

Board of County Commissioners Workshop Item

Date of Meeting: May 19, 2009

Date Submitted: May 1, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Jennifer Langston, Special Projects Coordinator

Subject: Requests Board Ratification of the Workshop held on April 27, 2009 to Discuss Ways for the EDC & TDC to Explore Ideas to Promote Wakulla County Businesses and seeks further Board Direction.

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item requests Board Ratification of the Workshop held on April 27, 2009 to Discuss Ways for the EDC & TDC to Explore Ideas to Promote Wakulla County Businesses and seeks further Board Direction.

Background:

At the February 3, 2009 Board meeting, the Board approved to schedule a workshop with the Economic Development Council and Tourist Development Council to discuss how staff could better work with these committees, and discuss ideas to promote Wakulla County businesses and tourism opportunities. This workshop was held to provide both groups and the Board an opportunity to dialogue about important issues in an open meeting in the sunshine.

Analysis:

On April 27, 2009, a workshop was held to facilitate discussion by providing a forum to allow the groups to present their goals, concerns and wishes, and aid in the development and strengthening of the relationships between the EDC, TDC, and the Board. Listed below is an overview of what was covered in the workshop.

Wakulla County Chamber of Commerce

Paul Johnson, President of the Chamber discussed a decrease in chamber memberships, and the current “shop local” initiative. Mr. Johnson stated that the Chamber would give a presentation to the Board on the “shop local” initiative in June.

Economic Development Council (EDC)

Bob Routa, President of the EDC discussed the current activities of the EDC such as: Community Garden effort, seeking stimulus funds for the Airport, and exploring alternative energy solutions. Mr. Routa requested that the Board re-institute the Industrial Development Authority.

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Tourist Development Council (TDC)

Pam Portwood, director of the TDC, presented the quarterly report, including the status of the re-design of the TDC website.

Additional discussion included:

- Mary Wolfgang with Tallahassee Community College discussed the green guide program, mentioned the local ambassador program.
- Marketing Strategies-Such as examining specific target markets, or areas of interest analyzing length of stay (Example-Atl residents traveling to St. George Island) Google Ads, Adwords, Adsense etc..,

Summary

Board approval is not granted at workshops, staff requests Board direction on the matters listed below which were generated by the discussion at the workshop:

- It was suggested that additional county funds be directed to the Chamber of Commerce for distribution of a direct mail piece to encourage citizens to buy local products, and services—and focus the importance of buying local.
- It was suggested, that additional funds from the general fund be directed to the TDC for their enhanced website. In addition to the amount currently in the TDC budget.
- Allow citizen input in the re-design of the TDC website.
- Seek out volunteers in an effort to lower the cost of the website re-design.

Options:

1. Ratify the discussion of the Workshop held on April 27, 2009
2. Do Not Ratify the discussion of the Workshop held on April 27, 2009
3. Board Direction

Recommendations:

Options 1 and 3