



**Highlands County Tourist Development Council  
Highlands County Government Center Boardroom  
Regular Meeting  
August 11, 2022 @ 8:15 a.m.**

**Draft Regular Meeting**

**1. The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m. by Commissioner Chris Campbell.**

**Roll Call**

Council Members Present:

Commissioner Chris Campbell  
Kacey Mee  
Mark Stewart  
Charles Wilson

Cindy Garren  
John Story  
Maritza Christiansen

Council Members Absent:  
Christine Hatfield, Vicky Pontius

Also, Present:

Leah Sauls, Development Services Director  
Casey Hartt, Lead Marketing Consultant  
Lori Krinke, Tourist Development Coordinator  
D. Matt Raulerson, Assistant County Attorney  
Jen Carlisle, Madden Media  
Lauren Hartog, Madden Media  
Alan Verlander, Airstream Ventures, LLC.  
Justin Smith, Airstream Ventures, LLC.  
Devona Taylor, Wander Media Company  
Kate Strickland, Wander Media Company  
Andy Kesling, Citrus Golf Trail/Sun 'N Lake Golf Club  
Phil Hatfield, Citrus Golf Trail/Inn on the Lakes  
Gaylin Thomas, Heartland Cultural Alliance  
Leonard Bryant, photographer

Commissioner Campbell and Lori Krinke established that a quorum was present, and that the meeting was properly noticed. Commissioner Campbell also introduced Maritza Christiansen and Charles Wilson as the new TDC members representing an accommodations seat and an elected municipality seat respectively.

## 2. Acceptance of TDC Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2022.

Commissioner Campbell inquired if there were any comments or changes to the minutes of April 28, 2022. Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart to approve the meeting minutes. All Council members voted aye to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

## 3. Financial and Office Reports

Ms. Krinsky presented the revenue reports that showed a balance total for FY 21/22, through May 31, 2022, of \$1,184,698.22. Revenue is up nearly 40% year-to-date and has exceeded the budget with 4 months remaining in the fiscal year.

Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart, to approve the financial reports as presented. All Council members voted aye to approve the financial and office reports. The motion carried.

## 4. Marketing and Event Updates

### A. Marketing and Public Relations Update

Casey Hartt presented the Highlands County Tourist Development Council Marketing and Budget update that included a PR update, destination management, event grant status, and budget update.

#### 1. AJGA Preview Event of the Year

Ms. Hartt announced that the Visit Sebring Preview had been named the 2021 Preview of The Year by the American Junior Golf Association and showed the plaque that had been awarded.

#### 2. Intro to Madden Media, Digital Marketing & Storytelling

Ms. Hartt also introduced Jen Carlisle and Laura Hartog from Madden Media. Ms. Carlisle and Lauren Hartog presented an overview of the digital marketing and storytelling service Madden Media would be providing Visit Sebring/Highlands County TDC in fiscal year 22/23.

### B. Sports Events Update from Airstream Ventures

Alan Verlander presented the Sports Tourism quarterly report and stated Airstream Ventures should meet or exceed their annual goal with the next few events this fiscal year.

## 5. Items for Voting

### A. Proposed 2022-2023 TDC Budget

Ms. Hartt presented the proposed 2022-2023 TDC Marketing Plan and Budget. The proposed preliminary 2022-2023 budget is \$960,000. Staff will bring an updated TDC Budget in January 2023 once all fiscal year 21/22 revenues are reported.

Mr. Story made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart to approve the proposed marketing plan and budget. All Council members voted aye, except Ms. Garren who voted no. The motion carried.

### B. 2022-2023 Citrus Golf Trail Marketing Match Request of \$12,500

Kate Strickland and Devona Taylor of Wander Media Company presented their proposal for a digital and direct email marketing pilot program to promote the Citrus Golf Trail. Services would include content creation, strategic distribution, user engagement, reporting and analyzation. Total campaign cost is \$25,000 for a 12-month agreement. The Citrus Golf Trail will pay for half of the cost, the TDC would pay the other half, \$12,500 to Wander Media Company.

Mr. Story made a motion, seconded by Ms. Garren to approve Wander Media Company's proposed program for \$12,500 from Cost Center 5305 Marketing and Events for fiscal year 2022/2023. All council members voted aye. The motion carried.

C. GFNY Cycling High Impact Signature Event Grant Request of \$65,000/year (October 2023-2025)

Lidia Fluhme joined the meeting via phone to request a High Impact Signature Event Grant for the GFNY Cycling event for years 2023 through 2025 in the amount of \$65,000 per year. After some discussion, Ms. Garren made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stewart to recommend approval of the 3-year grant (October 2023-2025) with funding up to \$65,000 based on \$20/verified room night. Reimbursable grant funds are to be used for promotional items, MOT/traffic/lighting fees, facility rental, marketing & graphic design, post-race meal for athletes and audio/visual. Funds to come from Cost Center 5305 for Marketing and Events. All Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

D. Lacrosse New Year Shootout (January 6-8, 2023). New Event Grant requesting up to \$80,000 year #1 (2023) and up to \$80,000/year for years #2 (2024) and #3 (2025)

Alan Verlander presented the New Event Grant request for Lacrosse New Year Shootout. After some discussion, it was determined that the event dates would not be helpful to develop more tourism for Highlands County. Mr. Stewart made the motion to postpone the motion indefinitely, seconded by Mr. Story. All council members voted aye. The motion was postponed indefinitely.

E. Sebring Multisport date change request to October 2023 (from October 2022)

Ms. Hartt presented the request from Integrity Multisport to change the date of the Sebring Multisport from October, 2022 to October, 2023. Mr. Story made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Mr. Stewart. All council members voted aye. The motion carried.

**6. Old Business/Discussion**

A. Grant Review Committee Update

Leah Sauls provided an update of the latest Grant Review Committee meeting that was held on June 27, 2022. No major changes were made. The County is now requiring Certificates of Insurance and the grant applications have been updated to notify applicants of this requirement. Grant awardees will also be asked to complete the Post Event Grant Report and will be invited to present their post event report if they would like to do so.

B. Agritourism Forum Update

Ms. Hartt provided an update of the Agritourism Forum set for September 13-14, 2022. It is the area's first Agritourism Forum. It is designed for anyone interested in starting or expanding an agritourism business. The Forum is co-hosted by Visit Sebring / Highlands County Tourist Development Council (TDC), Florida Agritourism Association, Highlands County Extension / IFAS, Highlands County Farm Bureau, and the Greater Sebring Chamber of Commerce.

### C. Tourism Awards Update

Ms. Hartt provided an update on the Tourism Awards that will be presented at the next Tourist Development Council meeting on October 27, 2022. She suggested future Tourism Award presentations be conducted at the April TDC meetings.

### D. Update on Istokpoga Fishing Tournament Improvement Projects

Ms. Sauls, Commissioner Campbell, and Ms. Krinsky gave updates on the Lake Istokpoga Fishing Tournament Improvement Projects. The 100 - foot dock and pavilion at the end of the dock was rebuilt. Engineering plans for the 96 additional pull-through trailer parking spots was completed and waiting for permit approval from South Florida Water Management District. Forty feet was added to the existing floating dock. Plans for construction of a 150-foot dock have been suspended due to water depth and excessive native plant vegetation. FWC has been asked to consider amending the grant to fund adding an additional 40-feet to the existing dock in lieu of constructing a second dock.

## **7. Public Input**

Public comment was given by Gaylin Thomas, President, Heartland Cultural Alliance. Ms. Thomas praised the TDC's accomplishments and noted that the Art and Culture community could use more support.

## **8. Board Member Roundtable**

Time was made available for board member roundtable discussion.

## **9. Upcoming Meetings & TDC-Sponsored Events**

- A. Florida Governor's Conference on Tourism; Aug. 31 – Sept. 2
- B. Motosurf/Motoskate; Aug. 20-21
- C. High School Lacrosse; Aug. 27-28
- D. Florida Outdoor Writers Association (FOWA) Conference; Sept. 7-11 (Visit Sebring presentation Sept. 10)
- E. Agritourism Forum; Sept. 13-14
- F. High School Lacrosse; Sept. 17-18
- G. GFNY Marathon & Cycling; Oct. 22-23
- H. TDC Board Meeting & Tourism Awards Presentation; Oct. 27

## **10. Adjournment**

Commissioner Campbell adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

For all backup documents, please contact Highlands County Public Information Office 863-402-6500.