



Town of Surfside

TOURIST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 4, 2017 – 5:30 p.m.

Town Hall Commission Chambers –
9293 Harding Ave, 2nd Floor, Surfside, FL 33154

Opening Items:

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by Chair Barbara Cohen at 5:38 p.m.

The following were present: Chair Barbara Cohen
Secretary Meischeid
Board member Jeff Lehman

Absent: Vice Chair Weiss
Board member Charles Ness

Also present: Vice Mayor Barry Cohen, Commission Liaison
Guillermo Olmedillo, Town Manager
Duncan Tavares, Assistant Town Manager
Lindsay Fast, Tourism Director
Mitch Bierman, Town Attorney
Elora Riera, Deputy Clerk

2. Welcome – Chair Barbara Cohen

Chair Barbara Cohen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Approval of Minutes: November 6, 2017

Board member Lehman made a motion to approve the minutes. Secretary Meischeid seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

4. A/R (Resort Tax)

The A/R resort tax spreadsheets were provided to the Board for their information.

Secretary Meischeid commented that September was low due to Hurricane Irma.

Tourism Director Fast reminded the Board that the accounts receivables for the resort tax for FY16-17 through October will be available at the end of November.

Chair Barbara Cohen stated that she read something about travelers not coming to the United States and she is unsure why but it will be something that will need to be monitored.

Tourism Director Fast commented that based on her conversations with the local hotels, everything is pretty much full for Art Basel.

Discussion Items

5. **Post Hurricane Marketing Activities Update**

This item was discussed after agenda item #7.

Tourism Director Fast reported that after the November 14th Town Commission meeting, the Board was granted approval for the \$115,000 of the reserve fund to be moved to the FY 2017/2018 budget for use of three marketing activities, including Uptown Beachtown Campaign Photoshoot, Conde Nast Traveler Digital Package, and Paddletopia event.

Discussion ensued regarding the Paddletopia event.

6. **Post Irma Acknowledgment of Hotel Staff – Final Update**

Tourism Director Fast gave a final update and small presentation of the acknowledgment that was done for the local hotel staff members. The acknowledgments took place in October and November and included ice cream and/or breakfast to the staff members. Between the four hotels, over 500 employees were acknowledged and the cost was under \$650.00.

7. **Sister Cities**

Tourism Director Fast reported that Board member Lehman has come forward to assist with this project. He brings past experience and contacts from working with the Sister Cities program in Miami Beach. The plan is for Mr. Lehman to work with her and Assistant Town Manager Tavares to help manage the project and put together an exploratory task force to examine other Sister Cities Programs.

Board member Lehman commented that this is a great idea and he is excited to help although it will be dependent upon the participation of the townsfolk and getting people interested.

Discussion ensued regarding the Sister Cities project in Miami Beach.

Chair Barbara Cohen advised the Board that Indulge Magazine featured an article about our Mayor and it was very nice and they are proud of him.

8. **Tourism Business Enhancement Program Proposal**

Tourism Director Fast reported that this item was something Commissioner Karukin mentioned at their Town Commission meeting in November. She envisions this program as a marketing and learning opportunity as well as providing the local businesses with partnership opportunities with Visit Surfside. She also would like to see a social media training and a brainstorming session. It will be an opportunity for the businesses to bring their thoughts and ideas to the Town so that the Town can better partner with them. This program is tentatively being looked at for January.

9. **Resident Outreach / Tourism Education**

Tourism Director Fast stated that Commissioner Karukin had also mentioned during the November 14th Town Commission meeting that he would like to see something geared towards the residents and getting them on board with the tourism efforts. She is looking to have an educational piece in the Gazette for January.

Board member Lehman commented that it would be a good idea to help the residents understand the dollars coming from the general fund for Town events are actually being paid for with Resort Tax dollars.

10. Enhancement of Tourism (Tourism Facilities)

Tourism Director Fast commented that at the November 14th Town Commission meeting, Commissioner Paul mentioned the topic of enhancement of Tourism facilities and how to add to our own community from a Tourism perspective. She would like to get ideas from the Board possibly for the following year since the Board is aware of the availability of funds for contingencies this year.

Chair Barbara Cohen stated that whenever she sees people who seem to not know where to go, she speaks with them. She urged residents to be friendly with the tourists if possible because it makes them feel good.

Secretary Meischeid suggested selling towels, bottles, and items of the like that have the Surfside logo on them be sold in Town.

Discussion ensued regarding selling Surfside merchandise. Tourism Director Fast said it is something that can be looked into.

Assistant Town Manager Tavares stated that the Town Commission is looking for the Board to come up with ideas on what to pursue with the tourism enhancement and educational outreach. For the tourism enhancement, it is really more of what the tourism dollars, not just the 34% but maybe there is a recommendation for the 66%, on enhancing the experience in the destination and not just the ability to purchase something. He suggested to somehow look at the overall Town and come up with ideas. If not through this Boards budget, maybe the Town Commission looks at it from a larger budgetary prospective. He also recommended looking at larger vision items and quality of life enhancements.

Secretary Meischeid asked if the Town Commission provided an example. Assistant Town Manager Tavares responded that to some degree, they mentioned focusing on the beach.

Board Member Lehman recommended something on the beach so that it is a “breath of fresh air”.

Discussion ensued regarding ways to enhance the tourism experience on a larger level such as maintaining the walking path on the beach and the dunes.

11. Next Tourist Board Meeting: Monday, January 8, 2018 at 5:30pm

Chair Barbara Cohen advised the Board of the next meeting. She would like for all five members who were appointed to the Board to be attending the meetings and giving more of an effort or else she believes that the rules in selecting members need to be changed.

Discussion ensued regarding the rules and procedures of the Board specifically pertaining to attendance. Board member Lehman would like this to be added to the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. Also discussed was the work being done by the Board.

Board member Lehman would like to request that the agenda items have small descriptions for informational purposes. He would also like to have a monthly recap of what staff has completed or worked on so that the Board is aware and up to date.

12. Public Comments

George Kousoulas spoke regarding meeting attendance and the work being done by the Board. Commissioner Michael Karukin spoke regarding meeting attendance and the work being done by the Board. Commissioner Karukin spoke about the possibility of receiving data about each Commissioner's appointee's attendance.

13. Adjournment

Secretary Meischeid made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board member Lehman seconded the motion and all voted in favor.


The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Accepted this 8th day of January, 2018


Barbara Cohen, Chair

Attest:


Elora Riera, CMC
Deputy Clerk