



Town of Surfside
Joint Meeting of the Town Commission and Tourist Board
MINUTES
May 4, 2015
7 p.m.
Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2nd Floor
Surfside, FL 33154

1. Opening

A. Call to Order

Mayor Dietch called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

B. Roll Call of Town Commission and Tourist Board Members

Town Clerk Sandra Novoa called the roll with the following members present: Mayor Dietch, Vice Mayor Tourgeman, Commissioner Olchyk, Commissioner Karukin, Commissioner Cohen, Tourist Board Chair Michelle Kligman, Vice Chair Elizabeth Levine, Board Member Barbara Cohen, Board Member Joel Baum, and Board Member Sandra Argow.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Town Manager Guillermo Olmedillo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor then turned the meeting over to Duncan Tavares, TEDACS Director.

- 2. State of the local Tourism Industry ~ Rolando Aedo, CDME, Executive Vice President / Chief Marketing Officer, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau.** Mr. Aedo gave an overview as to what his responsibilities are as Chief Marketing Officer and an overview of what the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau does. He explained the tourist taxes and where the monies go. He presented marketing visuals they have done for Miami and a video featuring Surfside.
- 3. Adopted Surfside Five Year Tourism Strategic Plan Recap ~ Carolyn Feimster SCMD, CJF Marketing International, and Duncan Tavares, TEDACS Director.** Director Tavares gave a power point presentation recapping the plan. He spoke about resort taxes and the surrounding communities and how monies are spent. He also spoke of the ordinances that are presented which he supports.
- 4. Resort Tax Ordinance Amendments, Tourist Board Operating Procedures, Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy ~ Guillermo Olmedillo, Town Manager.**

a) **Resort Tax Ordinance Amendments ~ Duncan Tavares, TEDACS Director.**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COMMISSION AND THE RESORT TAX BOARD OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA AMENDING CHAPTER 70 "TAXATION" AND SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 70-124 "COMPOSITION; APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES; COMPENSATION; REMOVAL FROM OFFICE, ETC."; SECTION 70-125 "ORGANIZATION"; SECTION 70-126 "POWER AND DUTIES"; AND CREATING SECTION 70-128 "BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS" OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE CODE OF ORDINANCES PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Town Clerk Sandra Novoa read the title of the ordinance.

Chair Kligman asked for a motion for discussion purposes. Board Member Cohen made a motion for discussion. The motion received a second from Board Member Argow and all voted in favor.

Mayor Dietch asked for a motion for discussion purposes. Commissioner Karukin made a motion for discussion. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olchyk and all voted in favor.

Commissioner Karukin had noted that the document refers to a Resort Tax Board and asked if it was the same as the Tourist Tax Board. Director Tavares they are one in the same and it will be clarified that the Resort Tax Board is also known as the Tourist Tax Board.

Director Tavares presented suggested changes to **Sec. 70-124 Composition, appointment, vacancies, compensation, removal from office, etc.**

(a)

Number, term and qualification of members. The board shall consist of ~~five~~ seven members. Each commissioner shall appoint one board member, and two board members shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Town Commission. All appointed board members must be ratified by a vote of the town commission. Any newly elected commissioner has the right to appoint a resort tax board member unless the corresponding appointment has yet to reach the end of their two-year term. Each of the five individual commissioner appointments shall be persons who either work or reside in Surfside and preference will be given to professionals with experience in tourism and hospitality related activities. ~~at least three of the five members shall be persons who have experience in tourism and/or tourism related activities.~~ The two members appointed by the majority vote of the Town Commission shall be identified as professionals employed in tourism or hospitality related activities. No two members of the Resort Tax Board shall represent the same company or organization. One town commissioner shall serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the board.

Commissioner Karukin asked if the two additional members have to be residents of Surfside. Director Tavares said they did not have to be residents.

There was discussion as to all members being residents and perhaps the two additional members either residing or work in Surfside. Experience in the field of tourism was discussed and sometimes we have had to go to the outside in other areas. Board Member Barbara Cohen suggested that the two additional members not residents not having a vote but be ex-officio. Chair Kligman was not in favor of expanding by two members especially if they are not residents. She suggested using some of the tax resources to get expertise advice when needed rather than put additional people on the board that can influence where tax monies should be spent.

Vice Mayor Tourgeman feels board members should be residents as he believes they will have the best interests of Surfside. He also said there are residents of Surfside that are knowledgeable in this field.

Vice Chair Levine regards Director Tavares as Surfside's expert in tourism and relies on him to keep the town aware of happenings and suggestions. Board Member Argow believes large boards create problems and we should not be upsizing. She would like to keep the board to five members which are residents. Board Member Baum agreed with Board Member Argow and is not in favor of expanding the board by two members.

Commissioner Cohen made a motion to keep the board as five members and they all should be Surfside residents only. The motion received a second from Commissioner Olchyk.

Mayor Dietch opened the meeting to public comment.

Public Speakers:

-Sean McKeen representing Marriott Hotel said whichever way they go on this issue it is important to keep the town authentic. He also commented on the 5 year strategic plan.

-Joel Simmonds was not encouraged by what he has heard this evening especially that board members must all be residents and this may exclude some business owners. If industry is paying taxes they should have a say. He also spoke about the taxes and how and who decides how that income is utilized.

-Barbara McLaughlin feels we should have tourism expertise on the board.

-Jessica Levison is concerned that the board is keeping things too simple and local and feels industry should be allowed to have a vote on the board. She feels keeping the five members as residents but opening up the two additional positions to non-residents.

-Jeff Lehman feels there will always be a conflict between tourism and residents. He believes there should be diversity on the board representing residents and all types of industry.

-Gil Katzman agrees that the tourism board should consist of members with professional expertise in the field who know how to bring tourism into the town of Surfside.

-Rozeln Mahboubi creating a better understanding and partnership between residents and businesses would only benefit the town. Segregating the two on the board is not good.

-Jeff Platt agrees that there should be five members and residents only. He feels hotels will only look to benefit their interests and not really care about the residents

of the town. He said hotels totally disrespect residents by placing all their beach chairs in the sand and residents have to find a spot to sit their chairs.

Commissioner Cohen said after hearing all that was said, he would like to withdraw his motion to keep the board at five members and they all should be Surfside residents only.

Commissioner Cohen then made a motion to accept the ordinance as presented.

Vice Chair Levine said she would like to see board members with the expertise needed and asks the Commission how this can be enforced with their appointment of the resident five members.

Commissioner Olchyk said she would only second the motion if the two additional members are non-voting. Commissioner Cohen said that he is accepting the ordinance as presented. Mayor Dietch passed the gavel and seconded for discussion purposes only.

Chair Kligman said she has always been supportive of the downtown business district. She also said we have a Director of Tourism, Duncan Travares and we should utilize him to the fullest. She objects to the concern that we do not believe in diversity but cannot support putting hotel people on the board.

There was discussion as to board members and those appointed having some degree of expertise in the field. Mayor Dietch made a friendly amendment that the five members be residents but do not require expertise in the field but preference given to those who do. The two additional members appointed by the majority vote of the Town Commission shall be identified as residing or working in Surfside and be professionals employed in tourism or hospitality related activities. No two members of the Resort Tax Board shall represent the same company or organization.

Commissioner Olchyk left the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

After more discussion, the Commission and the Board were divided in their views. Commissioner Cohen then withdrew his motion. Mayor Dietch said for the record, the 5 year plan has been worked on for years trying to make the Tourist Board better and being everything it can be.

Commissioner Karukin asked that some items be reviewed and clarified for the next meeting. (a) term limits; (b) where all tax monies will be spent and what is allowed; (c) clarify a sentence to read part of the Town Commission budgetary process.

Vice Mayor Tourgeman left the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

- b) **Tourist Board Operating Procedures** ~ Robert Meyers Esq., former Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics, and Duncan Tavares, TEDACS Director.
- c) **Tourist Board Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy** ~ Robert Meyers Esq., former Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics, and Duncan Tavares, TEDACS Director.

Robert Meyers gave a brief overview of Tourist Board Operating Procedures and Tourist Board Conflict of Interest and Ethics Policy. Members of the meeting posed questions regarding conflict of interest and ethics. There was some discussion on this point and Mr. Meyers addressed some of their concerns.

5. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Dietch thanked the Tourist Board for making themselves available for this meeting and all who attended and gave their input.


6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Accepted this 9th day of June, 2015



Daniel Dietch, Mayor

Attest:


Sandra Novoa, CMC
Town Clerk