



ST. TAMMANY PARISH TOURIST & CONVENTION COMMISSION
SPECIAL BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2017

Chairman Thomas J. Smith, Jr. called the **Special Board of Commissioners** meeting to order on Monday, January 9, 2017, at 3:00 p.m. at the St. Tammany Parish Tourist and Convention Commission, 68099 Highway 59, Mandeville, Louisiana.

Prior to the first order of business, T. J. Smith, Jr. gave the Invocation.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

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

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

Bonnie Eades
Daniel Schaus

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

A quorum was present

NEW BUSINESS

► **DISCUSSION OF REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD QUESTIONNAIRE**

- Donna asked the commissioners to take a moment to look at their copy of the Regional Partnership Board questionnaire she received. T. J. Smith said the Executive Committee felt it necessary to bring it before the board. Donna said as we are one of two public agencies brought into the regional board we are open to public information requests at all times. Mary Anne said she spoke with Jennifer Schaye, who is one of the lead attorneys for the State Legislative Auditor’s office and she said we can give name, job position and salary but we cannot give benefits because that violates the Right to Privacy Act. T. J. said he would like to see a definitive plan on paper that would indicate the direction the RPB is going. Other than the report from the consultant, he has seen nothing else. The Strategic Plan that the Tourist Commission has been operating under since 2006 has reached the end of its useful life and during the course of the year we will be working with Randall Travel Marketing to develop a new one.

Commission Counsel Tom Huval said the St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission was created by state statute in 1995 along with 43 other parish CVBs, and we are a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, independent and separate from the Parish, with the sole purpose of promoting tourism in the Parish. To ensure funding to fulfill the purpose for which it was created, the state statute also gave the Tourist Commissions certain powers; giving authorization to levy and collect hotel tax, not to exceed 3%, and the commission and monies collected from that are to be used solely for promoting tourism. The same legislation that created the Tourist Commission said we would have a seven member board and the parish has an ordinance in place concerning nominating and appointing members of that board, but that is the extent of the Parish’s input.

T. J. said we want to decide our response to the questionnaire and need more information as to why the questions are being asked. The Tourist Commission is being handled as though it is a St. Tammany Parish governmental entity and it is not. According to our contract with the state, which is the state statute, we cannot share or pool resources, office space, funds or staff for any purpose other than promoting tourism. The Board should enable T. J., as a member of the Regional Partnership Board, to ask specific questions of the group. Tom Huval said we are not closing the door and are willing to cooperate in an advisory role, but we need additional information.

Mark Myers made **A MOTION** that due to statutory law, the Tourist Commission is prohibited from sharing resources, including staff, funds and/or office space, Sharon Drucker seconded, and **The Motion** passed.

Donna is attending a meeting of the Regional Partnership Board on January 23rd and Judy Randall will speak to the

group. She will complete the questionnaire forward it to the Executive Committee by January 17th. Donna will ask if Judy Randall can speak for more than ten minutes, and then, depending on how the January 23rd meeting goes, possibly draft a letter or request a meeting with President Brister, depending on what the Executive Committee feels is best.

NEXT MEETING

The next Regular Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 21, 2017, 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 4:30 PM.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

S / Rae Shipley

Rae Shipley
Recording Secretary

S / Thomas J. Smith, Jr.

Thomas J. Smith, Jr.
Chairman