



# PUNTA GORDA ENGLEWOOD BEACH

SM

The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

## Charlotte County Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes Friday, April 19, 2024

A meeting of the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council was held Friday, April 19, 2024, at Murdock Administration Building, Conference Room B-106, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte, FL.

### **Members Present**

Commissioner Christopher Constance  
Councilmember Donna Peterman  
Councilmember William Dryburgh  
Keith Farlow  
Kathy Burnam  
Robin Madden  
David Haynes  
Gary Butler  
Kelly Williamson

### **Members Absent**

### **Staff Present**

Claire Jubb, Assistant County Administrator  
Glinda Pruitt, Assistant County Attorney  
Sean Doherty, Tourism Development Director  
Sean Walter, Sales & Sports Marketing Manager  
Aimee Blenker, Leisure Sales Manager  
Maureen Morgenthien, Marketing Manager  
Jeff Berg, Meetings Market Sales Manager  
Julie Pennock, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Amy Sharpe, Administrative Services Coordinator  
Brynja Phipps, Project Coordinator  
Dan Roe, Tax Collector's Office  
Elie Fischhof, Fiscal Services

### **Guests**

Doug Izzo, Englewood Chamber of Commerce  
Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center  
Tom David, Peacekeeper's Concert  
Brandon Moody, Charlotte County Water Quality Manager  
Bob White, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce

#### **I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

Commissioner Christopher Constance called the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

#### **II. Roll Call**

A quorum was established.

#### **III. Approval of the Agenda**

With the addition to appoint a new Vice Chair, a motion was made by Kathy Burnam and seconded by William Dryburgh, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Citizens' Input**

There was no Citizen's input on any agenda items.

**V. Approval of TDC Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Donna Peterman and seconded by Kathy Burnam, to approve the February 23, 2024, minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

**VI. Tourist Tax Report – Dan Roe**

The tax collector report was presented by Dan Roe. Roe reported October through February collections were \$2,368,566.93. Roe continued to report that there were 564 suspect accounts, with no suspect accounts added in the second quarter. Roe advised that January collections were up 13.9% over the first quarter of last year and February collections were up 40.4%. Roe continued to advise there are currently 3,021 rental properties, with 108 properties added and 3 properties removed in the last quarter.

**VII. Budget Report**

The fiscal report was presented by Elie Fischhof. Fischhof reported that we are seven months into the fiscal year with a \$4.8 million budget, from the first 3 cents. Fischhof continued that YTD expenditures were at \$1.8 million, and most encumbrances had been taken care of for a total of \$1.1 million. Fischhof also advised expenditures for the 4th and 5th cents have a budget of \$600 thousand, with a large encumbrance. Fischhof advised every year they ensure the 4th and 5th cents have been expended and then movement between the first 3 cents may occur to ensure everything stays balanced.

**VIII. Robin Madden – Budget Review**

Robin Madden confirmed that the budget appeared to be in order.

**IX. Charlotte County Water Quality Status and Update – Brandon Moody**

Brandon presented a detailed report on the status of Charlotte County water quality and initiatives and its relation to tourism.

**X. Event Development Program Application – Tom David**

Tom presented the Peacekeepers Memorial Concert application for second year event funding in the amount of \$10,000. The TDC requested additional information on the event that was not available during the meeting. The event organizer will re-present their application at a future TDC meeting for scoring and approval.

**XI. Director/Staff Report – Sean Doherty**

Sean Doherty, Tourism Director, provided a recap of the Tourism Department Board Report. Doherty reported the Florida legislature passed one bill that related to TDT but it only impacts Monroe County. The Vacation Rental bill is waiting on a decision from the Governor. Visit Florida was renewed with an \$80 million budget. The new Visit Florida collaboration video was shown to the TDC.

Doherty continued to report on the success of conferences, meetings, and FAM's. Over 4,000 sporting athletes have been to the destination just between February and April of 2024. Charlotte County has been welcoming many new groups to train at the new Public Safety facility off the interstate in Punta Gorda. With the increased workloads among staff the VCB is in the process of hiring two additional employees.

Doherty reminded the TDC that the annual tourism celebration is scheduled for Friday, May 10, 2024. He also advised the VCB offices have reopened and to stay tuned for an Open House invitation.

**XII. Vice Chair Appointment**

With Mark Kuharski leaving the TDC, Commissioner Constance appointed City of Punta Gorda Vice Mayor William Dryburgh as the new Vice Chair.

**XIII. Citizen's Comments**

Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event and Conference Center, reported on the last six months of activity. Almost all categories of events are up with many big events lined up for the near future.

Doug Izzo, Englewood Chamber of Commerce, spoke to the Water Quality presentation and the importance of getting out timely information to our visitors. He also spoke in favor of Englewood Beach Waterfest and ensuring they have the needed support to move forward with their fall time event.

Bob White, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, spoke about the latest Honor Flight that took place for Charlotte County Veterans and how impactful the event was on the County's veteran heroes.

**XIV. Council Comments**

David Haynes spoke in favor of supporting Waterfest. He advised there is a sewer issue going on out on the island. Haynes concluded that business is going well but with the addition of more negation of rates and length of stay taking place.

Councilmember Donna Peterman thanked Brandon Moody for his presentation and inquired if a version of it could be presented to the City Council.

Councilmember William Dryburgh reported that there was a great turn out of the eclipse at Sunseeker.

Keith Farlow echoed his support for Waterfest. He reported that he has talked to his counterparts and everyone's business is holding steady as we head into the summer months.

Kelly Williamson reported that the sales team has been bringing great business to Four Points.

Kathy Burnam advised they too have been benefiting from the sales and FAM efforts of the VCB. Business has slowed with the change in season and closing of the Pier. Leroy's Fish Shack is under construction and is slated to open in September. The receivership company is looking for a tenant to take over the Pier's old location.

Gary Butler reported a great turn out for the Giving Challenge. The museum is also supporting two new endeavors in the County, the Florida Philharmonic and the artist village at the History Park.

Robin Madden reported that March was a great month, great water and no red tide. Easter was slow with it being early this year. Madden echoed Mr. Haynes on the sewer and construction issues. Tropical Nights is coming up and tickets are still available.

Claire Jubb spoke to the National Flood Insurance Program and the issues they are having in Lee County. She assured Charlotte County is not facing the same troubles.

Commissioner Christopher Constance also spoke to the issues in Lee County and how we might look forward to construction in the future.

**XV. Next Scheduled Meeting**

The next scheduled TDC meeting is at 9:00 a.m. Friday, June 21, 2024. The meeting will be held in the B-106 Conference Room, Administration Building, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte.

**XVI. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

**Approved**