

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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| **Tourist Development Council** |  |  |
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**TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 17, 2018**

**1:30 P.M.**

**117 West Duval Street**

**City Hall, First Floor**

**Lynwood Roberts Room**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call**

City Council President Aaron Bowman, Chair

City Council Vice President Scott Wilson, Vice Chair

City Council Member Lori N. Boyer, Board Member

Barbara Goodman, Board Member – EXCUSED

Steven Grossman, Board Member – EXCUSED

Kirit Patidar, Board Member

Craig Smith, Board Member

Dawn Southworth, Board Member – EXCUSED

Jeffrey Truhlar, Board Member

Annette Hastings, Interim TDC Staff

Rachel Merritt, Interim TDC Staff

Sondra Fetner, City Council Staff

Jeff Clements, Chief of Research

Kim Taylor, Assistant Council Auditor

Lawsikia Hodges, Deputy General Counsel

**Meeting Convened 1:34 p.m. Meeting Adjourned: 5:03 p.m**

**II. Introductions – Council President Aaron Bowman, TDC Chairman**

Chairman Bowman convened the meeting at 1:34 p.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the TDC’s Quarterly Meeting of September 13, 2018 were **approved as distributed 6-0**.

1. **TDC Financial Report**

Assistant Council Auditor Kim Taylor gave the TDC Financial Report. TDC tax collections for FY17-18 were up 10% over FY16-17 collections, and the revenue for September 2018 was up by 16.27% over September 2017. Total collections for FY17-18 were $8,568,533. The budgetary balances available in the Tourist Development Plan Components through August 31st were as follows: Tourist Bureau - $0; Marketing - $26,500; Convention Sales - $900; Development and Planning - $123,933; Special Event Grants - $7,494.21. The balance remaining to be spent in accordance with the TDC Plan is $140,320, for a total of $299,147.21 available to be expended without further City Council action. There are still a few encumbrances for pending items that have not yet cleared. Balances in the accounts requiring further City Council approval are: Development Account - $3,807,937.51; Contingency Account - $1,463,000; Special Revenue Fund - $32,278.

1. **TDC Staffing Update**

Diane Moser, Director of Employee Services Department, gave an update on the hiring process for the TDC Executive Director and TDC Administrator positions. 30 applications were received for the Executive Director position which were evaluated and ranked; the department listed 11 “A” level candidates, 13 “B” level candidates and 6 “C” level candidates. The TDC Administrator was posted both internally and externally to City government and 54 applications were received, which were evaluated and ranked; the department listed 6 “A” level candidates, 22 “B” level candidates and 26 “C” level candidates. The department did phone interviews with all of the “A” candidates for both positions and also interviewed the “B” level candidates for the Executive Director position. In response to a question from Chairman Bowman, Ms. Moser said that once the TDC decides on a final candidate, the department will evaluate their qualifications and experience and recommend a reasonable starting salary level. Either Employee Services or a TDC representative can make the offer to the candidate.

**Motion** (Boyer): TDC grants to the Search Committee the authority to interview and make recommendations to the body for both the Executive Director and Administrator positions –

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**

**Motion** (Boyer): approve the list of individuals presented by the Employee Services Department for the Executive Director position for interviews, with the top 6 candidates to be interviewed; grant the Search Committee the authority to review the qualifications of candidates below the top 6 and to recommend any additional candidates deemed qualified for interview from the A or B list –

**Public comment –** none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

**Motion** (Boyer): approve the list of individuals presented by Employee Services for TDC Administrator position for interviews, with the top 4 candidates to be interviewed; grant the Search Committee the authority to review the qualifications of candidates below the top 4 and to recommend any additional candidates deemed qualified for interview from the A or B list –

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

Kirit Patidar suggested that someone from outside the Jacksonville region be selected for one of the positions to bring new perspectives to the table.

Ms. Boyer said that since none of the Executive Director candidates have any experience with Jacksonville’s TDC, she would not be comfortable with hiring that person and delegating to them the authority to hire the Administrator position on their own. The TDC could potentially hire the Executive Director and have that person sit in on the TDC’s Search Committee search process for the Administrator. Several TDC members expressed a preference for hiring the Administrator first to get a full-time staff member on board while the Executive Director search proceeds.

Ms. Boyer said that since several of the top candidates on the lists are from out of town, she recommends that interviews be conducted for all candidates via videoconference; the TDC agreed that all candidates should undergo the same type of interview. If multiple TDC members want to attend the videoconferences, that would require noticed Sunshine meetings. In response to a question from Council Member Boyer about whether the TDC has a budget to bring in top candidates for an on-site interview, Kim Taylor said that there is no money budgeted specifically for travel but funds could perhaps be reallocated for that purpose with City Council approval. She will check to see if the TDC can allocate funds from its Tourist Development Special Revenue Fund without further Council. Ms. Boyer said that when the Selection Committee arrives at a top candidate or two, it will ask the TDC for a special meeting to authorize the committee to make an offer to a candidate since that power was not delegated to the Search Committee. Mr. Patidar asked about the possibilities for conducting future meetings by teleconference since he has considerable travel scheduled in the next few months. Deputy General Counsel Lawsikia Hodges explained the regulations regarding quorum requirements and the necessity for members to be physically present to vote unless exercising a specific exception under the Government in the Sunshine Law.

**Motion** (Boyer): the TDC authorizes the temporary employment of Sondra Fetner, formerly an attorney in the Office of General Counsel, to draft grant applications and guideline documents, draft travel policies, and review contract compliance by Visit Jacksonville (evaluation of contract deliverables, review of reports, etc.), for not more than 50 hours per 2 week pay period at a rate of $40.39 per hour –

**Public Comments –** None

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**

1. **Visit Jacksonville Convention Grant Requests**

**Presenter:** Sarina Wiechens, Chief Operating Officer, Visit Jacksonville

**Total Encumbrance Request CVB Grant Fund FY 2018-2019:** $119,595.00

**Total Room Nights:** \_\_27,718\_

**Name of Group**: Barbershop Harmony Society

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** January 3-13, 2020

**Room nights**: 2,473 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 2,000

**Funds Use**: Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $12,365.00

**Name of Group**: Church Benefits Association

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** December 3-6, 2019

**Room nights**: 400 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 300

**Funds Use:** A/V, Reception

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,000.00

**Name of Group**: Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Lexington Hotel & Conference Center Jacksonville Riverwalk, and Hampton Inn Jacksonville Downtown I-95

**Event Date(s):** June 15-21, 2020

**Room nights**: 5,546 (at $3 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 5,000

**Funds Use**: A/V, Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $16,638.00

**Name of Group**: Corning Optical

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** January 16-22, 2021

**Room nights:** 4,200 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 680

**Funds Use**: AV, Group Transportation, Reception (Food & Beverage)

**Funds to be encumbered**: $21,000.00

**Name of Group**: Electric Power Research Institute

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** January 26-February 1, 2019

**Room nights**: 809 (at $3 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 180

**Funds Use**: Group Transportation, Marketing, Reception, AV, Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,427.00

**Name of Group**: Florida State Convention Joint Advisory Committee – 64th Florida State Convention

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s)**: August 3-8, 2020

**Room nights**: 1,250 (at $3 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 1,000

**Funds Use**: A/V

**Funds to be encumbered**: $3,750.00

**Name of Group**: Great Homeschool Convention, Inc.

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** August 6-11, 2019

**Room nights**: 835 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 350

**Funds Use**: AV, Group Transportation, Venue/Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $4,175.00

**Name of Group**: Great Homeschool Convention, Inc.

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s)**: June 23-28, 2020

**Room nights**: 835 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 350

**Funds Use**: AV, Group Transportation, Venue/Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $4,175.00

**Name of Group**: International Paper, REACH Technical Conference Phase 1

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Lexington Hotel & Conference Center Jacksonville Riverwalk

**Event Date(s):** January 28 – February 1, 2019

**Room nights**: 865 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 200

**Funds Use**: Room Rental, Group Transportation, Reception

**Funds to be encumbered**: $4,325.00

**Name of Group**: International Paper, REACH Technical Conference Phase 2

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Lexington Hotel & Conference Center Jacksonville Riverwalk

**Event Date(s):** May 20 – 24, 2019

Room nights: 865 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 200

**Funds Use**: Room Rental, Group Transportation, Reception

**Funds to be encumbered**: $4,325.00

**Name of Group**: International Pentecostal Holiness Church

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** July 21- August 2, 2021

**Room nights**: 5,385 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 4,000

**Funds Use**: A/V, Room Rental

**Funds to be encumbered**: $26,925.00

**Name of Group**: National Newspaper Association

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** September 17 – October 3, 2020

**Room nights**: 469 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 225

**Funds Use**: Group Transportation

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,345.00

**Name of Group**: Reinke Manufacturing

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** October 6-11, 2020

**Room nights**: 1,240 (at $3 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 600

**Funds Use**: Group Transportation, Reception

**Funds to be encumbered**: $3,720.00

**Name of Group**: Rinosnet – Corporate Training Winter 2019

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Lexington Hotel & Conference Center Jacksonville Riverwalk

**Event Date(s):** January 23-26, 2019

**Room nights**: 415 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 700

**Funds Use**: A/V, Marketing

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,075.00

**Name of Group**: Rinosnet – Corporate Training Spring 2019

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** May 22-25, 2019

**Room nights**: 413 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 700

**Funds Use**: A/V, Marketing

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,065.00

**Name of Group:** Rinosnet – Corporate Training Fall 2019

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** September 18-22, 2019

**Room nights**: 413 (at $5 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 700

**Funds Use**: A/V, Marketing

**Funds to be encumbered**: $2,065.00

**Name of Group**: Society of Gynecologic Surgeons

**Hotel(s) Utilized**: Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

**Event Date(s):** March 26 – April 2, 2020

**Room nights**: 1,305 (at $4 per room)

**Estimated Attendance**: 420

**Funds Use**: A/V, Marketing, Room Rental, Group Transportation, Reception

**Funds to be encumbered**: $5,220.00

**Motion** (Boyer): approve the 17 convention grant requests listed above with the clarification that the use of funds is as listed on the agenda and that “room rental” means ballroom or meeting room rental, not sleeping rooms –

**Public Comments –** none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**

1. **Special Events Grant Requests**

**2019 Gulf Coast Athletic Conference Men’s/Women’s Basketball Tournaments**

**Applicant**: Edward Waters College

**Presenter**s: Stanley Cromartie - Athletic Director, Henry Smith - Assistant Athletic Director

**Event Date(s):** February 28 – March 3, 2019

**Location**: EWC Adams-Jenkins Sports/Music Complex

**Tourist Attendance**: 5,000 (8,250 overall attendees)  
**Room Nights**: 250-300

**Event Grant Amount**: $10,000

**Funds Use**: Southeast Regional Marketing (Birmingham, AL; New Orleans, LA; Jackson, MS; and Little Rock, AR).

The representatives of Edward Waters College agreed to revise their application pursuant to the new guidelines approved by the TDC today and return to the November 8th meeting to discuss their application.

**2018 TaxSlayer Gator Bowl – Signature Event**

**Applicant**: Gator Bowl Sports

**Presenter**: Richard Catlett, President & CEO

**Event Date(s):** December 26, 2018 – January 1, 2019

**Location**: TIAA Bank Field

**Tourist Attendance**: 30,000 (60,000 – 65,000 overall attendees)  
**Room nights**: 25,000

**Event Grant Amount**: $480,000 (year five of a six-year agreement)

**Funds Use**: Supplement participating team payouts

Mr. Catlett said that last year’s Gator Bowl was the most poorly attended game in decades, but the television ratings were still good and the room occupancy and REVPAR were strong. The Gator Bowl is in the fifth year of a six year contract with its conference partners and ESPN and is ready to begin negotiations for new six year contracts with both. The game will begin at 4:30 p.m. on New Year’s Eve and is unopposed by football games on the other ESPN stations, so television ratings should be very strong.

**Motion** (Smith): approve the requested signature event grant of $480,000 -

Ms. Boyer asked if, with the new rules in effect, the TDC members will need to review and score an application for this event before making the grant even though this event is part of a continuing contract. She said that she had scored the application before the meeting based on the new criteria and found that it exceeded the minimum score requirement for funding. Given Mr. Catlett’s comment about the REVPAR rate from last year and the favorable television time slot and ratings expectations for this year, she is even more confident that the event qualifies for TDC funding.

The committee was in recess from 2:58 to 3:08 p.m. to allow the members time to score the Gator Bowl application using the new criteria and scoring matrix. Staff reviewed the score sheets and determined that all TDC members rated this application above the 40-point minimum to be considered for funding and the average score was 48.67. The group discussed the process to be followed if one or more members grade an application below the 40-point minimum while most grade it above that score. Ms. Boyer said that the group will engage in discussion of the rationale for the varying scores, which may play into the decision to make or not make a grant, or the amount to be granted. In response to a question, Ms. Boyer said that her impression was that applicants could make a presentation or explain their application to the group, which might well provide additional information that could change a member’s grade. Lawsikia Hodges said that other City agencies typically offer the opportunity for applicant presentations before the grading process begins. Ms. Boyer pointed out that that would entail another noticed meeting of the group to hear the presentations.

**Public Comments –** none

The Smith motion was **approved 6-0**.

1. **Joint Marketing Services/Special Events Grant Requests**

**Florida State vs. Boise State Football Game**

**Applicant**: Gator Bowl Sports Events (JAXSPORTS)

**Presenter**: Richard Catlett, President & CEO

**Event Date(s):** August 30 – September 2, 2019

**Location**: TIAA Bank Field

**Tourist Attendance**: 25,000 (60,000 overall attendees)

**Event Grant Amount**: $150,000 – Total Grant Request   
 $50,000 – Marketing Grant   
 $100,000 – Special Event Grant

**Funds Use**: Marketing to out of town FSU fans as well as the Boise market; provide events surrounding the game.

Mr. Catlett said the game will be the Saturday of Labor Day weekend and should draw a large crowd of fans from both teams. Boise State is a team whose fans are known to travel well to away games. He asked the TDC for advice on how it would like to see the application structured (more emphasis on game marketing versus more emphasis on Jacksonville destination marketing) for submission for the November TDC meeting. Ms. Boyer said that she had evaluated the application using the new criteria and found its marketing component to be lacking in specificity about return on investment and marketing strategies. Chairman Bowman said that he’s looking for strategies to keep the FSU fans in town for more than one night and to get Boise State fans to spend the long holiday weekend in Jacksonville. Mr. Catlett said that he will be working with Visit Jacksonville and with the schools’ alumni associations to target alumni and fans with considerable social media marketing.

**2019 Spartan Race Super, Sprint & Kid’s Race**

**Applicant**: Airstream Ventures

**Presenter**: Alan Verlander, Founder/CEO

**Event Date(s):** February 22-24, 2019

**Location**: WW Ranch Motocross

**Tourist Attendance**: 15,000 (7,000 room nights)

**Event Grant Amount**: $165,000 – Total Grant Request   
 $100,000 – Marketing Grant   
 $65,000 – Special Event Grant

**Funds Use**: Marketing, Facebook Live stream and national broadcast; Event rental and expenses

Mr. Verlander said that Spartan Race has decided to make Northeast Florida a strategic target market for its events and is very good at marketing the host cities of its events. He is willing to come back to the November meeting with a new application but needs direction from the TDC about the Council’s attitude about Spartan and whether there is sentiment to keep supporting its events. He said that Spartan would bring an event to Jacksonville early next year without TDC support, but it would not be a national championship event with national television coverage. Ms. Boyer said that the TDC has allocated $100,000 for marketing grants and will have multiple applications for its use, so it is unlikely that the TDC will grant the full $100,000 request to a single event. She suggested using the Player’s Championship tournament model, which provides a substantial amount of Northeast Florida destination marketing impact highlighting the area’s tourism assets and noted that special event grants are also available in addition to the marketing grant. Kim Taylor said that the TDC has an unallocated balance of $76,245 that could be allocated to the marketing category and that bed tax revenues were budgeted conservatively and there could be additional revenue to allocate to marketing later in the year if tax collections continue to be strong. Mr. Bowman and Mr. Smith felt that last spring’s Spartan event was one of the best events the TDC has supported in recent years.

1. **Visit Jacksonville Travel Plan**

**FY18-19 Travel Plan Amendment Request – Sarina Wiechens, COO, Visit Jacksonville**

Ms. Wiechens asked for an amendment of the previously-approved Visit Jacksonville travel schedule to accommodate 2 event changes.

**Motion** (Boyer): approve transfer of the $8,500 Pharma Forum travel funding in March 2019 to the New York Society of Association Executives meeting -

**Public Comments -** Stanley Scott said that Jacksonville is not as popular a destination as it should be and urged greater efforts to attract visitors to the city. Jacksonville has no reputation or identity as an exciting place to visit.

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

**Motion** (Boyer): approve transfer of the Military Reunion Network SE Regional Roundtable travel funding (event cancelled) to the Your Military Reunion Network event in Kississimee, Florida –

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

Visit Jacksonville agreed to provide an updated travel plan spreadsheet reflecting the changes for the record.

1. **Tourist Bureau Services Contract – Visit Jacksonville**

**Visitor Center Kiosks Update – Sarina Wiechens, COO, Visit Jacksonville**

Ms. Wiechens presented the results of the bids for construction of 3 outdoor kiosks, all of which were higher than the amount budgeted for this project. One bid was $64,145; another was $92,900; a third company did not make a formal bid but proposed an option for indoor rather than outdoor kiosks.

Visit Jax’s top two priorities for kiosks are the Jacksonville Zoo and the Beaches Town Center if fewer kiosks are constructed than the 5 originally discussed. Katie Mitura said that a third priority would be at the St. Johns Town Center; she has begun discussions with the various property owners at that site, which will make that location somewhat more problematic. There are three different property owners at the St. Johns Town Center, depending on the location chosen. Mr. Bowman asked about the possibility of buying 2 kiosks with an option to buy a third at a later time. Mr. Truhlar posed a list of questions for Visit Jax to pose to the two responsive bidders regarding internet access, electric supply, insurance requirements, geoboundary restrictions, etc.

**Motion** (Boyer): TDC authorizes Visit Jax to contract for 2 outdoor kiosks from Meridian Zero Degrees, LLC with an option for a third kiosk if it can be procured at a later date at the same price (without a premium being charged for the production of the third unit at a later date) -

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

**Annual Results Submittal – Sarina Wiechens, COO, Visit Jacksonville**

Ms.Wiechens distributed two binders of information documenting fulfillment of the contractual requirements for the TDC’s initial review. Several items are still outstanding for completion in the next month. Visit Jax will make a full presentation on the submittals at the November meeting.

1. **Convention Sales & Services Contract – Visit Jacksonville**

**Annual Results Submittal – Sarina Wiechens, COO, Visit Jacksonville**

Ms. Wiechens distributed materials that will be discussed at the next TDC meeting.

1. **Marketing Services – Visit Jacksonville & Dalton Agency**

**Annual Results Submittal – Sarina Wiechens, COO, Visit Jacksonville**

Ms. Wiechens distributed materials that will be discussed at the next meeting.

1. **TDC Special Project Accounts**

Council Member Lori Boyer gave a PowerPoint presentation and discussed a variety of potential uses for the TDC’s special project accounts. She reviewed the currently permissible uses for the various accounts. The Florida Legislature in 2017 expanded the authority for use of TDC funding to allow maintenance and operational expenses of public facilities.

**Development Account – Potential Uses**

Capital improvements to publicly-owned or private tourism-producing facilities (arenas, convention centers, museums, aquariums, etc.).

**Contingency Account**

Unforeseen opportunities for major events, activities or projects.

**Donations and Sponsorships Special Revenue Account**

**Visitor Center within the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts**

Ms. Boyer suggested allocating $850,000 from the Development Account for this new visitor center. SMG has hired an architect to develop conceptual plans for renovations/improvements to the river side of the T-U Center, including a riverfront café on the west end of the building and a visitor center in the east end near the Jacksonville Landing. New visitor wayfaring signage is being manufactured and should be installed by February 2019.

**Wallcast livestream projection venue utilizing CSX building façade**

This concept is based on the outdoor projection system at the New World Symphony’s concert hall in Miami. CSX has agreed to the concept of using the east wall of his office building adjacent to the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts as a projection screen and a video engineer will do a demonstration of the concept next week. This would require the installation of outdoor speakers and a projection system on the T-U Center property.

Craig Smith said that the TDC will need to decide which avenue to take with regard to use of the Development Fund – to use the available funds on 3 or 4 smaller projects in the near future or to let the fund grow for several more years and use $10 or $12 million to construct a single, major tourist attraction (i.e. an aquarium). Chairman Bowman asked how the City would enter into a relationship with CSX to protect the City’s ability to implement this concept (i.e. to protect the availability of the building wall); Lawsikia Hodges said that a contract would need to be negotiated.

**Riverfront sound and light show**

Ms. Boyer described a proposed nightly synchronized light and sound show using Friendship Fountain and the St. Johns River Park on the Southbank, the T-U Performing Arts Center on the Northbank, and the Main Street and Acosta Bridges. The City has budgeted for fountain nozzles, computers and other hardware in the current budget; the TDC would be asked to help fund the development of the show software. Ongoing maintenance will need to be budgeted as well; the Downtown Investment Authority may fund half of the cost if someone (TDC? City?) will fund the other half.

**Motion** (Truhlar): recommend that the City Council appropriate funding from the Development Account for a new Downtown Riverfront Visitor Center in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts ($850,000) and for the livestream projection system on the CSX Building façade and associated Times-Union Center outdoor seating area ($1,200,000) –

**Public comment** – Stanley Scott said that the proposals as described don’t contain enough money for the desired end product and maintenance of the systems will be very expensive. He recommended planning for the future of the entire riverfront and not doing projects piecemeal.

The Truhlar motion was **approved 6-0**.

1. **Tourist Development Grant Guidelines**

Council Member Lori Boyer discussed the following issues:

**Special Events and Marketing Grant Applications**

Ms. Boyer distributed drafts of special event and marketing grant applications and asked for the group’s approval to allow applications to be submitted electronically rather than in 14 hard copies as currently required; the group agreed. Ms. Boyer suggested that applications be submitted to Visit Jacksonville at least 5 business days before the TDC’s application deadline to give them time to review and comment as required before TDC’s evaluation. She also suggested that the TDC application deadline be 4 weeks before a TDC meeting. The group agreed with those application deadlines.

Ms. Boyer said that in the past there has been confusion about what events qualify for special event versus marketing grants, depending on what they are promoting (a particular event versus experiencing Jacksonville in general). She said the grant criteria that were approved by City Council did not assign specific point values to particular categories; that was left to the TDC’s discretion. The $5 per room night standard the TDC has been using is not an officially adopted standard, but has been an unofficial practice. She suggested the need to allocate the 25 points from the matrix criteria into the various categories for better specificity. The consensus of the group was to authorize the committee to make that change to the scoring form.

Ms. Boyer asked if the TDC wanted to continue requiring the information currently required of not-for-profit organizations since the rules have been changed and no longer require that all applicants be not-for-profits. The consensus was to not continue requiring the not-for-profit documentation (except for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs’ Certificate of Solicitation of Contributions registration form). Staff would be instructed to continue searching the Florida Division of Corporations Sunbiz website to determine if an applicant is a for-profit or not-for-profit and if it is still listed as an active corporation.

Ms. Boyer asked the group how much documentation they want to receive regarding an applicant’s marketing plan for its event. What is needed is at least a conceptual plan of what the marketing plan will contain, sufficient to allow the TDC to determine compliance after a grant is awarded and expended.

**Motion** (Boyer): the TDC authorizes Ms. Boyer and Ms. Fetner to make the grant applications, scoring sheets, instructions, web site information, etc. consistent with the changes agreed to by consensus of the group at today’s meeting -

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**

**Motion** (Boyer): the TDC authorizes Ms. Boyer and Ms. Fetner to finalize the applications, scoring sheets, instructions, etc. as described above and to release the documents for public use prior to the November meeting without further TDC review and approval, consistent with the subcommittee’s report previously adopted -

**Motion** (Patidar): make the release and use of the documents subject to a 24 hour review and comment period by TDC members before release -

Lawsikia Hodges explained the Sunshine Law implications of board members making individual comments and requesting changes to documents in a substantive way as a result. The TDC’s next meeting will be November 8th at which any substantive changes can be made. Ms. Hodges and Ms. Fetner will receive any comments supplied by commissioners and will determine which recommendations are “substantive” requiring further action at the next meeting. Mr. Truhlar said that the documents will still be a work in progress after their implementation and can be changed as experience dictates.

**Public comment** - none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

**Equestrian Center Grant Application**

Ms. Boyer said that the same system and criteria discussed above would be applied to the Equestrian Center grant application form and scoring matrix.

1. **Other Business**

Council Member Boyer said that Visit Jacksonville has been developing a downtown historic walking tour brochure and has identified signs for on-ground or wall-mounted signage at important locations. They have received a quote of $2,500 for the signage.

**Motion** (Boyer): authorize expenditure of $2,500 from the Special Trust Account for purchase of on-ground or wall-mounted wayfinding signage to accompany the historic walking tour –

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

Council Member Boyer said that the walking tour information needs to be made available digitally and reminded the group of the requirement in the Visit Jacksonville contract for production of a digital app. She reported the Visit Jax has located a vendor that can provide an app with all of the desired features within the budget allocation ($46,000) for that purpose. In response to a question from Mr. Truhlar, Katie Mitura of Visit Jax said that there is not a specific marketing plan for the app, but that it should be fairly simple to market its availability through all of the currently available channels.

**Motion** (Boyer): TDC authorizes Visit Jacksonville to proceed with procuring the app as required in the contract, using the funds budgeted for that purpose –

**Public comment** – none

The Boyer motion was **approved 6-0**.

Ms. Boyer reported that Visit Jacksonville has recently submitted its travel expense reimbursement request for FY17-18 but was holding its entertainment expense receipts until the TDC clarified its policy about what expenses are and are not allowable for last year, prior to the new entertainment expense policy for 2018-19 having been recently approved. Sarina Wiechens reported that Visit Jax has submitted approximately $90,000 in receipts for clearly allowable expenses and is holding $19,000 in receipts for entertainment expenses.

**Motion** (Patidar): authorize payment of Visit Jacksonville’s $19,000 in entertainment expense receipts for 2017-18 –

**Public comment** – none

The Patidar motion was **approved 6-0**.

1. **Public Comments**

Stanley Scott with the African-American Economic Recovery Think Tank said that the Ritz Theater is an expensive venue to rent which puts it out of reach for many community groups. He asked City leadership to look at ways to reduce the rental price so that it is more available to underserved communities to access, especially for family-friendly events.

1. **Closing Comments**

The next meeting will be on November 8th.

1. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

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Posted 10.23.18 9:30 a.m.

Tape – Tourist Development Council 10.17.18 meeting – Legislative Services Division