

**Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
September 7, 2011**

Present: Mark Becker (11/12); Susan Danis (10/12); Richard Bradshaw (12/12); Commissioner Joseph Barbetta (9/9); Paige Hartmann (11/12); Larry Fineberg (9/12); Trent Young (10/12); Kumar Mahadevan (10/12); Christopher Rolle (4/6); Laura Williams (11/12); Michael Klauber (6/12); Scott Busby (4/6); Leslie Power (9/12).

Excused Absence: Jay Schrock (11/12).

Staff in attendance: Virginia Haley, Stephanie Grosskreutz, Anne Zavorskas, Erin Duggan, Bob Horn and Janis Holland.

At 8:05 AM Mark Becker, Chairman, called the meeting to order, welcoming everyone to the final Board meeting of the fiscal year and welcoming Susan Danis as the incoming Chair.

Consent Agenda:

Chair Becker asked for questions or comments regarding the Consent Agenda.

First, there was a discussion of the Sports Commission's sponsorship allocation recommendation. Funding comes from the SCVB Sports budget and there were more requests for sponsorship funds than the SCVB has in its budget. The idea of a room commission was discussed, but it was noted that the SCVB can give smaller sponsorship awards because it does not collect room commissions; the commissions go directly to each sports organization. The economic impact of youth soccer in Lakewood Ranch this past weekend was huge, and there was a suggestion for better traffic management. The sports sponsorship recommendations include Ultimate Club Championship at the Polo Grounds, which is in its final year of commitment to Sarasota; a May tennis event that has not yet generated significant room nights; and the Dragon Boat Festival. The Board discussed its desire to support the Dragon Boat Festival because of its potential to grow (international event held in Tampa recently) and because of the County's investment in the rowing facility. It was noted that Beach Volleyball received a higher funding recommendation due to its potential to generate national television coverage.

The minimum score to receive funding is eight to ten points, based on the criteria provided along with the recommendations. There is little restriction on use of the funds, but they are not disbursed until the event organizer has provided reporting information at the end of the event, making ROI easier to calculate. Location and timing are important factors in determining a recommendation for sponsorship. The approximately \$125,000 investment in sports creates a huge return on investment.

Kumar Mahadevan moved to approve the sports sponsorship allocation recommendation; Leslie Power seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Second, the tourism marketing grants for FY 2012 were considered. It was noted that these grants are for off-season events and allow only for four years of grant awards for any one event. The Marketing Committee made recommendations with the following comments.

- Downtown Sarasota City Guide – printing costs are high and the DSA collects money for advertising in the guide. However, it is popular at the Visitors Center. The Committee recommends funding only the Tampa distribution segment of the grant request in the amount of \$4,200.
- Forks & Corks – it is so successful that it cannot grow and sells out each year. The Committee recommends funding only the national food and wine magazine advertising component of the grant request in the amount of \$5,000.
- The Venice grant request illustrates the kind of collaboration the Committee supports and is a modest amount to print and ship brochures to Visit Florida Welcome Centers.
- Other recommendations were listed on the handout.

There was a discussion of about the Downtown Sarasota Alliance. Virginia Haley noted that she, Anne Zavorskas and Steve Queior of the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce will be working on long-term perception surveys for both Venice and downtown Sarasota. It was noted that the Chalk Festival needs stronger organization and that the Arts Alliance is providing funding for it also, but from non-TDC funds.

Mark Becker moved to approve the Tourism Marketing Grants recommendations; Paige Hartmann seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Third, the Meetings Sponsorship recommendations from the Marketing Committee were considered, with an \$8,500 sponsorship to John Deere and \$800 to MPI Tampa Bay Chapter. The Board discussed John Deere generally, noting the problem with lift to SRQ. Trent Young moved to approve the Meetings sponsorships; Chris Rolle seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Finally, the balance of the Consent Agenda was considered. Susan Danis moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Richard Bradshaw seconded the motion. The motion passed.

President's Report:

Virginia Haley noted the staff report's highlights and asked for volunteers to make calls to 60-day overdue partners. Laura Williams will call Enterprise Rent A Car, and Mark Becker will call Roy's Hawaiian Fusion restaurant.

The July STR report showed a great month. Larry Fineberg suggested that we need to get these numbers in a press release, using the Memorial Day to Labor Day figures. Virginia Haley will send the numbers to various hotel consultants who have contacted her in the past about

potential new hotel projects. Michael Klauber suggested trying to get an article in a trade publication that hotel companies use. Virginia Haley reported that two Siesta Key properties may start reporting for the STR reports.

There was a discussion of the November US Airways Magazine cultural advertising insert for Sarasota. It was required that the funds be used for a cultural piece since they came from the one-time \$200,000 cultural funding. The insert sold out in 24 hours and its size was doubled from the original plan. The EDC, Sarasota Chamber and City of Venice all have pages in the insert. The question of whether the SCVB could do this with Southwest Airlines/AirTran was raised, and there was a suggestion that we not wait a full year to do this, but look at something sooner. The next time it should have an area-wide focus. Delta Airlines is too expensive for this type of project.

Financial Report for July 2011:

In the absence of Treasurer Jay Schrock, Virginia Haley noted that the July financial report speaks for itself, that the Visitors Guide income will be recognized in 2012, and that the Dr. Beach promotion was successful.

Susan Danis moved to approve the July financials; Michael Klauber seconded the motion. The motion passed.

FY 2012 Slate for SCVB Board:

The next item for consideration was the FY2012 Slate for the Board of Directors and Officers. There are four new Board members joining: Steven High of The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Pete Norden of Clear Channel Communications, Maria Bankemper of the Holiday Inn Express Sarasota Siesta Key and on the Tourism Committee for the Siesta Key Chamber, and Mindy Pieper of Venice MainStreet. Officers for the new fiscal year are: Susan Danis as Chair, Paige Hartmann as Vice Chair, Christopher Rolle as Treasurer, and Mark Becker would become Past Chair. Committee assignments for the coming year were listed, along with members of the four advisory committees. Paige Hartmann and Chris Rolle were thanked for their willingness to serve in expanded roles.

A motion to approve the new Board members was made by Trent Young; Paige Hartmann seconded the motion. The motion passed. A motion to approve the officers was made by Richard Bradshaw and seconded by Michael Klauber. The motion passed.

The Chairman then talked about the departing Board members – Richard Bradshaw, Leslie Power, Trent Young and Jay Schrock (who was not present) – thanking them warmly for their service and presenting a plaque to each of the present members. Susan Danis then thanked Chairman Becker for his service to the SCVB and present him with a gavel; he noted that it has been a true pleasure and he found it very rewarding.

Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week:

Virginia Haley discussed Savor Sarasota Restaurant Week, its beginnings and how to take it to the next level. Hoteliers understandably want to use this event to build room nights. There was a discussion of various ideas mentioned in the memorandum from Erin Duggan. Michael Klauber noted that most restaurants would not support any kind of a discount plan, but he said the Fresh Originals support the concept and he suggests that someone from the SCVB arrange to speak to a meeting of the Originals and solicit new SCVB partnerships from that organization. The idea of have two restaurant weeks during the year was well received, and there was a recommendation to survey restaurants for their feedback on this idea. The concept of a kick-off event or festival was well received. The question of non-partners buying into Restaurant Week without becoming partners was discussed, and there was a suggestion of running a revenue model of the effects of that action to see if it would be beneficial or detrimental.

Tourism Investment District:

Virginia Haley gave a brief synopsis of the background for a proposed Tourism Investment District (TID) – that it is a dedicated source of funds controlled by the payers. Jacksonville is seeking a TID Act because it is in critical financial condition and supports a failing convention center. Such a TID would include restaurants, attractions and other tourist businesses in addition to hotels. One concern for such a TID is that TDC funds would be diverted to other uses. Comments by the Board included:

- we are fine where we are
- TDC funds would be siphoned off if TID in place
- it would be a disaster
- it would take us to too high a tax amount (13% to 15%)
- hoteliers could opt to give up bed tax funds and enact TID to have greater control of the use of funds

Virginia Haley invited interested parties to attend the FACVB presentation on this subject on October 20th.

President's Performance Review and Adjournment:

At 9:35 AM, Chairman Becker asked SCVB staff and President to leave the meeting so Board members could conduct the President's performance review. Thereafter the meeting was adjourned.