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ALACHUA COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Alachua County Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler, Chair
City of Gainesville Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut
City of Alachua Commissioner Dayna Williams
Adam Anderson | Stephanie Bailes | Staci Bertrand
Cornelia Holbrook | Linda Rocha

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

Alachua County Administration Building
12 SE 1st Street, Second Floor, Grace Knight Conference Room

MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order 1:34pm: Members present: Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler, Cornelia Holbrook, Adam Anderson, Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut, Stephanie Bailes, and Linda Rocha. Members absent: Staci Bertrand and Commissioner Dayna Williams.

Others Present: Tourism and Economic Development staff Jessica Hurov, Elizabeth Reyes, Bailey McClellan, and Jordan Shepherd.

1. Approval of the Agenda Packet and Minutes from the January 23, 2025 meeting – *Motion by Adam Anderson, second by Linda Rocha. Motion carried*
2. Meeting Advantage Program Application Review (7 applications): Tourism Program Coordinator Bailey McClellan presented 7 Meeting Advantage Program applications for review. Bailey detailed the economic impact of the MAP program applications with a requested funding amount of \$16,950.00. These conferences are projected to generate approximately \$146,206.00 in direct lodging revenue and bring an estimated direct economic sales impact of \$327,954.00 and a total induced economic impact of \$507,699.00.

Approved Meeting Advantage Program applications are as follows:

- **HOPE Animal Assisted Crisis Response, Southeast Regional Annual Workshop**
Verified Request Amount: \$1,125.00
April 10 – 13, 2025
Conference Location: Santa Fe College Institute of Public Safety
Lodging Location: Best Western Gateway Grand
75 room nights
- **Florida School Board Association, Finance 2.0 Forum**

Verified Request Amount: \$1,050.00

April 24 – 25, 2025

Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center
70 room nights

- **UF/IFAS Conference on Applied Statistics in Agriculture and Natural Resources**
Verified Request Amount: \$2,175.00
May 11 – 16, 2025
Lodging & Conference Location: Hotel Indigo at Celebration Pointe
145 room nights
- **American Shoulder & Elbow Surgeons Foundation, Central Florida Shoulder & Elbow Week 2025**
Verified Request Amount: \$900.00
May 16 – 17, 2025
Lodging Location: Hyatt Place Downtown Gainesville
Conference Location: Champions Club at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium
60 room nights
- **Florida Association of Genetic Counselors, 2025 Annual Education Conference**
Verified Request Amount: \$900.00
May 29 – 30, 2025
Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center
60 room nights
- **UF/Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Summer Short Course 2025**
Verified Request Amount: \$900.00
June 1 – 3, 2025
Conference Location: Gainesville Garden Club and UF Straughn Center
Lodging Location: Drury Inn and Suites
60 room nights
- **UF/PURC World Bank International Training on Utility Regulations & Policy**
Verified Request Amount: \$9,900.00
June 9 – 18, 2025
Lodging & Conference Location: Hilton University of Florida Conference Center
660 room nights

All 7 Meeting Advantage Program applications approved. Motion by Cornelia Holbrook, second by Commissioner Cynthia Chestnut. Motion carried.

Staff Presentation by Elizabeth Reyes, Tourism Development Director

- **World Masters Updates:** Updates were presented regarding the World Masters Athletic Indoor Championship 2025 (WMAic25)
 - **Cornelia Holbrook** shared support and discussed the impact of the WMAic25
 - **Adam Anderson** shared support and discussed the impact of the WMAic25
 - **Ron Gromoll** (General Manager of Sweetwater Inn) spoke about Airbnb and VRBO occupancy.
- **Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives:** Information was presented about the Visitors Bureau's logistics support and hospitality presented for the film crew of the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives" (DDD) television program. Locally sourced food items were shared with the DDD film crew to promote Alachua County agricultural products.
 - **Bailey McClellan** shared insights about episodes airing that were filmed in Alachua County.

- **Visit Florida's Huddle and Encounter:** Liz presented on the Visit Florida Huddle and Encounter event at the World Equestrian Center in Ocala, Florida. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County sponsored a coffee bar directly next to the VCBs tradeshow booth at the event, creating an opportunity for Visit Gainesville, Alachua County brand to be seen by more attendees and meeting planners.
 - **Bailey McClellan** Received four requests for proposals (rfp's) resulting from this event.
- **VCB Tallahassee Meeting Planner Event:** Bailey McClellan presented on the VCB Tallahassee Meeting Planner Event.
 - **Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler** commented on the challenges faced by some of the smaller VCBs in Florida.
- **Guest Service Professional Certification Program:** More than 70 early career professionals have enrolled in the program to date.
- **Upcoming Important Dates:**
 - Florida Tourism Day
 - National Travel and Tourism Week
 - Agritourism Conference
- **2025 Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Hospitality Awards:** The registration period for the 2025 awards is now open.
- **Website Visitation, Social, and Digital Campaigns:** Key performance metrics for website traffic and engagement from recent marketing campaigns were discussed. Overall campaigns are on track for yearly goals.
- **Tabling and Outreach Efforts:** An update was provided on visitor guide distribution, the growth in What's Good Guide subscriptions, and event ticket distribution.
- Jessica Hurov and Liz Reyes provided information on Visit Gainesville, Alachua County's newest initiative – The **Routes to Roots** carbon offset program. She shared that logo, the donation structure and where information about where the initiative could be found on the Visit Gainesville, Alachua County website. A link to the Routes to Roots page is found within the website footer.
- **Digital Campaigns for Summer Visitation:** The summer visitation campaign for Alachua County will begin May 1. New this year, Visit Gainesville, Alachua County will partner with Gray Media to conduct a digital display ad campaign along with a social lead generation campaign to drive summer visitation.

3. Member Comments

- **Stephanie Bailes** shared ideas for marketing restaurants in Alachua County.
- **Cornelia Holbrook** shared insights on the potential for launching a tour company in Alachua County.
- **Adam Anderson** talked about competing in the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championship.
- **Linda Rocha** highlighted Dance Alive's upcoming performance of Romeo and Juliet.

4. Public Comment

- **Kaitlin Gardiner** (Florida Museum of Natural History) announced that the museum will be closing on **March 23, 2025** for an estimated 16 months, with plans to reopen in the **Fall of 2026**. The closure will facilitate an expansion of the facility, including the addition of new gallery space, an upgraded gift shop, and a two-story administration building. During the closure, the museum will continue to engage with the community by tabling at various events.
- **Tara James** (The Embassy Event Hall, Waldo, Florida) discussed the possibility of adding her event venue to the Visit Gainesville website, with plans to promote her events in the future.
 - **TDC members** suggested opening the Embassy Event Hall to community activities like yoga classes and outreach programs.
- **Julie Smith** (High Springs) encouraged members to submit their events to the Visit Gainesville website. She also spoke about a brewery ordinance and advocated for allowing breweries to be open on Sundays in

High Springs.

5. Adjourn 3:14 p.m.

Visit Gainesville, Alachua County offices are located at 33 N Main Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601
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AGENDA PACKET ATTACHMENTS - To be approved upon approval of the agenda.

1. Draft Minutes from the January 2025 TDC Meeting
2. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Advertising Report
3. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Group Sales Report
4. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Web/Digital Report
5. Visit Gainesville, Alachua County Outreach/Group Service Report
6. Tourist Development Council Attendance Report
7. Tourist Development Expenditure Report
8. Gainesville Sports Commission Report