



2401 SE Monterey Rd.  
Stuart, FL 34996

## Martin County Tourist Development Council Minutes

Doug Smith  
Frank Fender  
Christopher Collins  
Tammy Calabria  
Nimesh Patel  
Patty O'Connell  
Ed Griffith  
Robert Steele  
Christopher Vitale

3:00 PM

Wednesday, MAY 8, 2024,

Commission Chambers

### CALL TO ORDER

- Meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM
- Roll call was taken- Nimesh Patel was absent.

### WELCOME

### MINU APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Frank Fender Moved to approve minutes of March 20, 2024, meeting
- Patty O'Connell 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion
- ( 8 – 0 ) Motion was **approved/denied/modified**

### ONGO Ongoing Business

#### A. Financials

Shannon McCarthy

- PowerPoint presentation provided

### PRES PRESENTATIONS / UPDATE

#### B. Arts Council

Nerissa Okiye for Nancy Turrell

- Kizzy from Visit Florida to make a presentation to the arts sector monthly meeting in July so all the members can learn more about the resources of Visit Florida.
- In April, the sector call included a presentation from the Division of Arts & Culture about grant opportunities available to nonprofit arts groups.
- Currently only a handful of Martin County's arts groups apply for funding, but we have a goal to have more requests in this year, than in prior years which help to make the case for needing the legislature to provide a healthier amount of funding in the line items that relate to the grant opportunities.
- The current exhibition at the Court House Cultural Center is the 38<sup>th</sup> annual Marvin S. Cone High School Juried Art Show – a legacy program for Martin Arts.

- MartinArts Magazine is due out next week. It includes a promotion of the songwriter's festival at Pirate's Cove and features several of our community's prominent studio artists.
- If any of the hoteliers would like the magazine delivered to their locations for the benefit of their guests let Nancy know.

**A. Play Treasure Coast**

**Rick Hatcher, TCSP**

- Event Update for First Half of the Year (October 1-March 31)
- 15 Events that drove room nights to Martin County (12 hosted in Martin County, 3 crossover events)
- Firefighter Challenge and Marathon of Treasure Coast the two biggest ones
- Just completed a Softball tournament in Martin County
- 2 Weeks ago, we completed the Sports Tourism Summit in Portland, Oregon
- Sports ETA press release handed out
- Generating an estimated economic impact of \$6,354,718.00
- Event Projections for Second Half of the Year (April 1-Sept. 30)
- 6 Events with Rights Holders & Industry Partners.
- State of Florida Ranked # 1 State for Sports Tourism (Texas # 2 and California #3).
- Florida Sports Foundation Summit (Panama City Beach, Florida) May 20-22, 2024
- Submitted a Letter of Interest to host the 2025 summit in Martin County, which would include estimated 30 Destinations & 20-25 Rights Holders for a FAM trip.

**C. Florida Oceanographic Society**

**Anthony Brunet, FOS**

- Visitation (March-April 2024)
- March - Visitation down 2.7% from 2023
- April – Visitation down 1.2% from 2023
- Overall – visitation is up 3.3% over a 3-month period (February, March, April) over last year
- Community Engagement
- Nighttime Sea Turtle Walks
- Thursdays in June & July (Excluding July 4<sup>th</sup>) and August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Registration begins May 15<sup>th</sup>
- Yoga on the Ocean Deck
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm & May 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:30am
- International Ocean Film Festival
- Lake Okeechobee
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers halted discharges to the St. Lucie Estuary in early April
- The lake's level currently sits at just above 14ft due to extended dry season conditions
- Predictions: 23 named storms, 11 hurricanes, 5 major hurricanes due to La Niña in the summer and fall
- Potential of high volume discharges from Lake Okeechobee are inevitable
- Summer discharges bring threat of blue-green algae
- In constant contact with the U.S. Army Corps and South Florida Water Management District about taking proactive steps to send as much water south before we get into the wet season

- Current Health of the Environment
- Salinities across SLE and IRL were good in all zones
- Water clarity graded fair to good for seagrass health
- No visible algal bloom potential in the St. Lucie Estuary
- Salinity in the middle estuary was optimal for adult eastern oysters
- Update on the news piece from Channel % with Mark Perry visiting the Williamson Cattle Company ranch to observe their water management practices, preventing runoff into Taylor Creek and Lake Okeechobee
- Farming's impact extends beyond boundaries; runoff carries nitrogen and phosphorus, leading to harmful algal blooms in Lake Okeechobee
- Williamson Cattle Company exemplifies responsible management implementing practices to reduce nutrient runoff to Lake Okeechobee
- Florida Department of Agriculture outlines best practices, but industry and state collaboration crucial for effective implementation
- Advocating for policies incentivizing farmers to adopt water quality improvement practices essential for addressing water pollution

## ACT ACTION ITEMS

### A. FY 25 Treasure Coast Sports Commission Contract

Frank Fender Moved to approve FY 25 Play Treasure Coast Sports Contract at \$210,000.00

Rob Steele 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

( 8 – 0 ) Motion was **approved/denied/modified**

### B. Martin County Tourist Development Council Destination Distinction Awards

Patty O'Connell Moved to approve the inaugural Martin County Tourist Development Destination Distinction Awards. (No fiscal impact at this time, but the TDC will need to determine the budget for the luncheon at a future date. The number of nominees will determine the size needed to host the event.

Ed Griffith 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

( 8 – 0 ) Motion was **approved/denied/modified**

### C. Conference Event Grant Application: Florida Venue Managers Association

Frank Fender Moved to approve the application presented for the request of \$6,000.00 based on room pick up

Patty O'Connell 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion

( 7 – 0 ) Motion was **approved/denied/modified** with TDC Member, Ed Griffith abstaining

## OTM Office of Tourism & Marketing Update

- Ecotourism Program Update
- PowerPoint presentation provided

Anna-Grace Agnini

- Since the last update
- Explore Natural Martin participant total @ 740
- IRL Kayak Tour
- Pollination Walk
- Exploring Atlantic Ridge
- Mushroom Walk
- Bird Island Kayak Tour
- Sea Turtle Celebration Walk
- Looking forward –
- The Secret Life of Tortoises -Tuesday, May 14, 2024 @ 9:00M – Halpaticoee Regional Park
- Indian River Lagoon Kayak Tour – Thursday, May 16, 2024 @ 9:00AM – Feet Wet Adventures, Hutchinson Island
- Moon Observation Night with Treasure Coast Astronomical Society- Friday, May 17, 2024 @ 8:30PM – Indian Riverside Park
- Sea Turtle Ecology Beach walk – Tuesday May 21, 2024 @ 8:30AM – Bob Graham Beach
- Promotional Materials
- Monthly flyers sent to the hotels to update visitors about our upcoming programs and how they can sign up
- Summer Sea Turtle Programming
- In collaboration with Ecological Associates, Inc. (EAI), we will be hosting 4 nest excavation events and 4 night-time nesting walks throughout June and July
- Recognition-
- Florida Youth Conservation Centers Network – 2024 Outstanding Partner
- Keep Martin Beautiful Environmental Stewardship Awards-2024 Community Enrichment Award

- **Public Relations Update & OTM Update** **Nerissa Okiye**
- PowerPoint presentation provided
- Recent PR Coverage–
- USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice Award 2024 with Stuart No. 1
- Currently Vote for your favorite beach in Florida through USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice Award with Stuart currently in 7<sup>th</sup> place
- Recent Coverage examples
- Time Out – "This is the best Coastal town in the U.S. written by Virginia Gil naming Stuart in the No. 1 spot
- AFAR-Miami is breaking up with Spring Break – Here's where you should go instead – Listing Hutchinson Island and Jensen Beach as No. 1
- Only in Your State – I visited the Coastal town of Hobe Sound, Florida and here are my favorite stops by Marisa Roman
- Satellite Media Tour (SMT)
- A satellite media tour (SMT) is a PR technique that involves a spokesperson being interviewed on TV, radio and online by multiple outlets across the U.S. in a single day.
- An SMT can take place from a broadcast studio or on location, and typically consists of 20-30 interviews (booked in 5–10-minute windows), lasting 2-6 hours on average.
- Family/Multi-Gen SMT-
- Dalia Colon, Writer, Chef & TV personality
- Date: March 26, 2024, from 8:30AM-12:30AM
- Target Markets: New York, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, Orlando, Miami, Washington, D.C.
- Results:
- Total bookings: 28 (bi-lingual)
- Syndicated TV airings: 956 total
- Total placements: 1,700+
- Total audience: 18.8 million

- Total ad value: \$614K
- VF Co-Op cost - \$10K
- Adventure TRAVEL SMT
- Submit a pitch and be selected
- Themes to included focus on:
  - Outdoor wellness ideas
  - Activities for thrill seekers
  - Soft adventure activities
  - Accommodations with adventure packages/offerings
- Martin County one of 2 to be selected
- Kinga Phillips is an award-winning TV journalist, writer, producer, speaker and fellow at the Explorers Club. She is also an adventure travel writer and avid environmental advocate
- Accessibility Developments
- Wheel the world update
- Wheel the World is a cutting-edge platform that empowers travelers to explore destinations with confidence, knowing that their accessibility needs will be met every step of the way.
- Martin County was 1 of 20 Florida destinations selected.
- Wheel the World team came to Martin County and assessed more than 30 points of interest, measuring over 200 data points for accessibility information.
- Examples provided
- IBCCES-Certified Autism Center
- In April, the Martin County Office of Tourism & Marketing team completed their training program to become an official Certified Autism Center.
- Example of coverage provided
- Trade Shows and Media Events
- Southeast Tourism Society- Birmingham, Alabama May 9-10, 2024
- FAM Visits
- Upcoming UK Travel Agent Group FAM – June 4-6, 2024
- 21 Agents + 3 Hosts
- Will be staying at the Hutchinson Shores
- Travel Leaders Group (U.S. based) -June 9-10, 2024
- US-Based Travel Agents
- Will be staying at the Marriott Hutchinson Island Beach Resort
- Trade Shows and Media Events
- Family creative shared
- Explore Natural Martin creative
- Uncrowded creative to stand out from the rest of Florida
- Fishing creative
- Golf creative
- Arts and Culture creative
- Visit Florida planner at [www.visitflorida.org](http://www.visitflorida.org)
- Doing 2 VF Co-ops
- Thought Leadership
- TTRA in Tampa
- Hurricane Preparedness
- Tourism assigned to ESF-18 Business and Industry
- Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG)
- <https://www.martin.fl.us/Hurricane>
- DestinationNext survey to be sent out
- Marriott on Hutchinson Island – tour of renovations
- Several industry bulletins proposed changes to TSA
- Waiting to see if the Governor will sign Senate bill 280 (Short term rental bill)
- July 10<sup>th</sup> is the next TDC meeting

## COMMENTS

### A. TDC MEMBERS –

- Chairman Doug Smith
- Special Olympics conversation and potential for opportunities in the future
- Ed Griffith – commented that Associations are the lifeblood of what we do here in Martin County (hoteliers)
- Goal is to get them here and then to get them to come back
- They are working hard to stay relevant
- The Shores was nominated by Conde Nast as a best resort and voting is still open

### B. Public Comments

- None

## CHAIR'S CLOSING

Next Meeting Date – JULY 10, 2024,

BOCC Chambers

## ADJOURN

- Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM

  
Sally Beynon, Tourism Project Coordinator

5/9/2024

Date

Name & Title of preparer

  
5/10/24

Date

Doug Smith, Chairman

Name & Title

ADA

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