

AUGUST 24, 2000 – SPECIAL WORKSHOP

The Walton County Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a special workshop on Thursday, August 24, 2000 at 10:30 A.M. at the Emergency Operations Center to discuss the possibility of non-profit status for the Tourist Development Council (TDC).

The following Board members were present: Chairman Van ness R. Butler, Jr., Vice-Chairman Randall Infinger, Commissioner Joel Paul, Jr., Commissioner Herman Walker, and Commissioner Gene Ryan. Ms. Shirl Williams, Administrative Supervisor, Attorney George R. Miller, and Mr. Dan Bodiford, Clerk of Courts, were also present.

The following council members were present from TDC: Doug Chism, Chairman, Ken Gifford, Joann Saucier, Don McQuade, Pat Potter, Mike Stange, Maurice Gilbert and Lana Barley, Director of Administration for TDC. Mr. Joe Lathrop, OCG Consultants, was also present.

Chairman Butler called the meeting to order.

Ms. Williams requested the Commissioners set an earlier date to hold a public hearing regarding the purchase of the Warren Building. The Commissioners agreed on a date of October 2, 2000, 6:00 P.M., at the Walton County Courthouse.

Mr. Doug Chism, TDC Council member, introduced Mr. Joe Lathrop to the Commissioners and stated that Mr. Lathrop has performed a study regarding the TDC's request for reorganization.

Mr. Lathrop presented a presentation highlighting the following concerns: the optimal structure for TDC, and the timing and objective of analysis. Mr. Lathrop informed the Board of the process he used in order to reach his recommendation. He also

spoke about dimensions of successful destination of tourists and product development and marketing. Mr. Lathrop addressed the issue of Florida Statute limiting resort tax usage.

Mr. Lathrop reviewed the following characteristics of a Destination Marketing Organization: adequate resource; clearly defined role; produces a high ratio for the community; maintains efficient and effective staff; functions as a business; responsible to the market demand; knows customers; partnership and receives support of county and industry leadership. He also stated that the South Walton TDC operates above average when compared to those characteristics. TDC is lacking in the area of functioning as a business, which hinders the marketing aspects.

Possible methods for improvements and the benefits were reviewed. Mr. Lathrop stated that allowing the TDC to operate independently would possibly reduce the county's role but increase the benefits to the community. He also presented the action that needs to be taken next, such as the appointment of a five-member task force to draft a contract and create a timeline of transition. Mr. Lathrop stated that he recommended a 3-year contract renewable each year.

Mr. Lathrop completed his presentation and opened the floor for discussion. Concerns were raised regarding future growth and a possible lack of infrastructure to support additional visitors. Additional concerns were raised regarding TDC being given liberty to freely spend funds. Mr. Gifford stated that TDC wants to accomplish their job in the best possible manner without delays and does not want the county to have to oversee the everyday operations. Commissioner Ryan agreed.

Ms. Barley responded to questioning by stating that on occasion, opportunities are missed due to county policy or the time frame in which checks can be cut for payment. The Commissioners stated that certain procedures could be waived in order to expedite matters for TDC.

Mr. Gifford asked the Commissioners to allow TDC to proceed with appointing a committee consisting of Kris Titus, Executive Director of the TDC; Attorney Miller; Attorney Mary Kramer, representing TDC; one TDC board member and one Commissioner in order to draft a contract. Commissioner Paul suggested for Attorney Jonathan Walker serve on the committee in place of Attorney Miller due to Mr. Miller's heavy workload, along with Commissioner Walker.

The Commissioners accepted Mr. Paul's recommendation and approved for TDC to move forward with drafting a contract with the assistance of Mr. Joe Lathrop.

Motion by Commissioner Paul, second by Commissioner Infinger to enter into special session. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Ryan Aye, Infinger Aye, Butler Aye, Walker Aye, Paul Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Paul, second by Commissioner Infinger to pre-approve for TDC to extend the contract with Mr. Joe Lathrop, OCG Consulting, not to exceed \$5,000.00, for the purpose of assisting with the contract preparation. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Ryan Aye, Infinger Aye, Butler Aye, Walker Aye, Paul Aye.

Motion by Commissioner Infinger, second by Commissioner Paul to close the special session and adjourn. Ayes 5, Nays 0. Ryan Aye, Infinger Aye, Butler Aye, Walker Aye, Paul Aye.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12 O'clock noon.

BCC/dc

APPROVED: _____
Van Ness R. Butler, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST: _____
Dan Bodiford, Clerk