

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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 **MEETING MINUTES**

**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday, March 2, 2017**

**1:00 P.M.**

**117 West Duval Street**

**City Hall, Fourth Floor**

**Conference Room A**

**Attendance**

City Council President Lori Boyer, Board Chairperson

City Council Vice President John Crescimbeni, Board Vice Chairperson-**Late Arrival**

City Council Member Greg Anderson, Board Member (arr. 1:28 p.m.)

Barbara Goodman, Board Member - **Excused**

M. G. Orender, Board Member

Kirit Patidar, Board Member-**Excused**

Craig Smith, Board Member

Jeffrey Truhlar, Board Member

Annette Hastings, TDC Executive Director

Jeff Clements, Chief of Research

Colleen Hampsey, Council Reseach

Kirk Sherman, Council Auditor

Phillip Peterson, Council Auditor’s Office

Lawsikia Hodges, Deputy General Counsel

          **Meeting Convened 1:08 p.m. Meeting Adjourned: 4:21 p.m.**

**Introduction**

Council Member Boyer convened the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 16 and February 23, 2017 TDC Quarterly Meetings were e-mailed to the members and will be acted upon at the next meeting.

**Public Comments**

None

**Florida’s First Coast of Golf**

Staff distributed a draft submitted by David Reese of Florida’s First Coast of Golf of his proposal for the print advertisement revisions as requested by the TDC at a previous meeting to include more Jacksonville-centric courses and information. Members were asked to forward any comments directly to Mr. Reese with a copy to Annette Hastings, TDC staff. Chairwoman Boyer’s initial impression is that the draft still appears to highlight St. Johns County and Nassau County courses at the expense of Jacksonville courses.

**Omnibus Request for Proposals (RFP)**

After meeting with Procurement Chief Greg Pease and Deputy General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges yesterday, Ms. Boyer understands that an omnibus RFP is the only way to accomplish the TDC’s expressed goal of grading proposals for each of the functions separately and offering bonus points for service enhancements for a proposer awarded multiple components (in the same way that extra credit can be awarded to a proposer for a identifying cost savings that might be achievable for being awarded multiple components in a construction contract). She suggested a minimum interview threshold score of 75 of 90 points in the written evaluation in each category, plus any respondent that finishes in the top two scorers in any category.

Ms. Boyer said that Mr. Pease had advised that at this point the TDC’s original desire to issue the RFP by March 15 is no longer feasible. He recommends that the RFP be approved by the CSPEC at its March 30th meeting, with advertisement on April 5th, deadline for potential respondents to pose questions by April 14, answers to questions posted by April 19th and final response deadline on May 3rd.

Regarding the length of term, M.G. Orender advocated for a 5-year term for each of the three functions being advertised, including the tourist bureau (currently 3 years). He also proposed that the RFP include language that would permit the TDC to renegotiate with the contractor several years down the line if a new visitor’s center is constructed rather than have to issue a new RFP. Lawsikia Hodges pointed out that the contracts will all include “termination at will” provisions that the City could invoke if a new visitor center substantially changes the nature of the service being provided. She advised that such substantial changes in the nature of the contract would normally require issuance of a new RFP. The group agreed that for the tourist bureau contract a 3-year initial term with a 2-year renewal option followed by additional 3-year and 2-year renewal options (10 years total) would be satisfactory. Ms. Hodges noted that her understanding from Mr. Pease was that service contracts should not exceed 5 years. Council Member Anderson suggested that all three contracts be for 4 years with two 3-year renewal options. Chairwoman Boyer preferred that the tourism marketing and convention sales and service contracts be longer rather than shorter because the winning companies will need some time to develop and then implement a long-term strategy to achieve the desired goals.

Council Member Anderson recommended and the group agreed that a non-mandatory pre-proposal conference be held to allow potential proposers to pose questions and fully understand the TDC’s desires. Ms. Boyer said that potential proposers will need to know what tourist bureau assets (existing visitor center leases, existing databases, publication resources, etc.) are available to a new company winning the contract.

The group agreed to remove the prohibition against color materials, high quality paper, etc. in the tourism marketing proposal submissions so that the TDC can see the full quality of materials that proposers can produce. Paragraph 3.2 needs to be reworded to recognize that the tourist bureau and tourism marketing services will be performed by the winning company as an agent for the TDC (not what the RFP currently says). Paragraph 3.6 will need to be amended in the tourism marketing and convention marketing RFPs to address international travel, which may be desirable. The procedure requiring Council President approval for all travel undertaken on behalf of the TDC will also need revision, perhaps via an Ordinance Code amendment to change the travel policy to relieve the President of that review and paperwork burden with some standard procedures and broad grants of authority.

The group discussed Section 4 of the tourism bureau RFP to clarify language and definitions of terms.

They discussed the need to clarify the language designating a difference between visitor center (accessible at ground level) and visitor kiosk (small structure protected from the elements). It was noted that on p. 29 there should be a distinction between the terms *city property* and *public property*. On p. 30 the RFP should make sure it is clear that the airport visitor kiosk is mandatory first and foremost, in addition to other supplemental ones in the city.

Ms. Boyer described the database she envisions for the tourist bureau website; it should be sortable by geography, interests and some sort of rating system (stars etc.). The bureau will be accountable to demonstrate the functionality of the database and visitor center staff expertise at least annually. The group decided that on p. 31, Mr. Pease should alter the phrase “reservation services” to read “visitor information at Interstate 95 welcome station”. The group discussed the database control mechanisms and how it shouldn’t just be a link to Expedia or some similar outlet. Ms. Boyer mentioned the importance of a frequently updated database that reflects new restaurants etc.

Ms. Boyer brought up the location requirements for the tourism bureau contractor, in that they must have a staffed local office, not just a rented space with no real work going on. Management and service providers must be local. Also, the conflict of interest section should be broader to include all principals within the bureau. There was some discussion about the scoring system: How many points should be assigned to financial stability, 5 or 10? How long should the contract term be, how important is it to be uniform with the other RFPs? The group settled on contract terms that include a 3-2/3-2 year option with extension and renewal.

CM Crescimbeni said it should be clarified that the visitor center must be manned (staffed), currently the RFP doesn’t say one way or the other. Mr. Crescimbeni also noted that the RFP requires the tourist bureau to handle TDC signature events but it doesn’t list those events. CP Boyer said that the bureau should focus on the packaging of enhanced travel experiences around existing attractions, rather than just distributing a list of things to do. This is an area where the expertise of the staff is crucial.

The group next looked at the Marketing RFP. In section 3.6, they looked at the location requirements and decided to strike that portion since location is part of the final scoring (for the marketing component, it is preferred to be a local firm but it is not required). CM Crescimbeni said that the list of attractions needs to be uniform throughout the RFP.

There was a lengthy discussion about the need/practicality of the traditional printed visitor guide. CM Anderson asked if maybe a digital version or app wouldn’t be better. CP Boyer said that it was incumbent upon the contractor to devise a marketing strategy that included the visitor guide, but that all innovative marketing strategies must be pre-approved by the TDC. The group decided that the reporting requirement should be broader, to include more than just “click’ reports. It was clarified that the city owns the IP address for the website. Regarding the evaluation matrix, the group chose to combine bullets 2 (understanding the needs and goals of the TDC) and 5 (ability and capacity to perform the work) and change the score for proximity to 5 points.

The group then talked about the Convention Sales and Service RFP. CP Boyer asked if it was necessary to permit the contractor for this component to travel outside the US for trade shows. The group decided that North America, to include Canada, and possibly Central America were permissible, but not Europe or beyond.

Like the tourist bureau, the proximity is mandatory for the convention component (the contractor must be local). CM Crescimbeni mentioned that there should be a section of the application in which the applicant can list industry awards.

**Other Business**

CM Crescimbeni voiced his concerns about the Florida’s First Coast of Golf printed advertisement that had been discussed earlier. Mr. Crescimbeni mentioned that the ad should include more Duval golf images and better pictures of Jacksonville overall. One is of the Jacksonville Beach pier, which was damaged in Hurricane Matthew and the other is a nondescript restaurant shot that doesn’t show off the downtown skyline. His commentary has been emailed to Annette Hastings and will be forwarded to David Reese of Florida’s First Coast of Golf.

**Old Business**

None

**Closing Comments**

The next meeting will be in 2 weeks, Wednesday March 15 around noon. Mr. Pease will finalize the RFPs and distribute them through email for the TDC to review prior to the next meeting.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Jeff Clements and Colleen Hampsey, Council Research Division

Posted 3.7.17 5:00 p.m.