



MINUTES OF  
*The Original Florida*  
TOURISM TASK FORCE

Thomas Center  
Gainesville, Florida  
Alachua County

January 16, 2014  
Thursday, 10:00 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Roland Loog, Alachua County  
Anna Mikell, Alachua County  
Lois Nevins, Alachua County  
Dick Bailer, Jefferson County  
Nancy Wideman, Jefferson County, Chair  
Cindy Vees, Madison County  
Dean Fowler, Taylor County  
Dawn Taylor, Taylor County  
Dave Mecusker, Union County  
Sam Martin, Wakulla County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Russ McCallister, Dixie County  
Laura Wigglesworth, Dixie County  
Donna Creamer, Gilchrist County  
Susie Page, Lafayette County  
Helen Koehler, Levy County  
Carol McQueen, Levy County  
Jerry Evans, Wakulla County

OTHERS PRESENT

Mike Banks, City of Lake Butler  
Brenna Dacks, Visit Florida  
Rick Lamberson, Bluewater iNet  
Kay McCallister, Dixie County Tourist  
Development Council  
Sean Plemons, City of Gainesville  
Joan Pricher, Alachua County Visitors and  
Conventions Bureau  
Bryan Thomas, City of Newberry  
Tommy Thompson, Florida Outdoor Writers  
Association

STAFF PRESENT

Steven Dopp  
Scott Koons  
Ting Sun

Chair Wideman called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

- I. INTRODUCTION: Chair Wideman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions.

Scott Koons introduced Steven Dopp, Senior Planner for the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, as the new staff member assigned to the Original Florida Tourism Task Force.

- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Wideman asked for approval of the meeting agenda.

**ACTION: Dave Mecusker moved and Dick Bailer seconded a motion to approve the Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.**

- III. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 21, 2013 MINUTES:

Chair Wideman asked for approval of the November 21, 2013 meeting minutes.

**ACTION: Anna Mikell moved and Roland Loog seconded a motion to approve the November 21, 2013 meeting minutes as circulated. The motion passed unanimously..**

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Committee Reports

##### 1. Financial Committee Reports -

Anna Mikell presented the monthly financial report.

**ACTION: Lois Nevins moved and Dave Mecusker seconded a motion to accept the monthly financial report. Motion passed unanimously.**

##### 2. Other Committee Reports:

No other Committee reports were presented.

#### B. Staff Items

##### 1. Tourism Intern

Steven Dopp introduced Ting Sun, a student at the University of Florida who will be interning with the Council and assisting with tourism projects.

##### 2. Staff Report on Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Grant

Mr. Dopp stated that the grant had been approved by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. Chair Wideman stated that the Task Force would like a list of deliverables for the grant and that the list should be included every month in the meeting packet sent to Task Force members.

##### 3. Staff Report on Visit Florida Grants and Other Projects.

Mr. Dopp noted that staff will begin working on the three Visit Florida grants which have been awarded to the Task Force. Anna Mikell stated that she may be able to provide some assistance on the Marketing grant.

Mr. Dopp requested guidance regarding adding items to the Visit Natural North Florida website. The Committee agreed by consensus that staff should use their judgment regarding the appropriateness of the item, add it to the website if appropriate, and report back to the Task Force regarding items added to the website.

##### 4. Other Staff Items

Dick Bailer requested that staff e-mail new contact information regarding Original Florida Tourism Task Force members to Task Force members.

## B. Other Old Business

Chair Wideman stated that funding and marketing issues would alternate the Task Force each month. She noted that this month's focus is funding and therefore next month's focus will be marketing. Chair Wideman noted that Cindy Vees may be contacting staff to request information on bed tax revenues and similar data items. Chair Wideman requested Roland Loog, Dick Bailer and Sam Martin to develop a plan to solicit funding from the state Legislature for the Task Force for member counties which have been classified as a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern as well as a "We Love Visitors" campaign similar to the Alabama "We Love Visitors" marketing campaign.

### 1. Nominations and Election of a Vice-Chair

**ACTION: Cindy Vees moved and Roland Look seconded a motion to elect Dick Bailer as Vice-Chair. Motion passed unanimously.**

## C. VISIT FLORIDA Report:

Brenna Dacks of Visit Florida gave the Visit Florida report. She asked Mr. Dopp to e-mail to Task Force members a monthly report summary which she had e-mailed to Mr. Dopp. She noted that the I-75 Florida Welcome Center event is anticipated to occur during the fall of 2014 while the I-10 Florida Welcome Center event will either be held in the spring or summer of 2014. She indicated that the Florida Department of Transportation has printed a new highway map.

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Presentation from Bluewater iNet

Rick Lambert of Bluewater iNet gave a presentation regarding the status of the Task Force website. He noted that the Task Force should consider upgrading its website to include "Responsive Design." He noted that such websites are usable on any device, be it a cell phone, tablet or desktop computer. He recommended Task Force members view [www.g3realtygroup.com/beta](http://www.g3realtygroup.com/beta) and [www.visitgulf.com](http://www.visitgulf.com) for example of Responsive Design websites.

It was agreed by consensus to form a website committee consisting of Dean Fowler, Anna Mikell, Sean Plemons and Tommy Thompson.

### B. Visit Florida Grant Applications

Steven Dopp stated that TwoHead video has unused video from a past Image Development grant to create a promotional video for the Task Force and that the unused video could be assembled into a number of short 30-to-90 second videos of individual events and locations. He further stated that the videos could be placed on the Visit Natural North Florida website.

Roland Loog suggested that the Task Force should apply for a marketing grant to contract with bloggers which could be featured as "Natural North Florida Insiders," and that such bloggers could provide articles on a number of different subjects, including but not limited to food and dining, as well as "Off the Beaten Path." He volunteered to assist in developing and writing a Visit Florida Marketing Grant application for this project.

**ACTION: Cindy Vees moved and Dave Mecusker seconded a motion to apply for a Visit Florida Image Development Grant to use the unused video taken by TwoHead Video and to also apply for a Visit Florida Marketing Grant to develop website content, including the hiring of bloggers for the website. The motion passed unanimously.**

C. Alternative Funding Sources

Chair Wideman stated that the April meeting will focus on alternative funding sources.

D. Other New Business/Announcements

Cindy Vees requested historical data on tourism development taxes paid/received and dues paid to the Task Force, by county, for Task Force member counties. She stated the information could be used to re-evaluate the fee structure of the Task Force.

Scott Koons informed the Task Force on issues raised by Alachua County staff with regards to the Task Force concerning the Sunshine Law and accessibility to meetings by the public. He noted that Alachua County has not yet paid their membership dues for the year.

John Pricher of Visit Gainesville stated that the Alachua County staff is continuing their review of this matter.

Roland Loog recommended that staff make a presentation to the Alachua County Tourist Development Council and the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners regarding the activities of the Task Force.

Kay McCallister recommended the Task Force place a co-op ad in UnDiscovered Florida Magazine which is distributed by National Geographic Traveler and at Florida Welcome Centers.

**ACTION: Dick Bailar moved and Cindy Vees seconded a motion to authorize an expenditure of up to \$6,000 for a Visit Florida co-op advertisement in UnDiscovered Florida Magazine. The motion passed unanimously.**

The Committee discussed renting a booth at the Tampa Outdoors Expo and Boat Show to be staffed by Roland Loog and to pay for Mr. Loog's expenses (travel, lodging and food) associated with attending the boat show.

The Task Force presented a photograph by John Moran to Bryan Thomas in appreciation for his six years of service as staff to the Task Force.


VI. Leadership Forum: Presentation on Destination Photography by Anna Mikell, Electronic Media Manager, Visit Gainesville

Anna Mikell gave a presentation on the subject of destination photography.

#### DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 10:00 AM, Thursday, February 20, 2014 in Taylor County at Steinhatchee Landing.

**The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.**

  
Chair

2/20/14  
Date

Minutes prepared by Steven Dopp of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council.