



ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST & CONVENTION COMMISSION
SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2017

Chairman Thomas J. Smith, Jr. called the **Special Board of Commissioners** meeting to order on Monday, March 13, 2017, at 11:00 a.m. at the Northshore Harbor Center, 100 Harbor Center Boulevard, Slidell, Louisiana.

The **Invocation** was given by T. J. Smith, Jr.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Connie Born
Sharon Lo Drucker
Bonnie Eades
Mark Myers
Susan Nuss
Thomas J. Smith, Jr.

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

A quorum was present

OTHERS PRESENT

Donna O’Daniels, CEO and President
Mary Anne Harrison, Vice President, Administration/CFO
Rae Shipley, Assistant to CEO
Renee Kientz, Vice President Communications
Christina Cooper, Manager Marketing & P.R.
Zondra Jones, Senior Sales Manager
Roberta Carrow-Jackson, Online Manager
Tom Huval, Commission Counsel
Tricia Zornes, Randazzo’s Camellia City Bakery
Zach Zornes, Randazzo’s Camellis City Bakery
Lou Zornes, Randazzo’s Camellia City Bakery
Alia Casborné, City of Mandeville Cultural & Economic Dev.
Martin Patel, Best Western/Country Inn & Suites
Jude Beck, Clarion Hotel & Suites
Stacy Agnew, Clarion Hotel & Suites
Paul Trahan, Dr. Wagner’s Honey Island Swamp Tours
Sharon DeLong, Mainstreet/East St. Tammany Chamber
Dawn Sharpe, East St. Tammany Chamber
Gary Huettmann, St. Bernard Tourist Commission
Charles Klepfer, CiCi’s Pizza

Pat Brister, St. Tammany Parish President
Gene Bellisario, Parish Council, District 9
Mary K. Bellisario, St. Tammany School Board
Sean M. Burkes, J.V. Burkes & Associates
Darius Gray, Courtyard, Northshore Lodging Assn.
Jeffrey Hansell, Ox Lot 9
Amy Hansell, Ox Lot 9
Jeff Bordelon, Bayou Adventure
Violet Peters, Jefferson Parish CVB
Todd Whalley, My Hospitality Hotels
Jill Kidder, LA Travel Promotion Association (LTPA)
Shari Appel, Holiday Inn & Suites/Slidell
Kelly Le, Holiday Inn & Suites/Slidell
Ronnie Townsend, Holiday Inn & Suites/Slidell
Mike Saucier, Gulf States Real Estate
Stephanie O’Rourke, Staybridge Suites/Covington
Lori Gomez, Gomez Art
Lori Murphy, Inside Northside Magazine
John Walker, St. Tammany Farmer
Faimon Roberts, New Orleans Advocate

NEW BUSINESS

► **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS / DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

- T. J. Smith, Jr. welcomed those in attendance and thanked Parish President Pat Brister for accepting the invitation to engage with the Tourist Commission and answer some questions the commission has regarding the Northshore Regional Partnership.
- President Brister said that a couple of years ago they started looking at where our community is going. St. Tammany has had a phenomenal growth rate and it continues. They contacted several agencies in the parish and it was decided to hire a consultant to help them come up with who we are and what we want to be and how we can continue to maintain our quality of life in the future. The Tourist Commission contributed to that study, along with both Chambers, the Northshore Business Council, the Economic Development District and Economic Development Foundation, the City of

Covington, and the City of Mandeville. They came up with “Northshore – North of Your Expectations.” The second phase of the Visioning Project was to look at several different organizations around the parish and learn what they do, and they found duplicative services. They wanted to find what those overlapping services are and if there was any way they could collaborate and use those resources in a more useful way, and formed a regional partnership board of community leaders and have every area represented on that board. The current board has ten members and she serves as Chairman. They will have staggered terms and after this first year she will no longer be Chair. The members are: Eric Schouest of Cleco, also the Economic Development Foundation and District; Jenifer Besh, a voice for entertainment; Kieran Weldon, architect, also served on the Economic Development Foundation; Lori Murphy, Publisher of *Inside Northside*; Martin Mayer of Sterling Properties; Maura Donahue, former chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; Sean Burkes, a community activist; T. J. Smith, Jr., Chairman of the Tourist Commission and a Parish Councilman; Todd Richard, who sold a large insurance company recently and sits on the parish Planning and Zoning Board; Trey Folse, Superintendent of the St. Tammany Parish School Board.

- The seven organizations received requests for information such as budget, funding sources, ByLaws, etc. Donna O’Daniels received additional questions following the initial request and as a result, she is providing the NRPB with an advertising budget spreadsheet, job descriptions, and justification for certain budget line items.
- Tourist Commission Counsel, Tom Huval, said the Commission was created in 1995 by the state legislature as a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana. Its purpose, by state statute, is the promotion of tourism in St. Tammany Parish by doing all things necessary for the promotion, advertising and publication of information relating to tourist attractions in St. Tammany. It is funded by a three percent hotel/motel tax. The mission of the Tourist Commission is to market and promote St. Tammany Parish as a highly desirable destination for visitors and thereby increase the economic impact of tourism on the area.
- Chairman Smith asked about the High-Priority Tasks listed in the NRPB Strategic Plan; one of them being “Research the St. Tammany Hotel/Motel Tax and make recommendations for efficiencies and effectiveness regarding quality of life efforts, economic development, and tourism”. President Brister said she knows that the Tourist Commission might think the NRPB plan to see how much more money they can get and that “nothing could be farther from the truth,” and there may even be other funding that can go into the Tourist Commission. She said looking into the Hotel/Motel Tax was a Strategic Plan recommendation only. She said that the group is in its earliest stages and are looking at everything to see where they are but there are no plans to undergo efforts to change the Tourist Commission allocation.
- Chairman Smith again thanked President Brister for her participation in the meeting as well as all in attendance.

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017, following a Public Budget Hearing which begins at 2:00 PM, at the Tourist Commission Office in Mandeville.

ADJOURN

Mark Myers made **A MOTION** to adjourn and Sharon Lo Drucker seconded. **The Motion** carried and the meeting adjourned at 12:50 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

S / Rae Shipley

Rae Shipley
Recording Secretary

S / Thomas J. Smith, Jr.

Thomas J. Smith, Jr.
Chairman