

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING  
January 8, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Commr. Kirby Smith, Chairman  
Mr. Jim Gunderson  
Mr. David Filipponi  
Mr. Alan Reisman  
Ms. Cindy Staley

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Mr. Steven Bishop  
Ms. Gigi Lemon

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Mr. Ryan Ritchie, Director for the Office of Visit Lake  
Ms. Rachel Bartolowits, Assistant County Attorney  
Mr. Brett Gordon, Chief Revenue Officer for Madden Media  
Ms. Jen Carlisle, Destination Strategy Director for Madden Media  
Ms. Lindsey McBride, Associate Vice President of Events, Operations and Business Development for the Greater Orlando Sports Commission  
Mr. Josh Pearson, Deputy Clerk, Board Support

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commr. Smith called the meeting of the Lake County Tourist Development Council (TDC) to order at 2:00 p.m. on January 8, 2024, in County Commission Chambers, Administration Building, Tavares, Florida. He called for a moment of silence and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES**

On a motion by Mr. Reisman, seconded by Mr. Filipponi and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the TDC approved the minutes for the TDC meetings of August 24, 2023 (Special Meeting) and October 9, 2023 (Regular Meeting).

**CITIZEN QUESTION AND COMMENT PERIOD**

No one wished to address the TDC at this time.

**UPDATES**

Mr. Ryan Ritchie, Director for the Office of Visit Lake, commented that Councilmember Jim Purvis, from the City of Clermont and who had served on the TDC the past few years, had passed away on December 11, 2023. He indicated that a plaque would be given to his family in remembrance and appreciation of his contributions to the TDC. He expressed that he could not

thank Councilmember Purvis enough for the time he spent on the TDC volunteering his time to make important decisions on the development on the TDC, as well as in supporting tourism in Lake County.

Commr. Smith commented that there were very few times where they had someone as committed as Councilmember Purvis was to dedicate his life to this community.

Mr. Ritchie mentioned that the TDC had received an email regarding some house bills that had already been filed during the current legislative session in the City of Tallahassee, opining that this would be a busy session. He indicated that some of the bills were regarding the expansion of the Tourist Development Tax (TDT); however, he said that he did not think these would affect Lake County. He related that he would be in the City of Tallahassee for Florida Tourism Day at the end of January 2024, and that he would keep the TDC updated on the session and all the support they received from their representatives.

### **CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

Mr. Ritchie recalled that a special TDC meeting was held on August 24, 2023 to discuss the capital improvement project for the City of Leesburg's sports tourism plan. He stated that there was a minor error in the motion that was made, noting that the motion for approval was for a \$1 million payment at the current time, and a \$2 million payment contingent upon the successful completion of phase one and phase two at the Susan Street Sports Complex and the availability of TDT funds in Lake County with the following conditions: any project overages above \$7,999,600 would be the full responsibility of the City of Leesburg, and the City would provide annual actual economic impact reports for all events held at TDT funded venues to the TDC. He indicated that the amount should have been \$7,996,000 instead and that after receiving guidance from the County Attorney's Office, they planned to present this project to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) for approval. He related that he was working on getting the project on the next available BCC agenda.

### **REPORTS**

#### **MADDEN MEDIA**

Mr. Brett Gordon, Chief Revenue Officer for Madden Media, commented that travel had been pretty consistent for the past few quarters, noting that demand was staying healthy, that consumers were continuing to travel, and that there had been an uptick in air travel, international travel, hotel demand and short-term rentals. He opined that they were happy to see that consumers were very committed to travel especially going into an election year. He indicated that the length of stay had remained static year over year for the last four years; however, the booking window, which showed how far out people were traveling, had started to drop and was on average 50 days in advance while the planning window was about 10 days in advance. He noted that this directly impacted their media timing when they were out in market. He stated that nationally, the supply growth of the vacation rentals was starting to slow and that travelers were looking for luxury for less, smaller and more affordable destinations, and rest and relaxation, noting that the overall travel demand looked very strong going into 2024.

Ms. Jen Carlisle, Destination Strategy Director for Madden Media, stated that there was some incremental growth in the top origin markets as compared to the previous year, noting that there

were more upswings in the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Florida market as they were continuing to put a lot into that market. She mentioned that when they marketed they made sure to target people who would spend more money in this area and said that they had seen at least a percentage of growth in the amount of spending from people in those particular markets.

Commr. Smith asked if they had any data on Lake County specifically, and Ms. Carlisle answered that this was for Lake County.

Mr. Gordon clarified that they used data from Zartico, which tracked the physical devices that ended up in Lake County, to pull this data together.

Ms. Carlisle then discussed their media performance, and explained that the different media placements they had throughout the last quarter brought nearly 10 million impressions, over 828,000 views of the video campaigns, over 167,000 ad clicks, and over 125,000 people actively engaging on the website from the ads.

Commr. Smith asked if they had a comparison of how Lake County was doing as compared to other markets they represented.

Mr. Gordon replied that they did not have anything on hand; however, he said that they could bring it to the next meeting. He mentioned that it was difficult to compare the different markets since it was directly related to the amount of budget they had to spend on media.

Ms. Carlisle showed some samples of the best performing ads, noting that they had seasonal ads to show the unique opportunities throughout the county and ads that talked about the proximity to the City of Orlando so people knew how close Lake County was to the City of Orlando experience. She showed the 15 second video that was broadcasted through connected television (TV) for their "Tune Out to Tune In" campaign, commenting that it ran during November through December 2023 and reached over 263,000 people with almost everyone watching the video to completion. She mentioned that they also used Visit Florida's co-op opportunities to re-target visitors of the Visit Florida website with the Lake County message, noting that this campaign just finished at the beginning of January 2024 and specifically targeted Canada and the United Kingdom. She also showed the print ad that was in the Visit Florida Vacation Guide. She stated that for their public relations efforts, there had been eight articles featuring Lake County with two driven by Madden Media and 16.8 million in total readership. She indicated that they continued to work with media leads and had 42 pitches on behalf of Lake County along with Visit Florida and Destination Quick Trip lead responses. She related that some of their outlets included MSN, Tampa Magazine, Thrillist, Fodor's, and Smarter Traveler, and that they continued to focus their pitches on the seasonal outdoor offerings, waterside towns, and the small city escapes. She indicated that the December 2023 quarterly newsletter focused on arts, culture, and art events and had a 65.3 percent open rate. She commented that they were looking forward to being a part of the International Media Marketplace, which was the leading global event to connect the travel industry with editors, journalists, broadcasters, and influencers who wrote about travel; additionally, she said that it was an appointment-based show where they would receive one-on-one time with the writers to create relationships with them and tell them about Lake County. She stated that they had three press trips

coming up, noting that Ms. Kathleen Walls would be coming in February 2024 for the Mount Dora Arts Festival. She discussed what was happening next, and showed some behind the scenes pictures from the photo and video shoot they recently did for their “Tune Out to Tune In” campaign, noting that they were expanding it to go deeper into the sensory aspects. She mentioned that they planned to unveil this at the next meeting and that it would be rolled out to in-state and out of state audiences. She indicated that they were working to have their first consumer brand activation in the City of Miami market where they would have personal interactions with those residents.

Commr. Smith mentioned that the hotel demand was down in October 2023, and asked if they knew the reason for that.

Mr. Gordon clarified that this was data from across the country and that the average demand for the year had stayed up.

Commr. Smith commented that the trend for bookings had shortened, and asked why that was happening.

Mr. Gordon opined that it was directly due to financial reasons because people were more hesitant to book trips. He elaborated that this data was from when they were coming out of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and there was an overwhelming demand for travel; furthermore, he said that the data was now showing a more normal demand and that this trend was consistent across all data points and with other markets.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that things were starting to level off, and Mr. Gordon confirmed this. Commissioner Smith opined that Madden Media was doing a fantastic job, and said that he would like more data to review.

#### GREATER ORLANDO SPORTS COMMISSION

Ms. Lindsey McBride, Associate Vice President of Events, Operations and Business Development for the Greater Orlando Sports Commission (GO Sports), welcomed Chairman Smith to the TDC and expressed her condolences for Councilmember Purvis. She displayed a list of events that were hosted during fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024, and stated that they had a great first quarter with over 9,000 room nights, noting that this was the most she had seen during her eight years of being with Lake County. She showed pictures of the recent events that had been hosted, commenting that over 30 countries and over 200 athletes were in town for a week during the 2023 International Waterski and Wakeboard Federation (IWWF) World Championships, and that this event was livestreamed on YouTube which averaged 20,000 views per day and over 120,000 total views. She mentioned that IWWF partnered with ICarus Sports to help broadcast this globally, noting that it reached over 180 countries and over one billion households. She indicated that the Bassmaster Open was held in October 2023 and that it was a great event with over 300 anglers. She stated that the Bassmaster Team Championship was held in December 2023 and that Mr. Aaron Yavorsky, who was a 17 year old from the City of Tampa, had won and was the youngest person ever to qualify for the Bassmaster Classic. She related that the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) Golf State Championship was held in November 2023 and had 569 athletes,

including the sons of Mr. Tiger Woods, Mr. Henrik Stenson, and Mr. Trevor Immelman. She noted that this was their 12<sup>th</sup> year hosting this event and that they had four years left on their agreement. She mentioned the following upcoming events: Hobie Bass Open Series in January 2024, NXXT RedTail Tournament and Florida Double Anvil in February 2024, Fishers of Men National Championship and Major League Fishing Toyota Series in March 2024, and Bassmaster Elite in April 2024. She displayed a list of events that they were targeting, and indicated that with the Lake County Disc Golf Club they had bid on the Professional Disc Golf Association 2025 event and although they did not win the event, they were highly encouraged to submit for 2026, opining that was exciting for them as there had been a much effort to build the disc golf courses throughout Lake County. She displayed a list for FY 2023-2024 business development travel, and noted that they were adding more conferences to their schedule as they came up. She indicated that staff attended TEAMS and Leaders in Sport, as well as several smaller conferences networking with chief executive officers (CEO) and rights holders. She related that staff planned on attending the Sports Events & Tourism Association (ETA) Summit in February 2024.

Commr. Smith asked for an explanation on the events that were highlighted in white on the list of targeted events.

Ms. McBride replied that the events highlighted in white were events that they were currently working on and were trying to find out more information on.

Mr. Ritchie commented that the county had some tremendous representation on the board of directors of GO Sports, including Ms. Cindy Staley from Mission Inn Resort and Club, Mr. Jeff Osterman from Montverde Academy, and Mr. Paul Johns from Orlando Health South Lake Hospital. He also congratulated Ms. McBride on her recent promotion and Mr. Brent Nelson, Senior Vice President of Business Development for GO Sports, on his recent engagement.

#### OFFICE OF VISIT LAKE

Mr. Ritchie gave an overview of FY 2023 and stated that it was another record year for TDT collections at just under \$5.7 million. He related that the demand for travel continued to rise and that he was excited to see what FY 2024 would bring. He indicated that the TDT collections for the online platforms and the other categories were eclipsing the hotel/motel category, and noted the following: the hotel/motel category was at 46 percent; the other category, which consisted of apartments, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, condos, multifamily and mobile homes, was at 28 percent; and the online platforms category, which consisted of Airbnb and VRBO, was at 20 percent. He highlighted some of their accomplishments as follows: held a media event in the Cities of St. Petersburg and Clearwater with Madden Media where writers from several publications were invited to attend to see what Lake County had to offer; celebrated National Tourism Week in May 2023 where they showed appreciation to local vendors; hosted the IWWF World Waterski Championships, the AVP Central Florida Open, and the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Volleyball Championships; and recruited the 2025 Innovation Think Tank and the 2025 Sunshine State Bowling events.

### **Market Analytics**

Mr. Ritchie displayed several graphs reflecting year to date (YTD) FY 2024 TDT collections, occupancy numbers and rates, average daily rate (ADR), and short-term rentals. He indicated that the YTD cumulative TDT collections were \$785,081, which was down 0.5 percent year over year. He mentioned that the TDT revenues by source had pretty much stayed the same as in FY 2023 and that they were as follows: the hotel/motel category was just under \$379,000, the single family category was at \$55,000, the online platform category was at \$165,700, and the other category was at \$189,378. He related that hotel occupancy had been trending down in the first couple of months in FY 2024; however, they were now trending in the right direction. He added that they were starting to move into the busy season and that there was nothing to be overly concerned about. He stated that they were currently averaging \$113.78 for ADR, which was slightly above the previous year's average of \$111.66. He noted that for the short-term rentals, the average occupancy was 46.5 percent and ADR was \$173; additionally, he said that although both of these were down three percent, they were trending in the right direction. He also commented that the average stay was about five days.

### **Administration and Budget**

Mr. Ritchie displayed a chart of the FY 2024 YTD promotional activities budget and mentioned the following: they renewed the Welcome Guide with Akers Media which would be published in March 2024; GO Sports was close to being paid out; the professional bass angler, Mr. Tim Frederick, was 50 percent expended and was currently on tour with some exciting projects in the works; the contracted events were events they worked on with GO Sports; the co-op marketing was a tool for any organization wanting to promote tourism outside of Lake County; the TDC event sponsorships were typically used by municipalities; the advertising was for any publication they wanted to market in; and the promotional items were to promote Lake County.

### **Visit Lake Updates**

Mr. Ritchie indicated that they sponsored 55 events which brought 224,782 visitors, 22,000 room nights, and an economic impact of \$43 million. He expressed that this was a robust program and that he could not thank his team enough for the process they went through in processing the applications and getting the correct information back from the event organizers so they could help sponsor these wonderful events. He showed pictures of staff activities and stated that they attended the TEAMS Conference in collaboration with GO Sports, noting that there were two screens at their booth that were rotating through their 15 second commercial. He stated that staff also attended the Destinations Florida annual meeting, the Sports ETA Summit, the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Convention, and the American Volleyball Coaches Association Convention, opining that these conventions and trade shows were industry standard and were the key to their success since it was an opportunity to be advocates of Lake County. He related that the IWWF World Waterski Championship was held in October 2023, noting that 200 athletes represented 34 countries. He commented that it was a tremendous event with some major stakeholders in attendance and that there had been almost \$3 million in economic impact. He mentioned that they had the opportunity to sponsor the ESPN High School Basketball Showcase events which took place at Montverde Academy and in the City of Miami. He noted that there were over 166,000 national live viewers who watched both games and over 2.2 million impressions through the social media channels. He opined that this was a great opportunity and because they had to make a quick

decision about this, he thanked the County Manager, the County Attorney, and the BCC for their support. He stated that they traveled to the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Convention and that with the partnership of Experience Kissimmee and Visit Central Florida, they hosted coaches who competed in THE Spring Games, commenting that this was a great opportunity to grow this sport. He mentioned that they sponsored a beach volleyball court at the AVCA Convention in the City of Tampa, noting that there were over 3,500 coaches from all over the country at this event. He said that this had been a great opportunity to showcase the Lake County brand and Hickory Point Beach. He showed a listing of the top 10 events sponsored by projected economic impact, and pointed out that the Mount Dora Craft Fair was the top event. He indicated that they worked on two new campaigns with two new partners, Renninger's Twin Markets and Clermont Main Street, through their co-op marketing, and that the tactics included billboards and marketing materials. He then showed a listing of the upcoming events planned for the second quarter.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **2024-2025 FHSAA SOFTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Mr. Ritchie explained that this event that would be hosted at the Legends Way Ballfields in the City of Clermont during May 20-25, 2024 and May 19-24, 2025, noting that there would be 644 players and coaches and 967 spectators per weekend with a projected economic impact of about \$1 million. He added that the sponsorship would be for \$30,000. He commented that this event had been hosted in Lake County before; however, this level of support was not previously provided. He opined that if they supported this, they would have a good opportunity of keeping this event here along with all the other state championships.

#### **2024 THE SPRING GAMES**

Mr. Ritchie commented that this was the largest sports tourism event in Lake County and that it would be held during February 15-March 28, 2024 in the Cities of Leesburg and Clermont. He related that the previous year they hosted almost 218 teams whereas this year there would be 254 teams with an estimated 7,000 room nights and a projected economic impact of just under \$13 million. He mentioned that this was for the Division I, II, and III National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) teams, NAIA, and NJCAA. He said that the sponsorship would be for \$125,000.

#### **2024 BASSMASTER ELITE SERIES**

Mr. Ritchie stated that this event had been approved in July 2023 and was supposed to take place in 2023; however, he said that due to concerns with TV and the timeline with getting this approved it was moved to 2024, noting that it would now take place on April 11-14, 2024 at Venetian Gardens in the City of Leesburg. He commented that there would be 153 anglers and it would be broadcast on TV, stating that this had been the most watched Bassmaster telecast ever the previous year. He indicated that the sponsorship was for \$97,750.

#### **2027-2028 NCAA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Mr. Ritchie explained that this event was on the agenda of the October 2023 meeting; however, due to a mistake with the publication of that meeting they had to ask the TDC for approval of this again. He stated that this was for Division II and Division III men's and women's golf

championships, this would take place at Mission Inn Resort and Club in the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, and that the sponsorship would be for \$205,000.

Commr. Smith asked how many room nights there were during THE Spring Games in 2023.

Mr. Ritchie answered that he did not have that information with him; however, he said that he believed it was very similar to the 7,000 room nights projected for this current year.

Commr. Smith asked when Division I golf championships would come to Lake County.

Mr. Ritchie replied that the Horizon League Championships were Division I and that they had hosted that event for several years. He related that he was working on a project for more Division I golf events, noting that Division I events were typically very competitive and usually stayed at the same location for a long time.

Mr. Jim Gunderson expressed that while he appreciated hearing the summary of events, he opined that it was becoming overwhelming and difficult to decide whether or not these events were worth supporting since he really did not know whether they would be good investments. He suggested that moving forward, they could look at these events from a budgetary standpoint and make the decisions based on the marketing budget for event sponsorships and whether the events would generate a certain number of room nights. He elaborated that they could stick to a budget and then do a summary at the end of the year. He commented that while he was supportive of events, he questioned their long term benefit to the marketing of tourism in Lake County and said that he would almost prefer to spend more time focusing on what Madden Media was doing and determining how they could identify and go after new markets. He mentioned that they should focus on the history and all the other things that made Lake County a destination as that would benefit the entire county; furthermore, he said that he always considered events to be the low hanging fruit of tourism since they did not generate a return that they could look at. He opined that what Madden Media was showing gave a reason for people to come to Lake County which in turn generated repeat business to a very large degree. He stated that they also needed to decide whether they wanted to continue with focusing on Lake County as the brand, opining that signs with the name "Lake County" on them did not mean much to people and suggested coming up with a different moniker or branding that would actually focus on what Lake County was known for, such as "Central Florida Lakes Region." He opined that they needed something very straightforward that gave some meaning to their location and what was offered. He stated that he believed they had an amazing destination that was incredibly unique, and he encouraged them to work with Madden Media on this so they could have more of a long term benefit of tourism in this region.

Mr. Ritchie stated that he appreciated his sentiments, and commented that he would not put anything before the TDC or BCC if it was not worth investing in. He mentioned that when he first started in his position about a year and a half ago, they were in the midst of trying to finalize the brand and said that he was not sure Madden Media wanted to go through that again. He elaborated that it was a long process and that he could provide Mr. Gunderson with the exercise that Madden Media went through.



Mr. Gunderson commented that all he was suggesting was that they could look at how to focus on the use of the work “lake” in a way that did not just say “Lake County.” He related that most people did not even know where the different counties were in the State of Florida, and opined that from a marketing standpoint it caused some confusion and did not leave as strong of an impression. He mentioned that he also was not so certain that continuing to vote on every event was worthwhile.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that the budget for Madden Media was \$750,000, and asked what the total promotional activities budget was.

Mr. Ritchie answered that it was \$2.812 million.

Commr. Smith opined that they should be highlighting Lake County as they did with the branding of “Real Florida, Real Close” since it was a special place, and commented that each city had their own uniqueness and special identities. He mentioned that it was important to have the previous year’s hotel room numbers, especially for THE Spring Games, so they could quantify that for the dollar amount that was being spent. He added that he thought it was fantastic that the number of teams for THE Spring Games was increasing from 218 to 254.

Mr. Ritchie stated that sports tourism was a tremendous industry currently with much revenue tied up in it, noting that GO Sports could provide great information on what they did. He remarked that he would not suggest picking and choosing which events they sponsored.

Mr. Gunderson clarified that his point was that staff could just approve of the event sponsorships as long as they were vetted and there was enough funding in the budget for them. He commented that he was unsure what role the TDC had in making those decisions as they rarely questioned things. He suggested that the TDC focus on other things and allow sports marketing to move forward in that direction, noting that staff could still give a summary on the event after it took place.

Mr. Ritchie opined that the goal in these meetings was to educate and communicate what their office was doing and why they were doing it. He said that the TDC could discuss whether they wanted to continue hearing about these things.

Ms. Cindy Staley asked if the event organizers provided information on where people stayed during an event and whether they stayed in Lake County or other areas.

Mr. Ritchie confirmed this, noting that the events that GO Sports worked with provided hotel reports and any events the County contracted with provided post event documents as per the agreement. He related that THE Spring Games provided a post event document showing where all the teams were coming from and where they were staying.

Ms. Staley mentioned that they could share that information with the TDC so they could see where people were staying, opining that they would be able to see the value of these events. She noted

that in her experience with being involved in other organizations, she noticed that the Central Florida area was highlighting Lake County even more because of how much it has grown.

Commr. Smith relayed his understanding that they sponsored more than just sports events to drive more heads in beds, such as the Mount Dora Craft Fair and the Antique Extravaganza.

Mr. David Filipponi opined that since this was public funding, there had to be guidance and checks and balances with the way it was allocated and spent for the broader benefit of the community. He asked for Mr. Ritchie to speak on the accountability side of this and their due diligence process on reporting how the funds were executed and how these events added value to the expenditure of these public funds.

Mr. Gunderson stated that he was not sure that their sponsorship of some of these events was actually making much of a difference, noting that many of the large events that happened in the City of Mount Dora had been going on for many years and were selling out long before any funding was given to Visit Mount Dora and the City of Mount Dora to help promote those events. He related that Lakeside Inn in particular was always booked up a year in advance during these events. He opined that the sponsorship money probably did help; however, he was not sure that these promotions were being effective. He gave the example of the Scottish Highland Festival in the City of Mount Dora that took place during the President's Day holiday in February each year, and noted that hotels were always booked that weekend; however, he opined that hotels were booked that weekend throughout the entire State and that it was a stretch to say that their marketing made much of a difference in that. He stated that he was not suggesting that they did not fund events, but that they should focus on the different communities and what they had to offer, noting that each community typically had some form of a small museum or attraction and they did very little to focus on those. He suggested that when they discussed the dollars spent in event marketing that they break it down to the cost factor per room night and what the actual average rate generated. He opined that many of these events did not generate a high room rate; therefore, when looking at the cost per room night and then weighing that against the average rate the impact of that was quite high. He added that they could then determine whether or not those events were actually generating as much as they thought they were. He opined that this was a lot of money and that they should be looking at this much more strategically.

Mr. Ritchie mentioned that they would begin working on the five year destination strategic plan on January 18, 2024 with a kickoff meeting with a consultant, noting that they would be discussing how to lay a foundation for how they made decisions moving forward. He opined that having this plan would help with some of these concerns.

Ms. Rachel Bartolowits, Assistant County Attorney, mentioned that she had a copy of the agreement for THE Spring Games and stated that the agreement listed the projected room nights along with the amount that was approved, and that there were forms to be completed after the event to show the room nights that actually occurred.

Mr. Ritchie indicated that sponsorship funding for events could increase or decrease depending on the room nights recorded on the post event documents as compared to the projected room nights.

Mr. Gunderson opined that the reporting for room nights was sometimes questionable because the average hotel was only reporting the total occupancy and was not differentiating which events each guest was attending, adding that reporting for vacation rental homes was also difficult since multiple people stayed in the home. He clarified that he did not think they were failing as there were many things that were going really well. He reiterated that staff should focus on managing the events whereas the greater efforts of the TDC should be about working with staff and trying to understand how to promote the county in a much broader sense.

On a motion by Mr. Reisman, seconded by Ms. Staley and carried unanimously by a vote of 5-0, the TDC approved to support the following events: 2024 Bassmaster Elite Series with the fiscal impact not to exceed \$97,750; 2024-2025 FHSAA Softball Championships with the fiscal impact not to exceed \$30,000; 2024 The Spring Games, Collegiate Softball Spring Training, with the fiscal impact not to exceed \$125,000; and 2027-2028 NCAA Division II & III Men's and Women's Golf Championships with the fiscal impact not to exceed \$205,000.

### **AROUND THE HORN**

Mr. Ritchie expressed his excitement for the strategic plan kickoff meeting on January 18, 2024 with Downs and St. Germain Research out of the City of Tallahassee, commenting that this organization was very well versed in destination marketing strategic plans. He indicated that they had been working on the new tourism website and wanted to possibly schedule a separate meeting with the TDC so they could see it, stating that they had been doing some beta testing and he was excited to showcase that. He thanked Mr. Levar Cooper, Director for the Office of Communications, and his staff for their work on this. He also stated that he was recently asked by Sports ETA to be on their mentoring board, opining that it was a great opportunity for him to be involved in a national organization and to be a mentor for young professionals in the industry.

Mr. Filipponi expressed his gratitude to Mr. Ritchie for his hard work on bringing this information to the TDC. He mentioned that the vacation rental industry was reeling in from a very busy holiday period and that the information which had been presented endorsed what the industry was experiencing. He stated that the vacation rental industry had lobbyists in the City of Tallahassee during the current legislative session and was staying apprised of what was happening. He related that he was looking forward to 2024 and was hoping for an upbeat return to business.

Mr. Alan Reisman wished everyone a prosperous New Year on behalf of the City of Leesburg, and thanked Mr. Ritchie and his team for everything they did for the TDC.

Ms. Staley stated that some golf tournaments had just ended at Mission Inn Resort and Club, and that they were planning some renovations soon. She commented that she was looking forward to a great 2024.

Commr. Smith thanked everyone for allowing him to chair this board, stating that he was excited about economic development as it was a wonderful thing for the citizens of Lake County. He also thanked Madden Media for what they did, opining that they did a wonderful job, and GO Sports as they brought a wealth of knowledge and a lot of events here to Lake County. He then congratulated Mr. Ritchie on his mentorship with Sports ETA.

Tourist Development Council

January 8, 2024

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**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be brought to the attention of the TDC, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.