuses to the concept, and it is a big issue. Ms. Haley has a lot of background information from California and she recommends that it be discussed in depth at the September Board meeting. When asked how the funds are used, Ms. Haley replied they are used for marketing, public relations and promotions, and not for products. It should stay in the tourism industry because it would be assessed by and for the tourism industry. However, the current draft legislative proposed in Jacksonville would not be satisfactory. There are other considerations, including what entity would collect the assessment. For example, the Board of County Commissioners could approve and oversee it collection without directing the usage of funds from such an assessment.

The materials on the assessments from FACVB will be included in the September Board package. At FACVB's annual board meeting in October, there will be a presentation in Lakeland by the attorneys from California who are involved in creating the assessment system. It might be helpful if any Board members can attend.

Finally, at the July Board meeting, there was a suggestion that SCVB partners who are overdue 60 days or more should get a personal phone call from an SCVB Board member to encourage continuation of SCVB partnership. Virginia Haley reviewed information about the two partners (Cool Breeze Boat Rentals and Adam Chicone Real Estate), and there being no volunteers to make the calls, she will ask Chairman Becker to do so.

### **Financial Report for June 2011:**

Jay Schrock spoke about the foresight in moving the SCVB savings account out of LandMark Bank. He briefly reviewed the June financials, noting that partner income, Visitor Guide and Visitor Center income is ahead of budget, and the County is paying in a timely way. Virginia Haley noted that Bernie Gottschalk is to be commended for Visitor Guide advertising sales that exceed expectations by \$40,000.

Paige Hartmann moved to approve the June financials; Kumar Mahadevan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **Administrative Office Lease:**

Stephanie Grosskreutz directed the Board's attention to Tab 4, the proposed office lease with SunTrust Bank, and the handout memorandum noting the current disposition of the red-lined items in the lease, many being resolved as requested by the SCVB. She said our attorney is pleased with the final version of the lease, which includes furniture, utilities, and janitorial services. There is some urgency to complete the lease since SunTrust will not request a permit to build a required devising firewall until the lease is signed.

Comments included:

- Ask for everything you could possibly want now.
- Increase notice to vacate from 90 days to 120 or 160 days.
- Is outside signage available? Not really. There will be lobby signage.
- Concern that this not appear to be an extravagant upgrade because it is not. It is more space, allowing all staff to be under one roof, except for Visitors Center staffing. This is not to replace the Visitors Center and no foot traffic is expected.
- The description of Landlord's work must be precise and all-inclusive.
- 24-hour access is good but there will be little a/c if any.
- Board meetings will be held in the new offices.
- Is tax included or additional - §3.6
- Rental increases are within our operations budget.
- Late charge is high - §3.7
- Ask SunTrust to waive the security deposit since we do our banking with them. §3.8
- Details of obligations to maintain.

The Executive Committee already has approved the lease in general. These final issues that have been raised by the Board should be sent to the Executive Committee and Larry Fineberg for approval.

A motion was made by Jay Schrock to move forward with the lease with the Executive Committee to give approval to the final version of it and Susan Danis as Vice Chair to sign it. Kumar Mahadevan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

## **Cultural & International Tourism Presentation**

Lynn Hobeck Bates, Cultural & International Tourism Sales Manager, gave a presentation about the SCVB's activities on cultural and international tourism sales. She reviewed the five-year strategy and goals for cultural tourism, tactics for the travel trade, in-market and niche marketing, and the two principal promotions, 30 Days of Discovery promotion in September and the Festival sARTEE in October. Future planning will include the additional \$200,000 of funding for cultural marketing, along with group sales and itinerary-building, and continuation of partnership with others. For international tourism sales, she reviewed the five-year strategy and 2011 goals and shared international visitation statistics for Florida and Sarasota specifically. She reviewed tactics and future plans, including possible outreach to Canada, as well as the

current efforts in the U.K. and Germany, noting that we still are waiting for direct air service to Germany.

Comments from the Board included:

- What is a receptive? A US-based travel agent/tour operator who deals directly with international wholesalers. The SCVB is meeting with receptive to promote international tourism to Sarasota.
- Addition of Canada as a market. Funding is a consideration.
- Challenges include lack of Siesta Key full-service properties and shortage of brand-name hotels.
- On the FY2011 Goals, change goal 1 to say 'stabilize U.K. visitation' or 'continue to increase international visitation.'
- Discussion of other viable markets: Brazil goes to Miami and Orlando and mainly consists of youth tour groups. Need a Portuguese-speaking infrastructure. Golf may be an area of interest for Brazilians. The issue of direct flights into SRQ remains.
- Should we target Miami and Orlando with ads for Brazil and China?
- How to get Sarasota onto itineraries for tour operators? These are pay-to-play opportunities usually.
- The Argentina market has good potential.
- Another market increase noted by Walter Klages is the Scandinavian market.
- With commissions charged by wholesalers and receptive, the room rate international travelers pay ends up being \$40-\$50/night.
- Continue to promote the Number 1 Beach, possibly by creating a Beach Legacy. Ms. Bates noted that internationally we will continue to reap benefits from this designation for at least another year because international travelers plan travel well in advance.

### **Video Marketing:**

Anne Zavorskas played the two television advertisements for Sarasota that currently are running in the Tampa-Orlando markets. The ads are identical except for sound, with one having a song with words and the other just having music. Ms. Zavorskas also played the Public Service Announcement created by the SCVB. The Board had the suggestion to add more Sports to the PSA and update it to reflect #1 Beach, rather than #2 (when PSA was filmed).

Vice Chair Danis called for final questions and comments, and there being none, the meeting adjourned at 9:28 AM.