



Department of Urban Redevelopment

Fort Pierce Authentic Tours - Advisory Board Meeting

February 7, 2013

Minutes

Board Members Present: Charlotte Bireley, Mark Harrison, Chop Lege, Donald Voss, Jann Widmayer

Board Members Absent: Excused: Cristin Ryan; Unexcused: Michael Adams, Clive Daem, Rosemary Knight

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

FPAT Members and Visitors: Quiche Fitzpatrick, Lynda Raby, Bobbie Deemer, Kerry Firth, Adam Pozniak, Linda Sneed, Richard Fitzpatrick, Alan Hayes, Michael Stark

Chop Legé called the FPAT Advisory Board meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Afterwards, Libby Woodruff called roll. Mr. Legé asked for approval of the minutes from the November 1, 2012 and January 3, 2013 Advisory Board meetings. There being no changes to the minutes, **motion was made by Don Voss and seconded by Mark Harrison that the minutes from the November 1, 2012 and January 3, 2013 meetings be accepted; motion carried.**

I. FINANCIAL REPORT

Jon Ward presented a copy of the financial statement as of January 31, 2013 to each Board member. The financial report shows total funds available as \$225,603.08. **Motion was made by Don Voss to accept the financial report; seconded by Chop Lege; motion carried.**

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Membership Report – Libby Woodruff

Libby stated that no new memberships were received during the month of January and presented a current member list to the Board.

B. FPAT Marketing Overview – Anne Satterlee

Anne Satterlee stated that since there was not a quorum at last month's Board meeting, she waited until today's meeting to present the FPAT marketing budget for 2013. Anne explained that this budget covers the marketing items that were approved by the Board in November 2012, which is also the same marketing program that FPAT participated in last year. She also stated that she was requesting the Board's approval for 2013 marketing expenses totaling \$11,215.

Mark Harrison made the motion to accept the 2013 marketing budget; seconded by Don Voss; motion carried.

Chop asked if Federico is still working on the website. Anne explained that Federico assists when necessary, but she primarily makes changes, as needed. Anne stated that anyone wanting changes to their info, including adding pictures, could email them to her.

C. Selvitz Road Property – Chop Lege’

Chop stated that he always tells everyone how beautiful it is out there. Jon displayed photos of the property on a PowerPoint and explained that the property is a result of St. Lucie County’s Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) project. He also explained that this property, referred to as “The Becker Property” is one of the County’s ESL lands and stated that the County is interested in collaborating with FPAT to develop the site. Chop stated that the property has an oxbow and is a little over 11 acres.

Jon stated that the vision is to develop the house as a ‘nature center’ that FPAT could use as headquarters and the County would use it as a headquarters for programming their environmentally sensitive lands. He explained that it could be a destination for bicycle tourists and we might think about putting up platforms for tent camping. He described how the back of the house overlooks the river and how the property is heavily wooded. Jon also explained that the house is on a rise on the fork of the river and said that the County has talked about tying the location to the environmental center that is about two miles up the river and developing an eco-lodge of sorts there as well.

Jon stated that FPAT could use this as a departure point for electric motor tour boats and said that Lisa’s Kayaks is currently using an area across the road as a canoe launch. He explained that there are lots of opportunities to make this the ‘eco check-in place’ for eco or nature tourists and explained that this would be a great place for visitors to come to pick up all of their brochures and information; just kind of a “central meeting place.” He also stated that tourism providers could start tours from this site, like horseback riding, walking tours and stated that there are multitudes of birds and that flora and fauna are abundant.

Chop stated that the property is located where the old river bends, right across the street from the 100-acre Strange Preserve, which is also owned by the County. Chop thanked Dyana Voss for her volunteer work on developing the trails at the Strange Preserve and stated that he has walked around it several times. He described the birds and wildlife tracks as being abundant and said that there is a fresh water marsh for ducks, etc.

Chop said if we tie the Strange Preserve in with these 11-acres and use this site for ‘feeding, restrooms, etc.’ it would be a great fit. Chop said he believes this is a great opportunity, a golden opportunity for us, just starting out here, to have our own little place or niche, where we can branch out and grow in to. He stated that he would be glad to set a time to go with the other Board members out to the site to look around.

Don Voss stated that he has been out there and asked what we can do to help with this. Jon stated that, as with all things with government, things seem to take longer. Jon explained that they are trying to figure out how to make the property work for everyone. He explained that the property was purchased using Florida Forever and Florida Community Trust grant funds, so, as with any grant award, there are stipulations, criteria and requirements as to the acceptable uses for the property. He explained that FPAT could help them meet some of these requirements and said that the County has a little bit of money and the City has a little bit of money, so now they have to figure out how this can be arranged so it can be operated in an intelligent fashion. Jon also said that the site will have to be manned part time, which will be a volunteer situation, so, if FPAT commits to this project as an organization, then FPAT will have to be accountable for showing up and

having the place open. He stated that the site could be used as a headquarters for our tour operators or a pickup and drop off place for tours.

Jon stated that this coming Monday he would be making a presentation to the City Commission to be sure they support this and then we will talk with the County. He stated that we already have a verbal commitment from the County.

Jon stated that this is not a park; it is a preserve, so we need to find an intelligent way to go forward with this project and get people out there, using the property. He also stated that yes, this is complicated, and it will be complicated, until we figure out what will work.

Dyana Voss stated that she has been working on the trails and has helped connect the Strange Preserve to Gordon Road and to add biking to the existing kayaking and backpacking activities that were previously available.

Jon stated that he is looking for an opportunity for the community to get involved; potentially the site could be rented for weddings, reunions, conferences, parties, etc. However, money made from renting the facility would have to go back into the facility. Not to say that tourism providers would have to pay to use it, this has not been figured out, but he believes tour providers would conduct their business the same way they do now and just use the site for a drop off and pick up point.

Jon stated that there is currently not a dock at the site but there are plans to construct one, and potentially a canoe launch.

Chop stated that FPAT voted in support of the project at one point and he just wants to keep it out there to keep the interest up. Mark Harrison stated that he has told Commissioner Dzadovsky that he is in favor of the project. Jon stated that there are five County Commissioners so all five of them need to at least be aware of it, because we would need approval of at least three to pass it. He explained that Commissioner Dzadovsky kind of spear-headed this. Mark, Don and Chop suggested that they approach all the County Commissioners to let them know of FPAT's support for the project.

Jon explained that his presentation on the project this Monday with the City Commissioners would not be at a formal City Commission meeting, but would happen at the bi-monthly Monday morning conference, where issues are discussed in an informal setting. He said he would present this to the Commission during the Monday morning meeting then present it as an agenda item later on to get the Commission's formal approval.

Chop suggested again that the FPAT Board set a date to go out and look at the property. Jon reminded the Board that they have to be mindful of the Sunshine Law. Jon recommended that Board members go individually and see the site for themselves.

Jon invited anyone who wants to come by this Monday and sit in on the informal discussion with the City Commissioners, that it will be held in this same meeting room where we are meeting today, beginning at 8:30 in the morning.

D. Review of Tourism Presentation from January Meeting – Chop Lege'

Chop stated that he received some good news that new signage would be coming and asked how it is coming along. Anne stated that everything is all good and that it would be coming soon.

Chop stated that Jon and he met with John Wilkes who suggested FPAT use one of their silver boxes at the Marina to publicize the program. Chop asked how everyone felt about this. Libby suggested an 11x17-size poster filled with the FPAT logo, photos and website information. Chop asked if the Board wanted to go forward with this and if everyone agrees. Don stated that he agrees. No motion to approve or vote was taken.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

No "New Business" was listed on the Agenda.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

Don Voss announced that the Oyster Festival will be April 6 and he will be the official "Oyster" again this year. Don stated that they would have A/C ticket booths and more security this year. He said they are expecting at least a 30% increase in attendance. Don encouraged everyone who wanted to volunteer to contact April Price. Libby stated that anyone wanting April's contact info should email her and she would send it to them.

Chop complemented Don for dressing up as the Oyster.

Charlotte reminded everyone about the Met's Lucky Stamp promotion and stated that she will need 16 FPAT gift certificates or give-aways for the promotion.

The Lucky Stamp promotion works like this: During each of the Mets 16 home games, announcers instruct attendees to look on page 26 of their programs. Attendees with the "Lucky Stamp" on the page receive prizes. She stated that Libby would be sending out an email to remind everyone.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Richard Fitzpatrick from the Black Triad Entertainment Group stated that they are moving forward with the "Heart of the Champion" movie project and that on April 19 there would be a benefit concert at the Sunrise Theatre. The concert will feature the performers from the soundtrack for the movie, along with the Avenue D Choir.

Richard requested a letter endorsing the project from FPAT, similar to the one he received from the Police Athletic League, to show that he has community support for the project.

Richard introduced Linda Sneed, a supporter of the project and owner of Port St. Lucie Moving and Storage. The website for the project is www.heartofachampionmovie.net.

Linda Sneed stated that she will be joining FPAT and explained that many people she meets do not know where Fort Pierce is and expects this movie to highlight Fort Pierce and bring tourism to the City.

Chop asked everyone seated in the room to introduce themselves, and they did.

Lynda Raby stated that she would be opening a gift shop and shell shop on the island. She stated that she is 100% behind FPAT's ecotourism efforts and her store will reflect that. She stated that she wants to be an asset to the community.

Bobbie Deemer with Heathcote said they have the largest tropical bonsai exhibit in North America. Chop encouraged everyone to drop by and visit.

Kerry Firth stated that after last month's presentation when Emily McHough mentioned we should consider billboards, she was coming into Fort Pierce from the I-95/Turnpike area and just had to say that Emily is right. She stated that it is awful out there and just does not spell out what we have to offer. Chop agreed and asked Jon where we are with getting anything done on billboards. Kerry stated that a billboard out there is a great idea.

Jon asked if everyone thinks it is a good idea. Everyone said yes. Jon stated that he would look in to it, with a goal to get the message "this is not us - we are over here" out to everyone.

Kerry Firth volunteered her artist to create a design for the billboard.

Jon said that in between now and the next meeting, they will do some homework to see what the pricing, etc. is for billboards out there.

Charlotte stated that the County owns the billboard that the Sunrise Theatre uses and suggested that FPAT use the billboard free of charge when the Sunrise is not in season. She

stated that the Sunrise advertisement could be taken down and re-used and that the County would pay for the production of the billboard for FPAT.

Adam Pozniak stated that he wants to be part of the bigger picture and explained that he cannot take but six tourists at a time on his boat. He stated that he refers his customers to other FPAT members and is hopeful that everyone else would do the same for him.

Linda Sneed stated that she is on US 1 in Fort Pierce and also has Treasures Used Furniture and helps people transition into assisted living. She is located north of Arrigo Dodge.

Dyana Voss stated that she is really glad that we are going to promote at the Vistana, and asked why FPAT does not do the same thing in our own back yard at Ocean Village? Jon stated that we could do this. Chop stated that he was going to do it and dropped the ball. He said he would be glad to go to visit Ocean Village and will have an answer for the Board at the next meeting. Libby encouraged Chop to find out if Ocean Village could use a PC and PowerPoint and we will try to get one for them. Anne stated that they brought 200 FPAT discount cards and flyers to Ocean Village a while back. Chop stated that he would get to work and find out what we need to do.

Dyana stated that the way to get things going is to give away a free ride; give out one free tour a week, so it would not be a big burden on any individual tour provider. Chop stated that he is all for that.

Billy Gibson stated that four outfitting companies in Florida are now using Motorized Kayaks as part of their tours. He stated that they were at the Florida Kayakers Association last week and everyone was just amazed at what they are doing. He said he is very glad to be part of FPAT and if anyone needs anything done, to call him, give him a little notice and he will help all he can. He encouraged everyone to come take a tour; a night tour and said he believes they are the only people doing this, on this scale. He said that they construct the electric motors and will be advertising in Coastal Angler magazine this March. He encouraged everyone to take the tour and stated that the business gets insane reviews. He explained that they cater to people with disabilities and the elderly and said their tours are for small groups to maintain an individual special experience. He described their tours as sometimes 'totally disappearing' for two hours and said they offer the opportunity to experience real Florida that people never get to see unless they are on a kayak.

Chop thanked Billy for helping FPAT by operating the booths at our events.

X. STAFF COMENTS

Jon stated that FPAT should consider changing their monthly meeting schedule to bi-monthly, quarterly, or just keep it as it is now. Charlotte suggested bi-monthly meetings, unless there is a need for a special meeting. Don said he was good with bi-monthly. Chop agreed.

Don asked when we would be looking at the grant opportunity. Jon stated that it would be released in March or April. Jann Widmayer suggested we meet again in March, and then go to a bi-monthly meeting schedule; this would leave FPAT not meeting in December. Jon said we would look at the schedule more at the next meeting to see which months the meetings would fall on if FPAT goes to a bi-monthly meeting schedule and stated that FPAT would meet in March, and vote on rescheduling the meetings to bi-monthly.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Don Voss made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Charlotte Bireley seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.