

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Annette R. Hastings** 117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425

TDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

OFFICE (904) 630-7625 JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

FAX (904) 630-2906

E-MAIL: ANNETTEH@coj.net`

**TDC MEMBERS BOYER AND GROSSMAN NOTICED MEETING**

**ON VARIOUS TDC TOPICS - MINUTES**

**Thursday, May 17, 2018**

**City Council Conference Room B**

**117 West Duval Street**

**City Hall, Fourth Floor**

**12:00 P.M.**

**Attendance:** TDC Members Lori Boyer and Steve Grossman

**Also:** Jeff Clements, Council Research Division; Kim Taylor – Council Auditor’s Office

See sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

**Meeting Convened**: 12:05

Council Member Boyer called the meeting to order and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. The members discussed Jacksonville’s “brand” in the minds of travelers and conventioneers. Ms. Boyer said that previous surveys have found that visitors are very satisfied with Jacksonville’s climate and airport, but less satisfied with the City’s arts, culture, attractions, etc. She found out indirectly that several City-related entities had hired the Burdette Ketchum marketing and advertising agency to develop a Jacksonville brand and that it had decided upon a focus on the river. Ms. Boyer identified 5 water-related attractions that could support a water-centered brand: 1) the beach, 2) preserves and nature experience, 3) downtown experience, particularly river-related amenities (Riverwalk, bridges), 4) marine life (related to things that live in the water – fishing tournaments, shrimping industry, Ocearch), and 5) sports and fitness activities (rowing, sailing, hiking trails near water, etc.).

Mr. Grossman questioned when the City Council would adopt the branding plan and make it official and well publicized. He also said that he sees a lot of plans with specific tactics, but not so much broad strategy and vision. He believes the city needs strategic visions for the next 5 years and 10 years, with options A and B depending on whether or not a new convention center is built downtown. Ms. Boyer said that the current Visit Jacksonville contracts were specifically timed to expire in several years with the expectation that a convention center decision would be made in that time frame and the contracts could be revised accordingly. Ms. Boyer reviewed the allowable uses of TDC bed tax revenues and how the decisions were made to allocate the percentages as they currently stand to the different market segments. She believes Jacksonville’s greatest tourism growth potential is in the leisure market, not the convention and meeting market (currently representing only 3-4% of Jacksonville’s total visitors), until such time as a new convention center opens. Mr. Grossman felt that the current TDC budget allocates a disproportionately large percentage of available funding to a very small segment of the market. The rationale for grants to festivals/events/sports and to capital facilities development/improvement was discussed.

Ms. Boyer noted the importance to all kinds of tourism segments of having fun, exciting things to see and do in Jacksonville, particularly in downtown for the benefit of convention and meeting attendees. Her waterfront activation initiative has been about picking the “low hanging fruit” and developing amenities and attractions to make Jacksonville more attractive to both leisure and meeting visitors. She said that the Jacksonville Civic Council has gotten behind the Burdette-Ketchum branding initiative and will help to fund its roll-out. Ms. Boyer explained that the TDC is run by the City Council and so has not had much connection with or buy-in from the Mayor’s Office, Office of Economic Development or Chamber of Commerce on the subject of tourism promotion. She said that Jacksonville collects far less in bed tax revenues than other Florida jurisdictions because of a relatively lower number of available hotel rooms and lower room rates. If Jacksonville got its occupancy rates and room rates up to the level of those other jurisdictions, the City could be generating considerably more TDC revenue. Ms. Boyer is pleased that the Civic Council is spearheading the branding effort rather than the TDC or Visit Jacksonville because of its ability to pull together numerous disparate partners who might otherwise not participate.

Mr. Grossman reiterated his earlier comments about developing a written vision statement that is officially adopted and endorsed by City leadership with a commitment to implement. He suggested allocating some TDC funding toward that task, possibly accomplished in conjunction with the Civic Council’s effort. He outlined an ongoing cooperative funding effort among the Jacksonville Aviation Authority, Visit Jacksonville, Amelia Island CVB and St. Johns County to attract a European airline to serve Jacksonville with direct flights. Jacksonville is the fifth-fastest growing airport in the country, with traffic up 18% . The Aviation Authority is working with airports with direct service to Jacksonville to promote each other’s cities to build traffic to everyone’s benefit.

**Meeting adjourned**: 12:56 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

Posted 5.18.18 12:00 p.m.