

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review and accept report from Cultural Tourism Task Force

OBJECTIVE: Review a report from the community based committee of arts, culture and heritage organizations and venues

CONSIDERATIONS: A group of organizations and venues representing the cultural arts and heritage offerings in Collier County began meeting in early 2008 to try to work more closely together. The goal of the group is to identify ways to promote the cultural and performing arts, and the history offerings on the Paradise Coast. This is a grass roots organization that is chaired by Elaine Hamilton, Executive Director of United Arts Council of Collier County. The group meets bi monthly at various venues.

The attached report from the September 26 meeting at the Inn on Fifth outlines the activities that were discussed and the projects that are contemplated. Tourism staff attends these meetings to give the group a status report on the tourism industry and how the culture/heritage offerings enhance the appeal of our area.

RECOMMENDATION: The report is offered for information only and does not require action by the TDC.

PREPARED BY: Jack Wert, Tourism Director

Cultural Tourism Task Force Meeting Minutes
Friday, September 26, 2008
The Inn on Fifth

October 27, 2008
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In attendance: Debi Debendetto, JoNell Modys and Maggie McCarty (CVB), Jane Sullivan (Classic Chamber Concerts), Rhona Saunders (Naples Players), Melissa Ryan Mead (Naples Transportation & Tours), Mary Margaret Gruszka (Collier County Museums) Jill Barry (Naples Botanical Gardens), Ginamarie Pugliese and Debi Brown (Naples Art Association), Kristen Coury and Jamie Carmichael (Gulfshore Playhouse, Roger Baker (Weatherburn Gallery), Kerry Durand (Inn on Fifth), Elaine Reed (Naples Historical Society), Lois Bolin (Naples Backyard History), Mikelle Hebka (Conservancy), Sue Trone (Bayshore CRA), Elaine Hamilton (United Arts Council).

We thanked Kerry Durand and the Inn on Fifth for hosting today's meeting. Catering was provided by Starbucks on Fifth Ave. South. Kristen Coury volunteered to take minutes for today's meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting were distributed. We reviewed why this group was formed: to provide input to the CVB/TDC on the topic of cultural tourism; to develop partnerships that will enhance tourism in general; and to network and explore ideas that will enhance Collier County tourism.

JoNell Modys reported that visitation was still high. August was up 2.5%. Kerry Durand added that Inn on Fifth had sold out weekends through the summer, mainly people from the other coast and International (UK and Germany). International visitation is spiking.

JoNell talked about putting more money into marketing in the international market through early 2009. She outlined some of their programs such as "Voluntourism" which includes classes, tours, etc. JoNell said they will also send something out to the national media for "Celebrate the Arts" month. Debi DeBenedetto will list the United Arts Council in the Visitor Guide. She also mentioned that anyone can get on her website, by emailing her at DebiDe@colliergov.net.

The VIP program which offered tourists discounts from May to October was very popular and will be repeated. We'll send information on the next book to all cultural organizations for their possible participation. Debi indicated that participants must offer "legitimate discounts" to be involved.

Discussed attempts for partnerships between hotels and arts groups. Rhona, Ginamarie and Kerry agreed that it was very difficult to do so because it was hard to "hold out" tickets in advance not knowing if a package would sell...and it was difficult to coordinate schedules. Ginamarie said it was easier for her to coordinate a tour as opposed to try to set up a class. Overall, the sense was that it was difficult and not necessarily helpful. Kerry added that the best person to talk to if you were trying to set up a partnership would be the Director of Meetings and Sales or Group Sales Manager.

Roger Baker announced that some of the local galleries have created a Fine Art Dealers Association. He suggested that a coalition be created for each arts category: theatre, visual arts, music, etc. so that people such as CVB would have one spokesperson to whom they could speak to get the news. He also announced that the new Fine Art Dealers Association was planning a Naples Latin Festival in February 2010 that would hopefully include all the galleries, restaurants, etc. Mary Margaret expressed interest in this idea. Lois Bolin agreed that we could include history and heritage. Kristen added that the UAC is investigating the possibility of creating a Festival and suggested that perhaps we should combine the two and seriously consider doing it in November instead of May since the CVB and TDC seemed to be focused on this month and this was already deemed "Arts Month". Kristen will contact Merlin Lickhalter in this regard.

JoNell said she was looking to November 2009 and wondered if we could create a theme for that. However, with 47 arts organizations, 100 galleries and 500 artists and musicians, it's hard to get everyone to agree on a single theme.

It was suggested that we should ask the CVB to arrange for a report at an upcoming TDC meeting on the work done by this task force. Our "wish list" was reviewed and expanded:

- Add a section in the CVB marketing plan for the arts and culture market.
- The CVB has specialty publications for golf, fishing and spas – add one on arts & culture.
- CVB advertising in arts-related national publications.
- Add something about the arts in national TV ads.
- Work with the new PR firm to get a solid campaign to market the arts to national media.
- Research to find out how we can get more of the lucrative "cultural tourists" to come to Collier County.

At last month's meeting, it was suggested that we talk to the *Naples Daily News* about getting extra copies of *Showcase* placed around the city since visitors really use this publication; need to check with Michele Klinowski on this. We should also pursue a "same day ticket sales" outlet in Naples.

Elaine Reed indicated that she was working with the local museums to update the "museum brochure."

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15.

Next meeting: January '09 (date & location TBD)