



# PUNTA GORDA ENGLEWOOD BEACH

The Charlotte Harbor Gulf Island Coast

## Charlotte County Tourist Development Council Meeting Minutes Friday, February 12, 2021

---

A meeting of the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council was held Friday, February 12, 2021, at Centennial Park, Large Multipurpose Room, 1185 Centennial Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL.

### **Members Present**

Kathy Burnam  
Commissioner Christopher Constance  
Councilmember Jaha Cummings  
David Haynes  
Robin Madden  
Councilmember Nancy Prafke  
Janet Watermeier  
Keith Farlow  
Kelly Williamson

### **Staff Present**

Sean Doherty, Director of Tourism,  
Lena Applegate, Admin Services Coordinator  
Maureen Morgenthien, Director of Marketing  
Sean Walter, Business Development Director  
Dan Roe, Tax Collector's Office  
Elie Fischhof, Fiscal Services  
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator  
Lori Tetreault, Deputy County Attorney

### **Members Absent**

N/A

### **Guests**

Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center  
Lois Croft, Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association

### **1. Call to Order & Welcome – Commissioner Christopher Constance**

Commissioner Christopher Constance called the Charlotte County Tourist Development Council (TDC) meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

### **2. Roll Call**

A quorum was established.

### **3. Approval of TDC Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Kathy Burnam, seconded by Janet Watermeier, to approve the December 11, 2020 minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

### **4. Citizens' Input**

Jim Finch, Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, provided a handout showing event bookings for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter. Finch reported that this year 39 events were held compared to the 54 events held last

year. The decline was due to the decline in banquets. Efforts are being made to replace the banquet loss of business with public events. Safety guidelines are still being followed.

Commissioner Constance administered the oath to the 2021 FRLA Gulf Island Coast Board at the request of Lois Croft of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association.

Lena Applegate read into record an email update from Kaley Miller, Punta Gorda Airport. Ms. Miller reported that Allegiant announced a special limited-time flight from PGD to Rapid City, S.D. and regular service flights to Baltimore/Washington BWI. Miller also reported that January passenger traffic numbers were down 36% from January 2020. Miller advised that this decrease was due in part to fewer flights of 408 in January 2021 compared to the 511 flights in January 2020.

**5. Dan Roe – Tourist Tax Report**

The tax collector report was presented by Dan Roe. Roe reported on collections for the first quarter of fiscal year 2021. Collections for October 2020 through December 2020 were \$915,588.86. There were 530 total suspect accounts on file. There is a total of 2916 on file compared to the 2,931 properties from last quarter. This is a decrease of 15 properties.

**6. Elie Fischhof – Budget Report – Fiscal Services**

The fiscal report was presented by Elie Fischhof. Fischhof reported that we are now five months into fiscal year 2021 with a budget of \$3.1 million. A total of \$922,585 which represents approximately 47% of the budget has been expended. A large portion of the expenditures are interfund transfers that are completed in the first quarter together with Central/Indirect Services. Fischhof advised that current encumbrances total \$196,471. The encumbrances are mainly against Other Contractual Services and Promotional Activities account lines. He finalized his report by stating that the current budget to actual review appears to be in order.

**7. Robin Madden – Budget Review**

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

**8. Director’s Report**

Sean Doherty, Tourism Director, advised that the last step of the strategic plan, visioning sessions, was recently completed. A report will be forthcoming. The report will include a recommended vision statement together with a plan that reflects information obtained at the visioning sessions. Doherty also advised that one of the campaigns that was initiated as part of the marketing recovery plan is also complete. A full Net Economic Impact report will also be forthcoming.

Doherty announced that the partner co-op program will be rolling out on February 24, 2021. He explained that this is a partner marketing opportunity and those who attend will have first option to secure marketing placements at a reduced cost. Doherty also announced that the website will be undergoing a redesign.

Doherty continued to recap the Director’s report and provide updates on marketing, sports and meetings sales, public relations, and film.

**9. Citizen’s Comments**

There were no Citizen Comments.

**10. Council Comments**

Kelly Williamson reported that the Tiki Bar is reporting record numbers. They are also working on bringing in various tribute bands as they help promote the venue.

Kathy Burnam reported that Fishermen’s Village has continued to have a busy season. Burnam also reported that there is a new restaurant under construction and will open in the next month.

Keith Farlow reported that the restaurants are gearing up for the Valentine's Day weekend. Farlow also reported that outside dining is very popular.

Robin Madden reported that real estate inventory remains low. Madden continued to report that there is currently an insurance issue. New homeowners are having to pay premiums that are three times higher than the previous owners.

Janet Watermeier reported that the Visual Art Center is having their own challenges. Every program is down 60% - 70%. Adjustments have been made in creating online activities which resulted in better numbers for January and February compared to September to November 2020.

David Haynes reported that legislatively, insurance reform is a key issue that has been in the works for a few years. Haynes also reported that on the real estate side, inventory remains low.

Councilmember Nancy Prafke advised that the City of Punta Gorda is working on codes to help preserve the historic character of the community. Councilmember Prafke provided an overview of a study about small businesses which was published in Forbes magazine and name Punta Gorda the seventh best entrepreneurial ecosystem in the nation.

Councilmember Jaha Cummings provided additional comments and information regarding small businesses within the county demographic. Councilmember Cummings provided information regarding a study conducted by AARP that stated that people who start business at the age of above 50 would have a 70% success rate versus younger people.

Commissioner Christopher Constance expressed his pleasure to be serving again as chair for the TDC.

**11. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

**Next TDC Meeting**

The next scheduled TDC meeting is at 9:00 a.m. Friday, April 9, 2021. The meeting will be held in the B-106 Conference Room, Administration Building, 18500 Murdock Circle, Port Charlotte.