



Department of Urban Redevelopment

Fort Pierce Authentic Tours - Advisory Board Meeting

January 3, 2013

Minutes

Board Members Present: Michael Adams, Chop Lege, Cristin Ryan, Donald Voss

Board Members Absent: Excused: Jann Widmayer, Charlotte Bireley, Mark Harrison, and Rosemary Knight; Unexcused: Clive Daem

Staff in Attendance: Jon Ward, Director, Urban Redevelopment; Anne Satterlee, Communications and Marketing Manager; Libby Woodruff, Grants Administrator

FPAT Members and Visitors: Captain Dyana Voss, Gary Guertin, Nancy Bennett, Linda Cox, Emily McHugh, Helena McHugh, Kerry Firth, James Burke, Alan Hayes

NOTE: A QUORUM (5+ Board Members) WAS NOT PRESENT FOR THIS MEETING.

Chop Lege' was running late for the meeting. Jon Ward began the meeting at 3:45pm. A vote was not taken to approve the minutes from the November 1, 2012 meeting.

I. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Financial Report for the December 2012 meeting was not given.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Membership Report – Libby Woodruff

Libby stated that she had just received two membership renewals at the beginning of today's meeting and did not receive any new memberships for the month of December.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Spoil Island Cleanup Project Kickoff – January 12 – Don Voss

Don explained that Marine Cleanup Initiative received a grant from South Florida Water Management and the State of Florida to include not only underwater debris removal but also to remove debris from the spoil islands in St. Lucie County and two spoil islands in Martin County. He plans to engage boaters, kayakers, paddle boarders to participate in the January 12 event. Will give away prizes for inventions from kayakers, paddle boarders, etc. to remove debris from the mangrove roots and trees without stirring up the water and damaging the trees or roots. Cannot be propulsion or vacuum operated. He is trying to engage people in the concept for now. Said West Marine is sponsoring their project and the divers will collect debris, massage it and make it palatable for the public to view behind a plexi-glass display inside the West Marine store. Overall goal of 2-year

project – get rid of debris on the spoil islands and encourage people to clean up after themselves and collaborate with DEP and FWC to get the word out so people will take better care of our waterways and the islands.

B. FPAT Marketing Budget Overview – Anne Satterlee

Anne stated that the majority of the marketing that the board voted on in November will total about \$11,000 and will include the same advertisers that FPAT used last year. She stated that FPAT has an ad in the Birdwatcher's Digest, which will go into the Space Coast Birding Festival packets for approximately 1,000 attendees. Anne also described the radio advertisement on The Breeze radio station that ran during December. She explained that eight FPAT members participated by donating 'give aways' to accompany the ad and that Alan Hayes had already received one of the discount coupons back that he gave away. Libby stated that she was at the dentist in Stuart and heard the FPAT ad on the radio.

Ocean Village on South Beach has many residential renters who are coming in for the season. They will be putting together 100 welcome packages for their guests. Anne supplied FPAT discount cards to include in the packets. She encouraged everyone to be on the lookout for the code written on the discount cards or ask, and if there is no code, where the customer got the discount card so she could track where the discount card came from.

Party in the Park is coming up January 19. Billy Gibson will be volunteering to operate the booth during the 1st part of the event. Anne offered to send out a 'doodle' to recruit more volunteers for the event.

Anne stated that FPAT's Treasure Coast Almanac ad is out and passed around the double page ad. She also passed out copies of the St. Lucie County Visitor's Guide, with the FPAT ad on back cover.

Anne stated that we now have a computer and monitor for the Vistana and are waiting for the latest version of PowerPoint to put on the computer so Rosemary can deliver it and set it up at the Vistana.

Anne will present the marketing budget during the February meeting for a vote by the Board.

C. Tourism Presentation – Emily McHugh / Casauri Enterprises, LLC

Presented by Emily McHugh, instructor at IRSC, teaching "Introduction to Hospitality Tourism." Emily is also partner and owner of Casauri, Inc., creator of laptop bags, purses, electronics carrying cases, etc.

Emily and her sister Helena were born in England and grew up in Jamaica. Emily stated that tourism is part of her DNA and understands the importance of tourism for a country.

Travel and tourism is on the increase. People with money are traveling more than ever before. In 2011, more than 87 million people traveled to Florida; spending 60+ billion dollars. 67% of tourists in the United States are going to Orlando - the #1 travel destination in the U.S. 7% of all International travelers are coming to Florida. They come from many countries, including Latin America and China.

50 million+ tourism trips are made between Central and South Florida each year, literally right through our back yard. This is a great opportunity; we need to bring them here to Fort Pierce.

Statistics – for every 85 visitors that come to Florida, one job is created.

All of these statistics are from VisitFlorida.org and VisitOrlando.org.

Emily continued her presentation by stating that we should focus on our potential visitors and on shaping or reshaping their perception of Fort Pierce. This can be done by updating the FPAT website, creating an APP for the website, purchasing billboards for the interstate exits – all of these will reshape the traveler’s perception of Fort Pierce, which is currently just a place to stop and get gas and eat at the Interstate 95 and Turnpike exits.

Emily gave her class at IRSC an assignment to come up with a list of things that the City is lacking and ideas on what we need to grow tourism and improve our tourism efforts.

Following are some of the ideas collected from the students (Emily stated that many of these things we already know):

Infrastructure – need more downtown lodging; possibly an upscale hotel in downtown Fort Pierce. Consensus of the class was that we need something that is going to tap into the unique character of downtown; and not replicate a standard franchise-mainstream hotel. Also suggested Key West 2nd Street-Style Bed and Breakfasts.

Increase Tourism Downtown – Keep businesses open after 9pm to draw young people downtown. Currently most everything closes at 9pm.

Encourage Day Trip Activity – like FPAT tours. Consolidate the market. Always look at the metrics – the effectiveness of what we are doing and gauge it to see the benefits and whether or not it is working, and change accordingly.

Regional Tourism Development – Create integrated theme with St. Lucie County. Do not lose FPAT’s identity; but also have multi-level regional marketing efforts - on the State, County and Local level by unifying what we have in common. For example, she referred to the current Visit Florida magazine and the “Still Unspoiled” ad for St. Lucie County on page 95 and the “Discover Treasure” ad for Indian River County on page 77, versus the “Emerald Coast” ad – a 1-page ad that consolidates efforts of Ft. Walton Beach and Okaloosa Island – promoting both as the “Emerald Cost” destination.

Emily stated that she has researched what is going on throughout the State of Florida and how they are marketing themselves. She reviewed different ads, their layout and message. She encouraged everyone to go to the Visit Florida website and specifically the Florida Keys section where it breaks out each individual Key, and does not take away the identity of any individual destination, and, at the same time, promotes the Keys as a destination.

Get Proper Bang for Your Buck – Emily said that as we set big goals, we should set smaller goals and gauge their effectiveness as we work toward the big goal. She asked about our large and small goals.

Expert Execution – Emily asked if we just got someone to set up the FPAT website or did we get someone familiar and experienced with targeting the tourism and hospitality markets and the metrics that drive tourism to set up the site – someone who would follow best practices used by similar entities? Emily also said that websites could sometimes be trial and error exercises.

Evaluating Success – Emily suggested we objectively deconstruct what we do; evaluate everything we are doing and place a critical eye on all of our marketing efforts and see if we can do better; then adjust accordingly. She encouraged us to maximize the FPAT

marketing budget, to use the money we have and think about creating new income streams, maybe through affiliate programs.

Case Study – FPAT – Marketing Collateral – FPAT rack cards, ad in Almanac, St. Lucie County Travel Guide. Emily commented that the FPAT logo is beautiful and easy to understand.

Above the Fold – Emily said that on the FPAT website, everything that you see on the first screen, before scrolling is described as being 'above the fold'. Once you start scrolling, if anything important is below that fold, chances are it will not be seen, because either people forget to scroll down, or they do not like to. She stated that it is critical that everything you want to be seen is 'above the fold' on the home page. She also stated that we also want the 'calls to action' to be bold, clear and above the fold and we also need to have intuitive site navigation.

Recommendations – Focus on the user experience. Step back from the FPAT website and ask yourself, how would a visitor, who has never been to the site before find what they want to do. She referred to a 'call to action' then asked 'what is the first thing we want them to do when they visit the FPAT website?' She, along with some FPAT meeting attendees answered 'Book A Tour'. Emily then stated that there is nowhere on the site that says 'Book a Tour'.

Jon asked if these were just generic website suggestions and Emily explained that these are specific recommendations for the FPAT site, and that she had spent a lot of time reviewing the site. Anne explained that the site was set up with the understanding that after a year we would look at it and make changes, as needed.

Emily suggested that FPAT promote 'mobile marketing' more than anything in our advertisements, and make sure the site always contains current events. Emily said that the website should be APP-usable and we should promote the APP in our advertising.

Emily stated that FPAT should have an APP entitled 'Things to do in Fort Pierce' and use "Meet Up.Com" and FourSquare, which is free, along with our magazine ads to promote the APP.

Local Outreach Offerings – meet with local hotel managers, marketing directors, in Fort Pierce, Vero, PSL, so that they know what is going on in Fort Pierce. Invite them to come take a tour so they will have a great time and encourage their guests to visit Fort Pierce and take a tour. Designate someone to coordinate these activities as part of an ongoing activity.

First Impression – Emily said that as we syphon people off the Interstate and Turnpike, what is the first thing they see? She asked 'what is welcoming for them and encouraging them to come to Fort Pierce?' She suggested we possibly make partnerships with the Pilot or outlying hotels and put up rack cards and displays in their businesses.

Billboard Placement – Emily stated that it is not important to place a billboard 200 miles from here, but to strategically place the billboards where people will see them and be encouraged to visit Fort Pierce and upload the APP. She stated we need a relevant billboard program. She encouraged us to put some real thought in to it, before we do it.

Welcome Tourism Kits – Encouraged us to put rack cards in the "welcome packets" that people get when they move to this area.

Multi-Ambassador Program – Emily encouraged us to tap into the resources of IRSC and get students involved in tourism. Multi-lingual students may be available to volunteer as

tour guides. Offer the students tour discounts; let them bring a friend for the tour, instead of paying them for their services.

Make A Friend on the Treasure Coast – Emily suggested we find ways to integrate the traveler with the people of Fort Pierce, so they will build relationships. She stated that in Jamaica, people come to island, sign up with the Travel Bureau, then go have dinner in someone’s home, and spend time with private citizens.

Chop asked how we could find out about bilingual students at IRSC. Emily told him she would provide that information for him and also stated that in an emergency, she speaks French and could help with translation.

Emily closed by saying that we know what Fort Pierce has to offer, and other people do not. She encouraged everyone to have fun with the Viva 500 coming up. She made several suggestions of festivals and activities we could incorporate into our regular tour offerings.

Final Suggestions – Positive PR; Aggressive micro-marketing outreach; Work with people who can bring this together; keep up with technology.

Jon thanked Emily for coming and for the presentation. He said that this is the type of thing we need to do at least once a year to analyze ourselves, and stated that we need constructive criticism so we can continually improve our efforts.

Chop suggested that we really look at the billboard ideas to see what we can do to get something going. He also talked about FPAT having some kind of program in the future to coordinate volunteers. He said he is very fortunate that he has volunteers who help him on his boat tours.

Emily stated that transportation could be a factor and suggested that we might use the Armadillo to pick up people at their hotels from Vero or Stuart and transport them to Fort Pierce for FPAT tours. She also stated that the number one hotel right now is in Africa on game reserves.

IV. BOARD COMMENTS

Mike Adams questioned how many members are not renewing. Libby stated that there are only a few who are not, and we have many new members. Jon explained the types of FPAT memberships. Libby stated she would send out membership lists when she emails this month’s minutes and the Agenda for the February meeting.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were received.

VI. STAFF COMMENTS

No staff comments were received.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Don Voss made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michael Adams seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.