MINUTES
TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
PUTNAM COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PALATKA, FL
JUNE 27, 2019

Present: Chairman B. Pickens, J. Hodge, B. DiCarlo, K. Redford, S. Smith, T. Smith, D. Jones and J. Linton staff.

Absent: Mayor Hill, T. Miller and Mayor Peterson.

Others Present: Andrea Conover and Joe Pickens.

I. Call to Order. Chair Pickens called the meeting to order at 8:31 with an invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. He welcomed those in attendance.

II. Public Comment. Andrea Conover stated she had applied to serve on the TDC Council when a vacancy arrived.

III. Matters Requiring Action.

A. Minutes. The minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting were presented for approval.

ACTION: Motion Redford, second Hodge to approve the Minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting as presented. CARRIED.

B. FY 2019/20 Allocations. Coordinator Jones stated that at the end of each fiscal year, the TDC members need to recommend where to allocate all unexpended revenues to carry forward to the next year. She added that we currently have the equivalent of one-years bed tax revenues, and we should continue to do so moving forward. Jones suggested that Category C (Promotions & Advertising) is probably the best category to break down the carry-forward funds.

ACTION: Motion J. Hodge, second S. Smith to approve carry forward funds to Category C, Promotions & Advertising, with a reserves line item of at least one-year of collections, a current-year large events/projects and future large events/projects as shown on the tentative FY 2019/20 Budget. CARRIED.

C. FY 2019/20 Tentative Budget. Coordinator Jones gave an overview of the tentative budget for approval. She stated that she would be receiving final numbers from the County in August which may change the budget. Jones said that a final budget would be presented at the next meeting for final adoption.
ACTION: Motion Redford, second Hodge to approve the tentative FY 2019/20 Budget as presented.

CARRIED.

D. Consideration of Large Event Opportunities

1. Bassmaster Elite Series. Coordinator Jones announced that we had been offered a chance to offer a proposal for a 2020 Bass Elite Series event. Jones presented an overview of the Elite event, which included a $1.2 million-dollar economic impact, 1500 hotel room nights, over $400,000 in media value, exposure to 5 million magazine subscribers, and unbelievable press coverage. Jones said the television coverage (9 hours) mentions the City of Palatka and St. Johns River on the show. Jones added that if we are approved to host the event, it is confidential until B.A.S.S. makes the official announcement. She reminded Council members this was just a proposal and doesn’t mean we will get it. Jones led a discussion on the requested host fee and deliverables. Jones mentioned the most difficult deliverable was the comp room nights and suggested taking out the comp hotel rooms in the host deliverables. Discussion followed.

ACTION: Motion S. Smith, second T. Smith to approve submitting a proposal to host a 2020 Bassmaster Elite Tournament and authorizing expenses up to $75,000 for the host fee and up to $40,000 for deliverables, from Category C, Promotions & Advertising/ Large Projects, 2019-2020 budget.

CARRIED.

2. Costa FLW Series. Coordinator Jones also reported that we also have an opportunity to host a Costa FLW Series event in 2020. Jones gave an overview of the FLW tournament we previously hosted and stated that they had 1270 room nights and created a significate economic impact. Jones explained that the proposed event would bring over 300 anglers, family members, FLW sponsors and staff, totaling over 700 people in our market for 7 days. She added though the event is not televised, they have a large digital presence. S. Smith said this tournament is a great buy. More discussion followed.

ACTION: Motion K. Redford, second J. Hodge to approve submitting a proposal to host the 2020 Costa FLW Series Tournament and approved authorizing expenses for the host fee up to $17,500 and deliverables up to $11,000 from Category C, Promotions & Advertising/ Large Projects, 2019-20 budget.

CARRIED.

3. Major League Fishing Pro Tour Event. Coordinator Jones commended the TDC members for the great job done attracting large events to our area. She said that Major League Fishing was also interested in our community as a host city. S. Smith said that this is a new league just started last year and tweaks will probably be made for the 2020 events. Coordinator Jones stated that staff has not had an opportunity to attend
one of the MLF events as they did before hosting the first Elite event. She reported that she had reached out to a few of the hosts who confirmed averages of 800-1200 hotel room nights during the 10 days they were in their market. She added that one of the communities had chose to host the tournament mainly for the Discovery Channel TV coverage. Jones showed a presentation so all could see the format of the MLF event. She said it is different as they have no weigh-in, all fish are weighed on the water and results are streamed live. The actual show airs on national television channels, The Discovery Channel and Sportsman’s Channel. Jones said that she plans to attend one soon to get a better idea on how it could work here. S. Smith agreed and said he does not think we are ready to host one in 2020. T. Smith suggested we invite MLF event coordinator here to identify a possible venue so we can evaluate providing the necessary deliverables. Jones added that one of the deliverables was high speed upload and download capacity and Comcast would most likely be our only source.

ACTION: Motion S. Smith, second T. Hodge to forgo bidding this year and ask to be considered for 2021. CARRIED.

4. Bass Nation Southeast Region Championship. Coordinator Jones indicated that B.A.S.S. Nation, an affiliate of Bassmaster, had also asked us to send in a proposal to host a SE Region Championship event. She gave an overview of this tournament, stating that they would bring in an estimated 800-1000 room nights for 200 anglers staying an average of 5 nights in market. She said this event is live stream media but not televised. Council members discussed the requested deliverables and most agreed that were pretty high for a non-televised event, although the host fee was reasonable.

ACTION: Motion T. Smith, second K. Redford to approve submitting a proposal to host the B.A.S.S. Nation Southeast Region Championship Tournament and approved authorizing expenses for the host fee up to $15,000 and deliverables up to $3,500 from Category C, Promotions & Advertising/ Large Projects, 2019-20 budget. CARRIED.

E. Discussion Items

1. Application/Guidelines Revisions. Coordinator Jones stated that Council members had mentioned the need to review and make changes on applications and guidelines. She added that specifically mentioned was documentation of attendees, time/duration of event and use of local vendors. Discussion followed with council members asking Coordinator Jones to make changes and present to them at the September meeting. Jones said changes would need to be made on the application that would be available prior to the next meeting so they would be reviewing after the fact. By consensus, all agreed it was better to do the minimal changes now.

2. Electronic Sign Rules. Coordinator Jones gave an overview of current rules for the electronic sign use which include no fundraisers or community events. Jones said that
the Chamber receives many calls concerning the use of the sign from folks with great community events or information and get angry with the Chamber for not allowing it. Jones said that many times the sign only has the date/time/temp. Chairman Pickens acknowledged Joe Pickens, SJR State College President, who had asked to speak under Public Comment concerning the TDC sign.

Joe Pickens stated that the College also had an electronic sign and it was often used for community events when it wasn't needed for College messages. He said it was an obligation to the community and to not use a sign this way was a disservice to the community we all serve. He said that he was very frustrated that an event at the College to raise funds for Lee Conlee House was not allowed on the sign due to the current rules. He suggested we should review our current sign rules, keeping tourism signage a priority but doing a better job servicing our community. Council members reviewed the current rules and regulations used to govern the sign and discussion followed. Jones added that if it was the will of the Council to broaden the use of the sign, that she could make some minor changes in the language to accommodate that.

**ACTION:** Motion Redford, second Hodge to give Coordinator the flexibility to make decisions on expanded sign usage and present revised rules for adoption in September. CARRIED.

3. Scoresheet Review. Coordinator Jones reminded all of the previous discussion concerning ways to expand our cultural category. Jones suggested one thing to consider would be the point system used for scoring our Cultural applications. Jones said we could assign more points to #7 New Offerings, moving to #1 on scoresheet. Jones added to make up the difference we could take 5 points from Showcase Putnam County's Unique Culture and another 5 points from Cultural/Artistic/Heritage Purpose.

**ACTION:** Motion T. Smith, second J. Hodge to change the point system on the Cultural Arts scoresheet to reflect 10 additional points for New Offerings to encourage more applicants. Additional, take the points from Showcase Putnam County's Unique Culture and Cultural/Artistic/Heritage Purpose equally. CARRIED.

4. Hotel Certifications. Coordinator Jones explained that applicants were having a hard time getting hotel certification completed by hotels. Jones stated that the forms were not intended to cause applicants or hotel employees a difficult time, but to be a measuring mechanism to count room nights. Hotel Manager and Council member B. DiCarlo said it was very difficult for hotel staff to know if guests were in town for an event. T. Smith added that instead of the certification forms, perhaps we could get

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registration lists or something from the event coordinator. Coordinator Jones said she could add a request for registration, rooming list, or whatever might be applicable to the application instructions for all categories.

ACTION: Motion K. Redford, second T. Smith to remove Hotel Certification requirement from all TDC instructions. **CARRIED.**

IV. **Chairman Comments**
Chairman Pickens thanked Council members for all they do and their time today.

V. **Coordinators Comments**
Coordinator Jones gave a recap of the bed tax collections, stating a 100% increase over the last 7 years, 74% increase just in the last 5 years. She commended TDC members for their wise decisions which is responsible for a great part of this growth in tourism. She added that growth in the number of annual events and economic development projects have also added to the increased revenues. Jones said next grant cycle would be August with a September meeting.

VI. **Adjournment.**
There being no further business, Chair Pickens adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Cameron Jones, Coordinator
Putnam County Tourist Development Council