

**Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau
Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
February 2, 2011**

Present: Mark Becker (5/5); Jay Schrock (5/5); Richard Bradshaw (5/5); Susan Danis (5/5); Kumar Mahadevan (5/5); Laura Williams (5/5); Larry Fineberg (4/5); Comm. Joseph Barbetta (2/2); Trent Young (4/5); Paige Hartman (4/5).

Excused Absence: Michael Klauber (2/5); Leslie Power (3/5).

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

At 8:03 AM Chairman Mark Becker called the meeting to order, noting the past month has been a busy one.

Consent Agenda:

The Chairman called for questions or comments on the Consent Agenda, and the following were mentioned:

- How was Baltimore Fanfest? Phenomenal.
- When will logos be presented to the Board? April Board meeting.
- Status and expected delivery date of white paper on downtown hotel? The issue of hotel meeting space will be added to the discussion; 20 conference centers/downtown hotels will be studied to see how well they work; completion of paper expected this summer, considering research to be done.
- Replacement of Board members? Meeting with three potential candidates in February.

Richard Bradshaw moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Paige Hartman seconded the motion; the motion passed.

President's Report:

Virginia Haley called the Board's attention to the new format of the quarterly report (dashboard), thanking Anne Zavorskas for her work in creating the easily readable charts. She noted the increase in the 'influenced by Sarasota message' number. Asked why European visitation is down, she replied lack of flights, value of the dollar and volcanic ash interfered with bookings. European value markets are down but upscale markets are up. Unfortunately the European travel wholesalers want branded properties on Siesta Key, which we cannot offer. Small properties and condos are reluctant to set aside blocks of rooms and wholesalers also want food and beverage included. Ms. Haley noted that Lynn Bates will be stepping up work with U.S. receptives. Paige Hartman suggested that the SCVB continue its educational outreach to small properties on Siesta Key to encourage working with European wholesalers.

At the Board's request, Ms. Haley will provide a list of the hotels that participate in the STR reporting and a 10-year ADR history.

There was a discussion of the idea of merging the Sarasota CVB and the Manatee CVB, with the observation that there is little support for anything more than working cooperatively, which the SCVB already is doing. The discussion moved to eco-tourism making huge inroads, but not extreme eco-tourism. Meetings with John McCarthy have been productive. Erin Duggan was commended for her work on the eco-tourism FAM trip, the groundhog campaign and work with Milwaukee. Currently the direct flights to Milwaukee are not full, but the Jet Blue flights to Boston are full. Mention was made of an article about Sarasota in the Economist magazine, and Ms. Haley will send Board members a copy of the article.

Financial Matters:

Jay Schrock stated that the financial reports look wonderful and noted two points: (1) an adjustment from last year in the audit (as a result of shifting numbers by the County); and (2) moving savings funds from LandMark bank. Trent Young moved to approve the December financials; Kumar Mahadevan seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Office Space for SCVB Administrative Office:

Larry Fineberg is working with Stephanie Grosskreutz on this project; they met with a broker to look at some spaces and talk about requirements. Mr. Fineberg indicated they are looking to the Board for direction. He suggests a storefront in downtown Sarasota that would allow for walk-in traffic. The SCVB currently pays approximately \$16/s.f. for rent. Class A office space is going for approximately \$22/s.f., with retail varying up or down from that number depending on location. Other issues raised included parking and cost of build-out. Ms. Haley noted that Berkeley Young of Young Strategies will be here next week looking at visitor services overall.

The Board reached consensus to proceed with finding downtown office space for the SCVB's administrative office.

March TDC:

The Chairman noted that the SCVB's presentation to the TDC was good, and the March TDC agenda includes the issue of SCVB marketing funds scheduled to end in 2012. The Chairman asked for volunteers to speak to individual TDC members about this situation prior to the March TDC meeting and to make the case for continued full funding of SCVB marketing efforts. After the TDC considers this subject, it will move to the Board of County Commissioners in June or July. Prior to that meeting, SCVB Board members will need to speak individually with BCC members. Board members will speak individually with TDC members as follows:

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| Barbetta | Terry Turner, Sarasota City Commissioner |
| Becker | Dan Bebak of Mote Marine Sharon Cunningham of Cunningham Property Management David Garofalo, North Port City Commissioner |
| Bradshaw | Bob Kirscher, Broken Egg Restaurants Roger Herber, Warm Mineral Springs Motel |
| Danis | Tony Swain, Swain Film & Video |

Fineberg Terry Turner, Sarasota City Commissioner
Robert Waechter, Airport Board of Directors

Haley Jim McManemon, Ritz-Carlton Sarasota
Nora Patterson, Sarasota County Commissioner
David Brenner, Town of Longboat Key Commissioner

Mahadevan Nora Patterson, Sarasota County Commissioner

Young John Moore, Venice City Councilman

Janis Holland will follow up with Board members on these meetings. Virginia Haley suggested that in the presentation to the TDC, Board members could make presentations on subjects different than their expected subjects – hotelier to speak about arts; arts person to speak about sports, etc. Ms. Haley also suggested that the services of MMG Mardiks could be used to fine-tune a response to the Sarasota Herald Tribune editorial about the Economist article.

The Chairman asked for other discussion or new business. The following were discussed:

- Laura Williams talked about the mad dash to complete Ed Smith Stadium before opening day, noting that the idea of a Sarasota Team Welcome event will have to wait for next year when there is more time for planning. She noted that Ed Smith will be the signature stadium in the Florida grapefruit league, that ticket sales have been amazing, and that there is a week of activities planned prior to the March 1st opening game.
- Mark Becker commented on how the grapefruit league has migrated to the Gulf coast and Sarasota is positioned in the middle of the string of grapefruit league home towns. He suggests using that central location in marketing Sarasota.
- Fanfest showed that people in Baltimore like Sarasota. There will be a visitor information kiosk at Ed Smith Stadium with staff and volunteers at every game. The SCVB should provide welcome posters for any storefronts and businesses that want them. Permission for flags downtown are problematic to obtain and flags are expensive.
- Laura Williams invited the Board to hold the March meeting at Ed Smith Stadium's conference room.
- Kumar Mahadevan said Mote Marine Aquarium will be getting a penguin exhibit in November that will stay for four to six months. Penguins are hugely popular. He suggests doing penguin pictures similar to the groundhog pictures, showing penguins at the beach, at the opera, at the ballgame and other Sarasota locations.
- Forks and Corks seemed to be very successful, selling out a week prior to the event. The SCVB will ask Michael Klauber for additional media access at next year's event.
- The Opera opens on Saturday and it is sold out.

There being no further discussion, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 9:17 AM.