

West Volusia Tourism Advertising Authority
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 17, 2024

Present: Bryn Adams, Jen Armstrong, Dave Wilson, Nicole Thims, Sue Elliott

Absent: Sara Patel, Karen Haught

Staff: Georgia Carter Turner, Executive Director; David Swanberg, Marketing Coordinator; Kristine Spence, Marketing Manager

Also Present: Laura Coleman, Volusia County Assistant County Attorney; Brenda Sidoti, Jamie Browder, Greg Otte with Benedict Advertising; Jon Hansen, Stetson University Athletics

Call to Order: Ms. Adams called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Call for Public Participation: Ms. Turner welcomed Jon Hansen, Assistant Athletic Director of Sponsorship and Community Outreach with Stetson University.

March 2024 Board Minutes: Ms. Armstrong motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Ms. Elliott, and approved unanimously.

March 2024 Financials: Ms. Turner gave the financial report in Treasurer Patel's absence. Mr. Wilson motioned to approve as presented, seconded by Ms. Armstrong, and approved unanimously.

Benedict Advertising & Marketing Report

During the March 2024 update, Ms. Browder provided information on ad performance, visitor and user behavior and locations, and public relations. She mentioned that the Google Search & Display ad campaigns had a total of 444,615 impressions and 13,141 clicks, with an average cost per click of \$1.23 and a 2.66% click-through rate. The average view rate for video ads was 62.9%. The website had 18,565 users, with the most visited pages being the calendar of events, the home page, attractions, and CoolCraft Trail. 80.5% of visitors used mobile devices, and the top ten visitor locations included Atlanta, New York, and areas in Connecticut (which has been targeted because of the Avelo flight to New Haven).

Ms. Browder also shared insights on Facebook and Pinterest. The Facebook lead generation for newsletter sign-ups was 416, and the newsletter had an open rate of 28.87%, which was almost 10% higher than the industry average. Public Relations coverage included articles about springs, fishing in the St. Johns River, and the Vote for DeLand USA Today Best10 contest.

Executive Director's Report March-April 2024

Ms. Turner presented an overview of recent events, meetings, and other activities:

Ms. Turner announced the big news that the Stetson Mansion has been sold to Bill and Frank Jennings and their wives. Past owner Michael Solari will work with them until the end of the year to promote the Christmas Spectacular which will add a café. The couples will have more weddings and events, as well as historic tours February through April.

EVENTS: Motorcade for the Stetson men's basketball team on their way to NCAA tournament; "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" at Athens; Taste of Volusia at the Fairgrounds; DeLand Chamber "Foodie Fest" at Office Octane; Nature Nook unveiling (Ray Johnson photos) at Stetson; DeLand Craft Beer Festival; Spring Frolic at Barberville Pioneer Settlement; Florida Wildlife Corridor Photography exhibit grand opening at Lyonia; Meet & Greet with Ricky Ray, new Athletic Director at Stetson University; Classical Jukebox concert by the Volusia Community Arts Symphony; Pat & Ed Northey 5K River Run.

MEETINGS: MSDA Board, Promotions, Tropical Nights meetings; FPRA at DBIA; planned "Bizability" event with Volusia Business Resource at the Center at Deltona in June; ROL Board and general meetings; Deltona City Commission re: sponsorship of Love Your Heart 5K: master calendar meeting at Stetson University; Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway web site review and quarterly meeting; new County Economic Development Director Lou Paris; Mighty River Recovery board meeting; Destinations FL Marketing Summit in Clearwater; two Legislative Forums with Hispanic Chamber and Daytona Beach Chamber; spoke to Local Art Agencies at Atlantic Center for the Arts; Michael Ryan, PIO at Volusia County; OFA re: June event at Athens; West Volusia Historical Society Board Meetings and presentation on historical homes; Fall Festival of the Arts Board meeting.

TRAVEL: Outdoor Expo in Tampa; Space Coast Boomer Festival.

OTHER: Ms. Turner participated in a welcome video being produced by Sailforth for Sunrail and is helping Sunrail by planning a joint "Lunch & Learn" with MainStreet DeLand Association to be held on May 14 at Venue 142 in DeLand. David Martin from Fox 35-Good Day Orlando filmed a segment at Gobbler's Lodge Archery attraction in Osteen.

General Discussion:

Mr. Wilson talked about Salted Goat, a new farm-to-table restaurant in DeBary. He also made announcements that the Elusive Grape will be opening another location called the Chapel Tap in Northwest Square, and the Southeast Building Conference will be in Orlando, July 24-25 and is worth attending for those who have an interest in real estate. Mr. Wilson is also participating in a fundraiser on behalf of the Karen Lyon Head of School Fund called "A Classic for Karen" where he has donated a restored 1987 Ford Mustang Convertible to be auctioned off on May 20 at The Elusive Grape.

Ms. Elliott announced the annual conference for the Florida Grape Growers Association will be held at Venue 142 on January 16-17, 2025. There will be a Poker Run event on that Saturday night to entice participants to stay longer and to include the local community. Ms. Elliott also mentioned that Elliott Vineyards has been collaborating with Greenlund's Blueberry U-Pick and Farm in Pierson.

Ms. Thims mentioned that the new Culver's restaurant next to the Hampton Inn & Suites DeLand hopes to open in August 2024.

Ms. Adams shared information about The Great Loop Challenge. Local angler Red Flowers is attempting to set a world record for the fastest completion of the Great Loop. The goal is to raise \$1,000,000 in donations to support the fight against childhood cancer. The journey will begin and end in DeLand, starting from Lake Beresford.

Adjourn: With no further business; Mr. Wilson motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Armstrong. The motion passed unanimously at 10:03 a.m.