

The logo for Orlando North Seminole County features the word "ORLANDO" in blue, "NORTH" in blue, and "SEMINOLE COUNTY" in green. A green triangle points upwards from the letter "O" in "NORTH".

# ORLANDO NORTH SEMINOLE COUNTY

Tourist Development Council meeting  
May 16, 2019

**In Attendance:**

Chairman George Speake  
Commissioner Patrick Austin  
Frank Cirrincione  
Don Dougherty  
Commissioner Amy Lockhart  
Commissioner Sarah Reece  
Bruce Skwarlo  
Brenda Urias  
Mary Sue Weinaug

**Excused Absence:** None

***A quorum was met***

**Meeting began at 3:00 pm**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Introductions**

**Approval of March 2019 TDC Minutes**

**Motion:** Commissioner Patrick Austin

**Second:** Commissioner Sarah Reece

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens Grant Presentation**

***Dino Ferri***

***Julia Krall***

***Stephanie Williams***

**Economic Impact:**

- 205,000 total visitors to Zoo through April 2019
- \$4.5 million dollars in economic impact for Seminole County
- Online ticket sales began July 2018

**Spending Breakdown for Proposed Grant:**

- 47% facilities improvement
- 25% marketing
- 17% boardwalk replacement
- 7% guest services
- 4% habitats

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* The boardwalks are ongoing maintenance; how much of the boardwalks are yet to be completed?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* FY19/20 should be the last of the boardwalk work for a few years.

**Zoo Marketing Activities**

- Launched online ticket sales
  - 76,000 users to website with 31% outside of Florida, 5% outside of US
  - Allows for improved tracking and data metrics analysis
- Event promotions
  - Hosting Chinese Lantern Festival: November 6, 2019 - January 5, 2020
    - Select evenings with special ticketing/pricing
    - Marketing to key drive markets and social media, print, e-blasts, media outlets

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Is this a launching of the lanterns?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri & Stephanie Williams:* No, they are hand-made paper designs specific to your site and on the habitats, like a light display.

**Question:** *Commissioner Reece:* Are these later hours?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* Yes, this will be an after-hours event, 6pm-10pm, Wednesday - Sunday. It is based off the holiday light displays but will focus on the environment with animals

**Question:** *Brenda Urias:* What percentage of room nights will be out-of-towners?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* What we've seen from other zoos that did this (Cleveland), visitors will typically drive two hours, but we don't have numbers from who may have stayed. We anticipate a large restaurant impact.

**Question:** *Sheryl Emmett-Vivo Tours:* Will you have animals on display?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* There will be access to the animals, but the animals may not be as visible. Messaging and marketing will address this to manage event expectations.

**Question:** *Commissioner Reece:* Will there be separate ticket pricing?

**Answer:** *Julia Krall:* yes

**Question:** *Brenda Urias:* Is this one event or several?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* This is not a one night event. It runs November – January, Wednesday – Sunday nights.

**Question:** *Frank Cirrincione:* Since the cost is on the company, will the sales receipts go to the zoo or the promoter?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* A percentage will go to the zoo and a percentage will go to the company. The company will not receive any percentage of monies for normal zoo hours, only that which occurs during the event times.

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Will the zoo be open normal hours during this event?

**Answer:** yes

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* I know we have a five year plan in place, but what will take the place of the boardwalk in the next year for replacement?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* Habitat maintenance/repairs/upgrades.

**Question:** *Bruce Skwarlo:* Now that you have the aerial course, how will you maintain that in the future? Where do you get the money to maintain the aerial course?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* It will pay for itself. So far the monthly revenue is covering those costs. TDT dollars are not spent on the aerial course (except for marketing).

**Part 2 of question:** Should marketing increase to support the course since it is now part of the Zoo?

**Answer:** *Julia Krall:* Marketing for the aerial course is different from the marketing plan for the Zoo, so this is still a work in progress.

**Question:** *Frank Cirrincione:* Does the excess cash flow go into a general fund or a specific fund for the aerial course?

**Answer:** *Dino Ferri:* Currently, it is going into a general fund and is earmarked for aerial course maintenance.

### **Zoo Guest Engagement Services**

- Performance Assessment and Visitor Satisfaction Data Collection Program
  - Outdoor kiosk for data collection
  - Customized kiosk-based survey using SnapSurveys
  - Data analysis in monthly, quarterly, and annual reports

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Are online sales capturing emails?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* Yes, which we use to send out surveys.

**Question:** *Bruce Skwarlo:* Is this software and hardware or an outside vendor?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* There is one company builds the kiosk and one that builds the software and analytics and they partner together, so the cost that you see is related to the kiosk, the software, and the analytics, reports.

**Question:** *Bruce Skwarlo:* Will you own the kiosk?

**Answer:** *Stephanie Williams:* Yes, we will own it and then we can flip it at some point to add/run video or change the format of what is shown.

**Question:** *(multiple asks):* Is this a voluntary survey for visitors to do on their way out?

**Question:** **Commissioner Sarah Reece:** Are there incentives?

**Answer:** Stephanie Williams: Yes, the survey is voluntary, but most people do them especially if there are added incentives. However this group has found that most people want to give their input and are willing to do a survey when they leave.

**Question:** Bruce Skwarlo: The contract is \$16,000 which is a lot of money. Is that for the annual cost of the kiosk for surveys and start-up for three years?

**Answer:** Stephanie Williams: The cost includes the start-up fees, the kiosk, and surveys for three years.

**Question:** Commissioner Amy Lockhart: Does the zoo have a Board of Directors

**Answer:** Yes

**Question:** Commissioner Amy Lockhart: So your Board 'gets into the weeds' and asks you these kinds of detailed questions? You are accountable to a Board? And we are re-vetting what has already been vetted?

**Answer:** Dino Ferri: Yes, although some of the day-to-day stuff, no, but the contracts, yes the Zoo Board reviews/vets.

**Answer:** Brenda Urias: There are also committees such as the marketing committee, financial committee, events committee, and facilities.

**Question:** Bruce Skwarlo: Will data reflect if people are staying at a hotel?

**Answer:** Julia Krall: This tool will be able to assist with collecting this data, yes.

### Zoo Marketing

- Website maintenance
- Rack Card printing and distribution
- Contractual advertising
- Print and digital advertising

**Question:** Frank Cirrincione: Please provide clarification re. the 25% of total TDT revenue spent on marketing - your marketing is \$87,000 and \$130,000 comes out of general fund. Does zoo spend additional money?

**Answer:** Yes, we spend more than TDT grant dollars on marketing.

**Question:** Why are 25% of TDT funds spent on advertising if you are exceeding that; why is it limited?

**Answer:** Dino Ferri: It was a set price.

**Answer:** Brenda Urias: Marketing dollars based on a radius for TDT money in your area.

**Question:** Frank Cirrincione: Is 75 miles really a valued parameter of how you spend your advertising dollars?

**Answer:** Paul Chipok (County Attorney): The TDT grant monies awarded to the Zoo (in referencing State Statutes) are not restricted in just promotional uses and can be used for maintenance, construction, operations, and promotions. According to the statute, Zoos that receive TDT funds do not have a direct promotional requirement. TDC is giving the zoo the money and it can be spent on a variety of things, including operations.

**Clarification from Frank Cirrincione:** So, it doesn't matter if the Zoo is marketing outside the 75 mile parameter because the funding can be spent on just about anything the Zoo would like to spend it on?

**Answer:** Paul Chipok: The County agrees with that statement. However, historically, the Zoo has spent about 25% of the monies awarded on marketing; that has been the standard.

**FY2019/20 Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens Grant Request: \$390,500**

**Motion:** Commissioner Sarah Reece

**Second:** Brenda Urias

**Vote:** Unanimous

**Paradise Update**

***Danielle Ackerman***

***MJ Kolassa***

- Spring/Summer campaign began in April 2019
- Paradise showcased digital banners that are being utilized in the campaign
- Click through rate (CTR) was .08% with 1700 visits and 1.2 impressions
- Full campaign reports will be presented at July TDC meeting
- In process of kicking off 2020 Marketing Plan
- Updating sports website

**Public Relations**

- Press releases/mass pitches
- Reader's Digest "Nicest Places in Seminole County" survey; promoted on TV station websites

**Evok Update**

***Lisa Mohle***

- Annual Social Media Report for Do Orlando North and Play Orlando North
  - Meeting all benchmark goals except for Twitter engagements – working on solutions to improve that goal without changing the frequency of posts

**Question:** *Brenda Urias:* How many of the followers are outside Seminole county?

**Answer:** *Lisa Mohle:* We will get that information to the TDC

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Are contract goals set up by the team?

**Answer:** *Gui Cunha:* The goals were created by the tourism staff during the bid process. We used a formula based on the social media numbers (average) from the three years prior to the contract renewal. This was done for most marketing metrics (social, website, etc)

- Highlighted performance numbers from all platforms
- Visit Florida travel chats resulted in engagement spikes
- Four promotions throughout the year

*Play Orlando North:*

- CTR 8%
- Facebook page ad to increase reach and engagements: \$542
- Twitter: \$560
- Instagram: \$419

## Tourism Update

### *Gui Cunha*

- Fully staffed tourism office: Welcome Karen Aplin, Marketing Coordinator, and Kirsten Carr, Intern
- Engaging Marketing Committee to begin five year plan discussion, as well as a grants program
- Attended FADMO (Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations)
- Ad buy with the Jacksonville Jaguars media guide
- Discussing digital ad buy with Telemundo for Women's FIFA World Cup and Copa America
- Working with Career Source on recruiting more labor for hospitality during the mid and high seasons
- Raw Travel will air episode on WESH TV, Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. Buster's Bistro is hosting a Watch Party for this episode

**Question:** *Commissioner Reece:* Have we ever been on the Spectrum road trip channel?

**Answer:** *Brenda Urias:* Yes, we have been.

## Occupancy

- Regionally and state-wide Feb and March are down, but the average daily rate (ADR) is above \$115
- Weekday vs. Weekend: a large portion from group sales. The fear is a drop in ADR. Currently there is a \$2 difference, which is minor
- YTD: January 1, 2019 through April 30, 2019: 87.4% occupancy – very strong

**Question:** *Don Dougherty:* January and February were high months for hotels, therefore ADR should have gone up.

**Answer:** *Gui Cunha:* I received these numbers from the STR report, and will look into and get back to you, but we did have a dip in January.

## Legislative Update

### *Brandy Hastings-Visit Florida*

- Visit Florida will continue to exist until at least June 2020
- Record first quarter (January - March) with approximately 36 million visitors to Florida. These are visitors outside of Florida who stay at least one night
- Hired a new Chief Marketing Officer, Gerardo Llanes
- Visit FL has been reauthorized for \$50 million a decrease from the current fiscal year budget of \$76 million. Everything will be effected with the decrease in dollars allocated to promote tourism
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**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Visit Florida doesn't have a lot of time to justify the loss before you have to go back up to Tallahassee and defend numbers. How are you going to show a possible drop tourism as a result of the drop in the budget?

**Answer:** *Brandy Hastings:* The numbers may not reflect anything for 1-2 years and it will be a challenge to show that decrease in visitors. We will be able to show what we can't provide to the public and to our partners as a result of the decrease.

**Question:** *Chairman Speake:* Do you do surveys? Research?

**Answer:** *Brandy Hastings:* Yes, however our research department will be reduced.

Tricia Johnson commented there was a Seminole County delegation recap meeting, and all four of our state delegates are supportive of Visit Florida.

### **Legislative Update**

#### ***Rico Pasamba-CFHLA (Central Florida Housing and Lodging Association)***

- Human Trafficking Bill liability clause passed. Hotels have to implement training to employees and submit by 2021
- Lost Property legislation allows zoos and theme parks to donate lost property found on establishments to a non-profit after 30 days
- Restrictions on employers and how they schedule employees did not pass the House
- Bill allowing counties, like Orange County, to have multiple TDC's within the county did not pass
- Bill allowing TDT funds for entertainment and film incentives did not pass
- Sudosky Fund is a trust fund created by the State for every development and a portion goes back to state for affordable housing. The money is being diverted to other 'pet projects' versus the general fund

### **Sports Update**

#### ***Danny Trosset***

- Fiscal Year Actuals for 2017/2018: Sports Complex
  - Events: 146                      Room Nights: 35,100                      Eco. Impact: \$53.89 million
- Fiscal Year Projections 2018/2019: Sports Complex and All Other Venues
  - Events: 106                      Room Nights: 41,100                      Eco. Impact: \$48.2 million

Next TDC meeting actuals through May 2019 will be presented.

#### ***Returning Events:***

- Field Hockey
- Coaches Association Event
- New Lacrosse Event in November 2019

#### ***Upcoming Events:***

- UAA (University Athletic Association) Men's & Women's Tennis Championship
- FHSAA (Florida High School Athletic Association)
- Junior college State Championships
- Florida Rush Champions Cup
- NCAA DII Tennis Championships
- Soldiers Creek will be hosting Division I College Softball over three weeks in March 2020. Hosting about 50 teams and goal of 3,700 room nights
- Perfect Game National – Six events hosting in June and July. 70% outside of Florida

**Question:** *Brenda Urias:* What percent are we filling space wise?

**Answer:** *Danny Trosset:* Currently, we have scheduled about 50 events. We hosted 62 last year so we are not at capacity. Now that we are in year three, the sports team is focused on quality rather than quantity.

**Question:** *Bruce Skwarlo:* How many days did locals get vs out-of-town (at the Sports Complex)?

**Answer:** *Danny Trosset:* 20%

- Lake Mary Life magazine article on Sports for Kids
- Recognize Commissioner Sarah Reece for induction into Sports Hall of Fame

**Old Business:**

- Discussion of the 'sister' website for Seminole County. Tricia has reached out and legal will be contacting individual about continuing page without the county logo.

**New Business:**

- Airport hosting air show over Lake Monroe in 2020. More details to come
- Question raised about flying over the Zoo. Chairman Speake will give Dino Ferri the information and bring him into the discussion as they move forward
- Historic Downtown Sanford pamphlet/ Sanford Visitor Guide shared by Bruce
- John Horan, Parks Foundation Treasurer and former Seminole County Board Chairman, discussed a fundraiser hosted by the Parks Foundation for an inclusive playground and park, which will be located at the new Rolling Hills property. Project will be appx. \$1M.
- Commissioner Austin shared that the City of Sanford is constructing a similar playground off Lake Mary Blvd.

***Meeting adjourned 4:57pm***