



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 25-0978A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 7/22/2025

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2026 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) recommendation to fund 49 events through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program (Elite Event Program).

- Convention and Visitors Bureau staff evaluated, scored, and recommended to the TDC 49 events totaling "up to" funding in the amount of \$2,685,000.00.
- Consistent with the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approval and Board delegated authority, the County Administrator or the Director of Administrative Services will execute Elite Event agreements, and they will appear as delegated items on the Board meeting agenda once final terms and marketing deliverables are agreed upon.
- Events applying outside of the application window may be considered if funds are available and may be recommended at VisitSPC's discretion.
- Unallocated funds may be used for marketing purposes at VisitSPC's discretion.
- Funding for Elite Events is included in the FY26 Proposed Budget in the Tourist Development Tax Fund. This item does not obligate the County before the adoption of the FY26 Budget.

Strategic Priorities:

Prosperity and Opportunity

3.2 Provide and promote tourism opportunities

Summary:

With Board approval, CVB staff will administer the FY26 Elite Event Program, which provides funding to qualified, high-profile and community events that meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Elite Event Program Guidelines (Guidelines). In addition to the funding, the CVB also provides events with value in-kind contributions that may include an on-site truss, concert stage, and more.

Background Information:

Tourist Development Tax funds may be legally expended for an activity/event if that event has as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the event to tourists, per Fla. Stat. 125.0104(5)(a)3. In enacting this authorization, Pinellas County's Tourist Development Plan, Section 118-32 of the Pinellas County Code, authorizes the use of up to \$3,000,000 annually for the marketing of special events and programs, which funding is governed by the Guidelines adopted by the Board on February 25, 2025. Those Guidelines include the following criteria:

Category 1, \$150,000 - \$250,000: Elite Event that meets or exceeds 50,000 unique attendees, 15,000 room nights and 500,000 broadcast views.

Category 2, \$75,000 - \$150,000: Elite Event that meets or exceeds two out of the following three criteria - 50,000 unique attendees, 15,000 room nights, 100,000 broadcast views or planned PR/media coverage valued in excess of \$50,000.

Category 3, \$50,000 - \$75,000: Elite Event that meets or exceeds one out of the following three criteria - 20,000 unique attendees, 7,500 room nights, 500,000 broadcast views or planned PR/media coverage valued in excess of \$100,000.

Category 4, \$25,000 - \$50,000: Elite Event that meets or exceeds one out of the following two criteria - 10,000 unique attendees or 3,000 room nights.

Category 5, up to \$25,000: Destination Enhancement Event that meets or exceeds 5,000 unique attendees.

In accordance with the Guidelines, off cycle events that are evaluated and recommended for Categories 1-4 will be brought before the TDC for review with final approval by the Board. Events recommended for Category 5, Destination Enhancement funding, will be administratively awarded by staff.

On June 25, 2025, during the regular TDC meeting, staff presented the CVB's recommendation to fund 49 FY26 events for a total of "up to" \$2,685,000 in funding. Additionally, Events applying outside of the application window may be considered if funds are available and may be recommended at VisitSPC's discretion. Unallocated funds may be used for marketing purposes at VisitSPC's discretion. Following discussion, the TDC unanimously approved staff's recommendations.

Total Category 1 Elite Events: \$500,000
Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg - \$250,000
Valspar Championship - \$250,000

Total Category 2 Elite Events: \$675,000
The ANNIKA Driven by Gainbridge at Pelican - \$150,000
St. Pete Pride - \$150,000
The St. Pete Powerboat Grand Prix - \$125,000
The Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival - \$125,000
2026 Clearwater Offshore Nationals - \$125,000

Total Category 3 Elite Events: \$840,000
Clearwater Jazz Festival - \$75,000
Sanding Ovations, The Gallery of Sand - \$75,000
World Champions Cup - \$75,000
ReliaQuest Bowl Clearwater Beach Day - \$75,000
Dunedin Highland Games & Festival - \$75,000
St. Pete Bike Fest - \$75,000
Reggae Rise Up 2026 - \$75,000
Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival - \$65,000
St. Pete Run Fest - \$65,000
MLK Dream Parade - \$65,000

Festivals of Speed - \$65,000
Tampa Bay Blues Festival - \$55,000

Total Category 4 Elite Events: \$300,000
John's Pass Seafood Festival - \$50,000
Savor St. Pete - \$50,000
33rd Annual Spring King of the Beach - \$50,000
NYE at the Pier - \$40,000
Tampa Bay Barbeque Festival - \$40,000
St. Pete Tacos & Tequila Festival - \$40,000
Dunedin Mardi Gras - \$30,000

Total Category 5 Destination Enhancement Events: \$345,000
32nd Annual Fall King of the Beach - \$25,000
Holiday Lights in the Gardens - \$25,000
American Stage "Into the Woods" the Musical in the Park 2026 - \$25,000
OCC Invitational Bike Show - \$25,000
SHINE St. Petersburg Mural Festival (contingent on receiving mural rights) - \$25,000
St. Petersburg Distance Classic - \$25,000
Winter Pride Saint Pete - \$25,000
Multiple Events (Tampa Bay Brewers Alliance) - \$20,000
SALSA at the District - \$20,000
Dunedin Celtic Music Festival - \$20,000
LOCALTOPIA, "A Community Celebration of All Things Local" - \$20,000
Merry Beach Market & Holiday Festival - \$15,000
Dunedin Pride Week - \$15,000
Tampa Bay Empanada Festival - \$15,000
Tide Fest - \$15,000
Palm Harbor Festival - \$15,000
Clearwater AquaX Grand Prix - \$15,000

1 Event Bundle for 6 events at the St. Pete Pier: \$25,000
St. Pete Pier Fall Festival and Pumpkin Patch
Piertoberfest
Tampa Bay Ice Cream Festival
St. Pete Spring Festival & Easter Egg Hunt
Paws on Parade
Putt The Pier Holiday Edition

Fiscal Impact:

\$2,685,000 (49) FY26 Elite and Destination Enhancement Events
\$ 315,000 May be allocated toward future FY26 off-cycle events or other marketing purposes
\$3,000,000 Total FY26 available Elite Event Program funding

Funding to support the Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Brian Lowack, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Attachments:

Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program Guidelines



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 24-1339A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 8/13/2024

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2025 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) recommendation to fund 21 Elite Events through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Elite Event (Funding Program).

- Convention and Visitors Bureau staff evaluated, scored, and recommended to the TDC 21 Elite Events totaling up to funding in the amount of \$1,600,000.00.
- TDC approved a combined total of up to \$135,000.00 in additional funding to be allocated among the following 3 Elite Events, contingent upon the applicant meeting marketing requirements to receive the increased funding.
 - St. Petersburg Powerboat Grand Prix - increase funding from \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00.
 - XInsurance Clearwater Offshore Nationals - increase funding from \$75,000.00 to \$135,000.00.
 - St. Pete Bike Fest - increase funding from \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00.
- Consistent with the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator or the Director of Administrative Services will execute Elite Event agreements, and they will appear as delegated items on the Board meeting agenda once final terms and marketing deliverables are agreed upon.
- In addition to the Elite Events, staff will administratively award Destination Enhancement funding to 18 Destination Enhancement Events totaling \$265,000.00 in funding.
- Funding for these Elite Events and Destination Enhancement funding is included in the FY25 Proposed Budget in the Tourist Development Tax Fund. This item does not obligate the County before the adoption of the FY25 Budget.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Deliver First-Class Services to the Public and our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

With Board approval, CVB staff will administer the FY25 Funding Program, which provides funding to qualified, high-profile and community events that meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines). In addition to the funding, the CVB also provides events with value in-kind contributions that may include economic impact and visitor profile studies, an on-site truss, and more.

Background Information:

Tourist Development Tax funds may be legally expended for an activity / event if that event has as one of its main purposes the attraction of tourists as evidenced by the promotion of the event to tourists, per Fla. Stat. 125.0104(5)(a)3. In enacting this authorization, Pinellas County's Tourist Development Plan, Section 118-32 of the Pinellas County Code, authorizes the use of up to \$2,000,000.00 annually for the marketing of special events and programs, which funding is governed by the Guidelines adopted by the Board on April 9, 2024. Those Guidelines include the following criteria:

Category 1: Elite Event that generates at least 50,000 unique attendees or over 15,000 room nights and is nationally broadcast.

Category 2: Elite Event that generates at least 15,000 attendees or over 4,500 room nights.

Category 3: Elite Event or Destination Enhancement Event that generates at least 10,000 attendees or over 3,000 room nights.

Category 4: Destination Enhancement Event that generates at least 7,500 attendees.

Category 5: New event to Pinellas County (considered Destination Enhancement Event).

On July 17, 2024, during the full regular TDC meeting, CVB staff presented their recommendation to fund 39 events in FY25 for a total of \$1,865,000.00 in funding. Of the 51 applications received, 12 were deemed ineligible as they did not meet the minimum criteria for funding, and they were not new events.

TDC members discussed staff's recommendations and unanimously approved 18 Elite Events totaling \$1,375,000 and 18 Destination Enhancement Events totaling \$265,000.00 in funding.

In a separate motion, that resulted in a 7 to 5 vote, the TDC approved for the following three Elite Events to receive a combined total of \$135,000.00 in additional funding increasing the total funding for these events to \$360,000.00. The additional funding was made contingent upon the applicant providing evidence that the event meets the required criteria to receive such funding under the Guidelines. The additional funding recommendations were:

1. St. Petersburg Powerboat Grand Prix - increase funding from \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00.
2. XInsurance Clearwater Offshore Nationals - increase funding from \$75,000.00 to \$135,000.00.
3. St. Pete BikeFest - increase funding from \$50,000.00 to \$75,000.00.

Total Category 1 Elite Events: \$735,000.00

Valspar Championship - \$150,000.00

Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg presented by RP Funding - \$150,000.00

The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican - \$150,000.00

St. Petersburg Powerboat Grand Prix - \$150,000.00

XInsurance Clearwater Offshore Nationals - \$135,000.00

Total Category 2 Elite Events: \$975,000.00

St. Pete Pride - \$75,000.00

16th Annual Sanding Ovations - \$75,000.00

Reggae Rise Up Florida - \$75,000.00

Dunedin Highland Games & Festival - \$75,000.00

Reliaquest Bowl Clearwater Beach Day - \$75,000.00
Clearwater Jazz Holiday - \$75,000.00
The Pier 60 Sugar Sand festival - \$75,000.00
Rise Up Concert Series - \$75,000.00
St. Pete BikeFest - \$75,000.00
32nd Annual Spring King of the Beach - \$50,000.00
St. Pete Run Fest - \$50,000.00
2025 John's Pass Seafood Festival - \$50,000.00
Festivals of Speed - \$50,000.00
Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival - \$50,000.00
2024 MLK Dream Big Parade - \$50,000.00

Total Category 3 Elite Event: \$25,000.00
31st Annual Fall King of the Beach

Total Category 3 Destination Enhancement Events: \$175,000.00 (\$25,000.00 per applicant)
Holiday Lights in the Gardens
St. Pete Tacos & Tequila Festival
SHINE St. Petersburg Mural Festival
St. Pete Bacon & BBQ Festival
OCC Invitational Bike Show
Tampa Bay Blues Festival
St. Pete Pier Bundle (includes 3 events)

Total Category 4 Destination Enhancement Events: \$60,000.00 (\$20,000.00 per applicant)
American Stage "Hair" the Musical in the Park 2025
Localtopia, "A Community Celebration of All Things Local"
NYE at the Pier

Total Category 5 New Events: \$30,000.00 (\$15,000.00 per applicant)
Rays Music Festival
St. Pete Pier Bundle (includes 5 events)

Fiscal Impact:

\$1,735,000.00 Elite Events
\$ 265,000.00 Destination Enhancement Events
\$2,000,000.00 Total FY25 Program Funding

Funding to support the Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Brian Lowack, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Attachments:

Elite Event and Destination Enhancement Funding Program Guidelines



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 23-1192A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 8/15/2023

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2024 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the program's \$2 million funding cap under the Tourist Development Plan.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) recommendation to fund 34 Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 events through the Elite Event Funding Program including a waiver of the Tourist Development Plan's \$2 million maximum funding cap.

- TDC unanimously approved 34 Elite Events for a maximum "up to" total of \$2,045,000.00 for FY24. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event to ensure a return on investment. The FY24 Proposed Budget includes \$2M for these purposes. Making payments based on these recommendations will be dependent on adoption of the Proposed Budget in September. Should all \$2,045,000 be agreed upon, either the budget for the Convention and Visitors Bureau will need to be amended or funding availability will need to be found within the budget.
- CVB Staff evaluated, scored, and recommended 33 Elite Events to the TDC for a maximum total funding amount of \$1,820,000.00.
- If fully approved as recommended by the TDC, this action will require the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to waive the \$2 million Elite Event funding cap under the current Tourist Development Plan.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator or the Director of Administrative Services will execute the agreements and they will appear as Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.
- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the following criteria in accordance with the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines:
 - Category 1 - generate at least 50,000 unique attendees or over 15,000 room nights and be nationally broadcast.
 - Category 2 - generate at least 15,000 unique attendees or over 4,500 room nights.
 - Category 3 - generate at least 10,000 unique attendees or over 3,000 room nights.
 - Category 4 - generate at least 7,500 unique attendees.
 - Category 5 - must be a new event to the County.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Deliver First-Class Services to the Public and our Customers

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

Summary:

With Board approval, CVB staff will administer the FY24 Elite Event Funding Program, which provides funding to qualified, high-profile events that meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Guidelines and that provide media and/or marketing exposure for the County. CVB staff will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits. In addition to the funding, the CVB also provides events with value in-kind contributions that include return on investment studies, visitor profile studies, an on-site entryway truss, and more.

If FY24 Elite Events are fully approved as recommended here, this action will require the Board to waive the Tourist Development Plan's (TDP's) \$2 million funding cap for a maximum not to exceed amount of \$45,000.00, subject to the final negotiated funding agreements.

Background Information:

The current Guidelines were adopted by the Board on March 8, 2022. The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 unique attendees or 15,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 15,000 attendees or 4,500 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees or 3,000 room nights and Category 4 events to generate at least 7,500 attendees. Category 5 events are required to be new events to the County in order to qualify for the program.

On July 19, 2023, during the full regular TDC meeting, CVB staff presented their recommendation to fund a total of 33 events for the FY24 Elite Event Funding Program for a maximum total of \$1,820,000.00. Of the 47 applications received, six events were deemed ineligible as they did not meet the minimum criteria for room nights or attendance and were not new events: Savor St. Pete, Tampa Bay Afrofuturism Festival, 12 Days of Christmas, Merry Beach Market, Dunedin Pride, and Lift Every Voice. Additionally, the Suncoast Criterium event was being held in FY23 and chose not to apply for FY24 funding and the OctoberWest application was withdrawn. A total of six events did not receive the minimum score of 70 to be considered for funding: 2024 M.L.K. Dream Big Parade, Orange County Choppers Invitational Bike Builder Show, Putt the Pier, Rocking Roller Rink, Spring Festival and Halloween on Central.

TDC members discussed staff's recommendations and approved increased funding for the following events:

1. Baystar Clearwater Offshore Nationals for up to \$150,000.00 contingent upon the event meeting the criteria for national broadcast.
2. St. Pete Pride for up to \$150,000.00 contingent upon event meeting the criteria for national broadcast.
3. Sanding Ovations for up to \$75,000.00 contingent upon event providing an updated marketing plan and sponsorship that supports Category 2 consideration.
4. Orange County Choppers Invitational Bike Builder Show for up to \$25,000.00 contingent upon event providing an updated marketing plan and sponsorship that supports Category 3 consideration.

Section 118-32 (a)(1) of the Tourist Development Plan caps Elite Event funding at \$2 million per fiscal year. If FY24 Elite Events are fully approved at \$2,045,000.00 as recommended here, the amount exceeds the TDP cap. Consequently, the Board is being requested to provide a waiver of the \$2 million cap for a not to exceed total amount of \$45,000.00, as may be needed based on final agreement negotiations.

Total Category 1 Events: \$750,000 (\$150,000.00 per event)

Valspar Championship
Baystar Clearwater Offshore Nationals
St. Pete Pride
The ANNIKA driven by Gainbridge at Pelican
St. Petersburg P1 Powerboat Grand Prix

Total Category 2 Events: \$900,000.00 (\$75,000.00 per event)

Clearwater Beach Day & ReliaQuest Bowl
Clearwater Jazz Holiday
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival
Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival
St. Pete Bike Fest
Enchant Christmas St. Petersburg
Dunedin Highland Games
Festivals of Speed
St. Pete Run Fest
Publix Rock 'n' Roll Running Series Clearwater
Reggae Rise Up
15th Annual Sanding Ovations

Total Category 3 Events: \$300,000.00 (\$25,000.00 per event)

St. Pete Tacos & Tequila Festival
St. Pete Bacon & BBQ Festival
30th Annual Fall King of the Beach
2024 John's Pass Seafood Festival
31st Annual Spring King of the Beach
Localtopia
SHINE St. Petersburg Mural Festival
St. Pete Fall Fest & Pumpkin Patch
The Fourth
NYE on the Pier
Holiday Lights in the Gardens
Orange County Choppers Invitational Bike Builder Show

Total Category 4 Events: \$80,000.00 (\$20,000.00 per event)

Piertoberfest
Shopapalooza Festival
First Night St. Petersburg
Tampa Bay Ice Cream Festival

Total Category 5 Event: \$15,000.00

St. Pete Pier LIVE

Total Amount All Categories: \$2,045,000.00

Fiscal Impact:

FY24 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$2,045,000.00

The CVB's FY24 budgeted expenditure for the Elite Event Funding Program is \$2 million. If final funding agreements are negotiated at an amount above the total budgeted expenditure, if necessary, the CVB will seek additional funding from reserves through a budget amendment.

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Brian Lowack, Interim Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 22-1129A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 8/16/2022

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2023 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Elite Events.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of attendees or substantial room nights in the County, Category 4 events to generate at least 7,500 attendees and Category 5 events to be a new event to Pinellas.
- This is the first-year staff evaluated Elite Event applications and submitted recommendations for funding to the TDC.
- TDC unanimously approved staff's recommendations to fund 30 FY23 Elite Events for a cumulative total not to exceed \$1,385,000.00. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event to ensure a return on investment.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator or the Director of Administrative Services will execute the agreements and they will appear as Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer the Elite Event Funding Program, which provides funding to qualified, high -profile events that meet the minimum criteria as set out in the Guidelines and that provide media and/or marketing exposure for the County. CVB staff will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits, in accordance with the Guidelines.

Background Information:

The current Guidelines were adopted by the Board on March 8, 2022. One of the major changes to the Guidelines included shifting evaluation of the applications from the TDC to staff. The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 attendees or 15,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 15,000 attendees or 4,500 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees or 3,000 room nights and Category 4 events to generate at least 7,500 attendees. Category 5 events are required to be new events to the County in order to qualify for the program.

On June 21, 2022, during the full regular TDC meeting, CVB staff presented their recommendations for the FY23 Elite Event Funding Program. Of the 35 applications received, two were deemed

ineligible, Clearwater Sangria Festival and Spring Beach Bash, as they did not meet the minimum criteria for room nights or attendance and were not new events. Additionally, the MLK Dream Big Parade, Reggae Rise Up Florida, and Holiday Putt Putt on the Pier did not receive the minimum score of 70 to be considered for funding.

TDC members discussed staff's recommendations and were concerned the MLK Parade had not received the minimum scoring. Subsequently, the TDC asked the CVB to explore other ways this worthwhile event could be funded. After further discussion and consideration, the TDC members approved the recommendations from staff as set forth below, including the maximum (or "up to") funding amounts, by a vote of 9-0. Council member Williams abstained from voting on the Valspar PGA Championship due to a voting conflict. Mayor Welch and Council members Prather and Rodriguez were not in attendance.

On July 18, 2022, the CVB met with MLK organizers from the Advantage Village Academy, Inc., (AVA) and a representative from the City of St. Petersburg. During the meeting the CVB discussed how their Elite Event application was scored, funding options outside the Elite Event Program and sponsorship opportunities. Future meetings are planned and will include among other things the valuation of AVA's sponsorship packages, discussion of marketing ideas to grow the event, and opportunities for increasing the County's exposure in other markets.

Total Category 1 Events: \$525,000
\$150,000 Pelican Women's Championship
\$ 75,000 Clearwater Beach Day & ReliaQuest Bowl
\$150,000 Valspar Championship
\$150,000 P1 Offshore St. Pete Grand Prix

Total Category 2 Events: \$450,000 (\$75,000 per event)
Publix Rock 'n' Roll Running Series Clearwater
Clearwater Jazz Holiday
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals
St. Pete Pride Parade
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival
St. Pete BikeFest

Total Category 3 Events: \$225,000 (\$25,000 per event)
29th Annual Fall King of the Beach
St. Pete Run Fest
14th Annual Sanding Ovations
Gasparilla Bowl
John's Pass Seafood Festival
Festivals of Speed
Dunedin Highland Games & Festival
30th Annual Spring King of the Beach
St. Pete Tacos and Tequila Festival

Total Category 4 Events: \$95,000
\$20,000 St. Pete Pier Fall Festival
\$15,000 Holiday Lights in the Gardens

\$20,000 St. Pete Bacon & BBQ Festival

\$20,000 Localtopia

\$20,000 The Fourth on the St. Pete Pier

Total Category 5 Events: \$90,000

Fall Beach Bash

Banyan Music Festival

Sunshine City Smokeout

NYE on the Pier

Shamrock Fest

Tall Ships® St. Petersburg 2023

Total Categories 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Events: \$1,385,000

Fiscal Impact:

FY 2023 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$1,385,000

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Cities of St. Petersburg, Treasure Island and Madeira Beach

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines



I. Background & Overview

Pinellas County collects a six-percent Tourist Development Tax ("Bed Tax") on all overnight tourism accommodations in the County. This tax is levied on customers of hotels, motels, condominiums, campgrounds, apartments and private homes that rent accommodations for less than six months in duration. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC"), with input from the Tourist Development Council ("TDC"), has developed a Tourist Development Plan ("Plan") to guide how these proceeds are spent. Bed Taxes are spent, in large part, on marketing Pinellas County as a destination for leisure, business, conference, sports, film production, and other tourist travel. In support of these tourism marketing efforts, the Plan authorizes the expenditure of up to \$2,000,000 annually for: (i) marketing special events and programs; (ii) providing promotional or operating support for exhibits or programs provided by museums owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; (iii) providing promotional support for zoological parks that are owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; and (iv) event and program sponsorships.

One of the marketing programs administrated by Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater ("VSPC") is the **Elite Event Funding Program** for events meeting the criteria to receive funding from TDT funds. The genesis of the Elite Event program was called "New Product" funding, which then became "Special Events" funding and is now operated under the current name. Prior to the New Products program, events were funded on an ad hoc basis. The New Product (now Elite Event) program was created with the intent to provide a more systematic means for funding applications, review and recommendations for funding. The goal moving forward is to continue the program to allow maximum 1) **consistency**; 2) **return on investment and sustainability of the individual events and the overall program**; and 3) **transparency**.

The County's fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year. Therefore, applications for Elite Event funding are for annual events that are held within the next fiscal year after the application submittal date between October 1 and the following September 30. However, events that are annually held during either the last week of September or the first week of October are eligible to apply for funding for two annual events in those instances when both annual events fall within the same fiscal year.

II. Definitions

In the context of this tourism marketing/promotion program, the following definitions apply:

- A. "Elite Event" shall mean an organized sporting event, concert, exhibition, festival, fair, special event or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule that is generally less than seven (7) days in duration, and that: (i) is marketed to tourists that would consider visiting the destination and staying overnight to observe or participate in the Elite Event; and (ii) is conducted at a venue in Pinellas County, generating at least the minimum number of required room nights in Pinellas County and/or unique event attendees for funding eligibility as set out herein.
- B. "Marketing" shall mean advertising (print, electronic, digital, etc.), direct sales, public relations, promotions, or research, exclusive of professional fees and services, designed to increase tourist-related business activity from outside Pinellas County.
- C. "Sponsorship" shall mean a mutually beneficial business arrangement between VSPC, on behalf of the County, and an eligible applicant producing an Elite Event, wherein VSPC receives event assets and opportunities to promote VSPC brand and the Pinellas County destination not included in the Marketing Plan.
- D. "Tourist" shall mean a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her residence and/or who rents or leases transient accommodations in Pinellas County as described in Section 125.0104(3)(a), Florida Statutes.
- E. "Unique Attendees" shall mean a single individual attending the event whether for a single day or multiple days. Examples of Unique Attendees:
 - a worker issued a 2-day credential is considered one (1) Unique Attendee
 - an individual purchasing a 3-day package is considered one (1) Unique Attendee

III. Funding Categories & Eligibility

- A. Funding Categories are as follows:
- i. **Category I** – generates at least 50,000 “unique” paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees or over 15,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$150,000. Category 1 events must be broadcast on national television or other broadcast services such as cable, streaming services or other viewing platforms.
 - ii. **Category II** – generates at least 15,000 “unique” paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees or over 4,500 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$75,000.
 - iii. **Category III** - generates at least 10,000 “unique” paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees or over 3,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$25,000.
 - iv. **Category IV** - generates at least 7,500 “unique” paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees with maximum funding eligibility up to \$20,000.
 - v. **Category V**- a new event to Pinellas County with no local prior hotel room and/or attendance history which is required to meet Category I-IV consideration, with maximum funding eligibility up to \$15,000.00.
- B. To be considered eligible for funding, each applicant must:
- i. conduct, produce, manage, and/or operate an Elite Event at a location in Pinellas County;
 - ii. for Category I, II, and III events, generate the required room nights or unique attendees in Pinellas County as set forth herein,
 - iii. for Category IV events, generate the required attendees;
 - iv. For Category V submit completed application, including projected potential room nights/ expected “unique” attendees;
 - v. demonstrate it will attract Tourists to Pinellas County;
 - vi. provide Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits that satisfies the Marketing rating criteria in Section V. C. and that has a media value equal to or greater than the funding awarded, as determined by VSPC and/or its advertising agency of record; and
 - vii. provide VSPC exclusivity as the only CVB and Destination Marketing Organization (“DMO”) recognized supporter of the Elite Event.

IV. Conditions of Funding

- A. Funds may only be used in accordance with Chapter 125, Florida Statutes for the Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits as agreed upon with VSPC. Funds may not be used for event operating expenses, except and only to the extent any funds received by applicant are allocated by VSPC for sponsorship benefits.
- B. Applicants receiving Elite Event funding will be required to enter into and sign a Tourism Promotions Agreement prepared by the Pinellas County Attorney’s Office. This Agreement will include Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits to be negotiated and received by VSPC.
- C. Applicant’s Marketing and/or Sponsorship proposal must have a direct correlation with VSPC’s targeted markets and should specifically indicate how that correlation exists.
- D. For Elite Events held between October 1 and December 31, expenditures incurred prior to the beginning of the fiscal year may be reimbursed in the fiscal year the Elite Event is held if expressly allowed in the Funding Agreement.
- E. By accepting Elite Event funding, the applicant agrees to allow the VSPC's staff and/or research firm of record access to the venue to conduct on site intercepts with attendees to determine the value of the event, festival, program, or project to tourism and its potential for future growth.
- F. Funding will be paid in a lump sum on a post-event basis or as otherwise provided in the Tourism Promotions Agreement, subject to submittal of a fully completed and signed **Post-Event Report Form and any other documentation** acceptable to VSPC.
- G. Elite Events utilizing Pinellas County property during their event must adhere to and abide by the County’s Special Events & Facilities Use Guide available at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/Events/pdf/Special-Events-Users-Guide.pdf>.

V. Application Process & Review

- A. Application Submittal.
- i. Each applicant must submit a fully completed **Funding Application** (“Application”) per the **Application Requirements & Instructions**.
 - ii. All Applications must be submitted by the deadline established in the **Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline**.
 - iii. Incomplete or late Applications may disqualify the applicant.
- B. Review & Evaluation Process.
- i. Staff review and evaluation .
 - a. Each application will be reviewed by VSPC staff and the County Attorney's office, as may be needed, to ensure compliance with state statutes, county ordinances and these Guidelines regarding proper usage of Bed Tax funds.
 - b. Select VSPC staff along with VSPC's advertising agency of record will evaluate each application using the criteria in these guidelines and determine the tourism and marketing value of the event.
 - ii. VSPC staff will then make its funding recommendations to the entire TDC who will then review and finalize their funding recommendations for BCC review and approval.
 - iii. BCC Review.
 - a. The BCC will review the funding recommendations of both VSPC staff and the TDC.
 - b. Funding recommendations and negotiations of funding agreement terms will not begin until BCC review and approval of those recommendations.
- C. Rating Criteria.
- i. Unique Attendees & Room Nights – Ability of the Elite Event to generate unique attendees (Category I, II, III, and IV) OR room nights in excess of the threshold established to be eligible for funding (Category I, II, and III).
 - ii. Marketing Plan – The value of the applicant’s proposed Marketing Plan in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the plan exceeds the funding request.
 - iii. Sponsorship Benefits – The value of the applicant’s proposed Sponsorship Benefits in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the benefits exceeds the funding request (includes onsite benefits).
 - iv. Economic impact - The financial effect an event will have on the local economy resulting from tourists.
 - v. Timing of Event: Peak vs. Offseason & Non-Conflicting – Timing of the Elite Event to coincide with non-peak or shoulder seasons in Pinellas County tourism. Preference will be given to Elite Events which occur during “off season” periods, including January 1 through February 15, May 1 through June 30, and September 1 through December 31. In addition, timing of the Elite Event should not conflict with other Elite Events or other special events taking place in Pinellas County.
 - vi. Event History & Community Support – Demonstration of widespread community support and charitable contributions by the Elite Event applicant that benefit the Pinellas County community. Ability of the Elite Event to fulfill any previous contractual obligations with Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to attract high caliber and high profile artists, athletes and/or participants to perform and/or attend in Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to enhance the overall image of Pinellas County.
- D. Program Timeline
- i. VSPC staff, with TDC approval, will annually establish a schedule for consideration and award of funding, which will generally comply with the following timeline:

March	Commence application process
April	Deadline for receipt of applications
May	Staff and advertising agency of record evaluation of applications
May/June	TDC reviews and considers proposed funding recommendations
June/July	BCC reviews and considers recommendations
July	VSPC staff negotiates terms of the funding agreements
 - ii. Each year’s timeline will be published and available online at <https://partners.visitstpeteclearwater.com/resource/funding-opportunities/elite-event-funding-program>.

VI. Key Documents

In addition to the Funding Guidelines, the Elite Event Funding Program is supported by other key documents, including:

- A. Program Overview
- B. Application Requirements & Instructions
- C. Funding Application
- D. Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline
- E. Post-Event Report Form
- F. Elite Event Funding Agreement



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-1744A, **Version:** 1

Subject:

Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2022 funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines' evaluation committee requirements.

Recommended Action:

Approval of an amendment to the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Elite Events, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines' (Guidelines) evaluation committee requirements for St. Pete BikeFest.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of event attendees and substantial room nights in the County, and requires Cultural Heritage events (Category 4), to generate a large number of attendees.
- On July 13, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approved 18 - FY22 Elite Events for a cumulative total not exceeding \$1 million.
- During the August 18, 2021, TDC meeting, the TDC approved for the Board to consider a waiver of the Guidelines to bypass committee review and evaluation and move St. Pete BikeFest from a Category 3 funding level to Category 2.
- Approval of this amendment will increase the amount of funding for BikeFest from \$25,000.00 to an amount not exceeding \$75,000.00.
- As Elite Event funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board delegated authority, the County Administrator or Purchasing Director will execute the agreements and they will appear as delegated items on a Board meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will proceed to negotiate the terms and final funding for St. Pete BikeFest as a Category 2 Elite Event, eligible for up-to \$75,000.00 in funding, in accordance with the Guidelines. This event is scheduled to be held at the Orange County Choppers Road House & Museum on November 18-21, 2021.

Approval of this amendment will increase the FY22 Elite Event Funding by \$50,000.00 to a new cumulative total of \$1,050,000.00.

Background Information:

On July 21, 2021, at the regular TDC meeting and subsequent to the Board's July 13, 2021, approval

of FY22 Elite Events, TDC council member Henderson initiated a discussion on moving BikeFest from Category 3 to the Category 2 funding level for FY22. The TDC deferred the discussion until the August TDC meeting to allow time for the BikeFest event organizer to be present. During the TDC meeting on August 18, 2021, the TDC members discussed the request and questioned the event organizer as to why BikeFest had not been submitted as a Category 2 event during the FY22 application period. The event organizer relayed that at the time the application was due, he had no knowledge of the number of room nights from the host hotel that were generated by the FY20 event nor did he have the results from the CVB's Economic Impact Study that had been performed on the event. The FY21 BikeFest was cancelled due to the pandemic, which is why the event would need to rely on FY20 event data for the FY22 Elite Event application submission. After discussion and consideration, the TDC voted 8-0 in favor of recommending the Board consider a waiver of the Guidelines to bypass the requirement for committee review and evaluation, since not all Elite Event committee members were present, and approved St. Pete BikeFest as a Category 2 event, eligible for funding in an amount up-to \$75,000.00.

The Guidelines require Category 2 events generate at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights. According to the CVB's Economic Impact Study performed by Destination Analysts for the FY20 event, BikeFest resulted in 25,926 unique attendees and 18,228 room nights.

The current Guidelines were approved by the Board on March 10, 2020. The TDC is scheduled to review the Guidelines on November 17, 2021, following the regular TDC meeting. If revisions are recommended and approved, they will be brought before the Board for final approval.

Fiscal Impact:

\$25,000.00 Current approved funding for BikeFest

\$50,000.00 Increased funding to move BikeFest to Category 2

\$75,000.00 Revised maximum funding amount for FY22 BikeFest

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines

BikeFest Economic Impact Study



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-1190A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 7/13/2021

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2022 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines scoring requirements.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2022 Elite Events, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines) scoring requirements as to the Localtopia event.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of event attendees and substantial room nights in the County, and requires Cultural Heritage events (Category 4), to generate a large number of attendees.
- There are 18 Elite Events recommended by the TDC to be funded for a cumulative total not exceeding \$1 million. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event agreement to ensure a return on investment.
- The TDC approved for the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to consider a waiver of the Guidelines as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator will execute the agreements and they will appear as Non-Procurement Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer the Elite Event Funding Program which provides funding to qualified, high-profile events that meet the minimum criteria for room night generation and/or attendance, as well as media and/or marketing exposure for the County. The CVB will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits, in accordance with the Guidelines.

Background Information:

The current Guidelines were approved by the Board on March 10, 2020. This fall, the TDC is scheduled to meet for a review of the Guidelines. If changes are recommended, the revised Guidelines will be brought before the Board for final approval.

The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 unique attendees and at least 25,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees and 5,000 room nights. However, Category 4 events have a

minimum of at least 20,000 attendees and no room night requirement.

On June 11, 2021, the TDC's Elite Event Committee (Committee) met to evaluate and score those applications, which had been reviewed by staff and determined eligible for consideration. Those scores and funding considerations, as set forth below, went to the full TDC for their consideration. Council member Williams abstained from voting on the Valspar PGA Championship due to a voting conflict.

On June 23, 2021, during the full regular TDC meeting, the TDC members discussed the St. Pete Run Fest, which the Committee had deemed ineligible for funding, and Localtopia, which had not received the minimum scoring criteria to be considered for funding. After discussion and consideration, the TDC voted 3-5 against allowing the St. Pete Run Fest to be considered for funding based on the determination that the event did not meet the definition of a "cultural heritage event" per the Guidelines. Additionally, the TDC voted 7-1 in favor of recommending the Board consider a waiver of the Guidelines, as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia. The TDC further approved the recommendations of the Elite Event Committee, including the following maximum (or "up to") funding amounts, by a vote of 8-0. Council member Commissioner Pletcher was not present for the vote, and Council members Henderson and Mayor Hibbard were not in attendance.

Total Category 1 Events: \$250,000 (\$125,000 per event)

Valspar PGA Championship

Pelican LPGA Women's Championship

Total Category 2 Events: \$525,000 (\$75,000 per event)

Outback Bowl & Clearwater Beach Day

Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals

Clearwater Jazz Holiday

Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival

Martin Luther King Jr. Parade Weekend

St. Pete Pride

Enchant St. Petersburg

Total Category 3 Events: \$200,000 (\$25,000 per event)

King of the Beach (Fall)

King of the Beach (Spring)

Sanding Ovations Masters Cup

Gasparilla Bowl

DTSP Songwriters Festival

St. Pete BikeFest

Festivals of Speed

Dunedin Highland Games & Festival

Total Category 4 Event: \$25,000

Localtopia

Total Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 Events: \$1,000,000

Fiscal Impact:

FY22 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$1,000,000

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council

City of Treasure Island

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines



I. Background & Overview

Pinellas County collects a six-percent Tourist Development Tax ("Bed Tax") on all overnight tourism accommodations in the County. This tax is levied on customers of hotels, motels, condominiums, campgrounds, apartments and private homes that rent accommodations for less than six months in duration. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC") has developed a Tourist Development Plan ("Plan") to guide how these proceeds are spent. Bed Taxes are spent, in large part, on marketing Pinellas County as a destination for leisure, business, conference, sports, film production, and other tourist travel. In support of these tourism marketing efforts, the Plan authorizes the expenditure of up to \$2,000,000 annually for: (i) marketing special events and programs; (ii) providing promotional or operating support for exhibits or programs provided by museums owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; (iii) providing promotional support for zoological parks that are owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; and (iv) event and program sponsorships. The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council ("TDC") was established to make recommendations on how best to spend Bed Tax proceeds, including proposing an annual budget and funding for marketing and promotion activities related to special events.

One of the marketing programs administrated by Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater ("VSPC") on behalf of the TDC is the **Elite Event Funding Program** for major events meeting the criteria to receive funding from TDT funds. The genesis of the Elite Event program was called "New Product" funding, which then became "Special Events" funding and is now operated under the current name. Prior to the New Products program, events were funded on an ad hoc basis. The New Product (now Elite Event) program was created with the intent to provide a more systematic means for funding applications, review and recommendations for funding. The goal moving forward is to continue the program to allow maximum 1) **consistency**; 2) **return on investment and sustainability of the individual events and the overall program**; and 3) **transparency**.

Examples of events that have received funding in the past include the Clearwater Jazz Holiday, Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Outback Bowl, St. Petersburg Bowl, Tampa Bay Rays, Valspar PGA Golf Tournament, Clearwater Super Boat National Championship, and the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon of St. Petersburg. Many of these events either generated or are projected to generate significant attendance and/or room nights, although not necessarily at the level of traditional Elite Events.

The County's fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year. Therefore, applications for Elite Event funding are for annual events that are held within the next fiscal year after the application submittal date between October 1 and the following September 30. However, events that are annually held during either the last week of September or the first week of October are eligible to apply for funding for two annual events in those instances when both annual events fall within the same fiscal year.

II. Definitions

In the context of this tourism marketing/promotion program, the following definitions apply:

- A. "Cultural Heritage Event" shall mean an Elite Event that recognizes and/or celebrates community history and identity, bonds to the past, present, and future, and/or values and traditions that attracts Tourists from VSPC's targeted markets.
- B. "Elite Event" shall mean a new or existing organized sporting event, concert, exhibition, festival, fair, special event or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule that is generally less than seven (7) days in duration, and that: (i) is marketed to tourists that would consider visiting the destination and staying overnight to observe or participate in the Elite Event; and (ii) is conducted at a venue in Pinellas County, generating at least the minimum number of required room nights in Pinellas County and/or unique event attendees for funding eligibility as set out herein.
- C. "Marketing" shall mean advertising (print, electronic, digital, etc.), direct sales, public relations, promotions, or research, exclusive of professional fees and services, designed to increase tourist-related business activity from outside Pinellas County.

D. "Sponsorship" shall mean a mutually beneficial business arrangement between VSPC, on behalf of the County, and an eligible applicant producing an Elite Event, wherein VSPC receives event assets and opportunities to promote VSPC brand and the Pinellas County destination not included in the Marketing Plan.

E. "Tourist" shall mean a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her residence and who rents or leases transient accommodations in Pinellas County as described in Section 125.0104(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

F. "Unique Attendees" shall mean a single individual attending the event whether for a single day or multiple days. Examples of Unique Attendees:

- a worker issued a 2-day credential is considered one (1) Unique Attendee
- an individual purchasing a 3-day package is considered one (1) Unique Attendee

III. Funding Categories & Eligibility

A. Funding Categories are as follows:

- Category I** – generates at least 50,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 25,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$125,000. Category 1 events must be broadcast on national television.
- Category II** – generates at least 20,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 10,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$75,000.
- Category III** - generates at least 10,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 5,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$25,000.
- Category IV** - a Cultural Heritage Event that generates at least 20,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees with maximum funding eligibility up to \$25,000.

B. To be considered eligible for funding, each applicant must:

- conduct, produce, manage, and/or operate an Elite Event at a venue in Pinellas County;
- for Category I, II, and III events, generate the required room nights in Pinellas County as set forth herein, regardless of attendance at the Elite Event;
- for Category IV events, generate the required attendees, and attract Tourists from VSPC's targeted markets.
- demonstrate it will attract Tourist to Pinellas County;
- provide Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits that satisfies the Marketing rating criteria in Section V. C. and that has a media value equal to or greater than the Sponsorship payment or Marketing plan funding, as determined by VSPC and/or its advertising agency of record; and
- provide VSPC exclusivity as the only CVB and Destination Marketing Organization ("DMO") recognized supporter of the Elite Event.

IV. Conditions of Funding

A. Funds may only be used in accordance with Chapter 125, Florida Statutes for the Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits as agreed upon with VSPC. Funds may not be used for event operating expenses, except and only to the extent any funds received by applicant are allocated by VSPC for sponsorship benefits.

B. Applicants receiving Elite Event funding will be required to enter into and sign a Tourism Promotions Agreement prepared by the Pinellas County Attorney's Office. This Agreement will include Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits to be negotiated and received by VSPC.

C. Applicant's Marketing and/or Sponsorship proposal must have a direct correlation with VSPC's targeted markets and should specifically indicate how that correlation exists.

D. For Elite Events held between October 1 and December 31, expenditures incurred prior to the beginning of the fiscal year may be reimbursed in the fiscal year the Elite Event is held if expressly allowed in the Funding Agreement.

E. By accepting Elite Event funding, the applicant agrees to allow the VSPC's staff and/or research firm of record access to the venue to conduct on site intercepts with attendees to determine the value of the event, festival, program, or project to tourism and its potential for future growth.

F. Funding will be paid in a lump sum on a post-event basis or as otherwise provided in the Tourism Promotions Agreement, subject to submittal of a fully completed and signed **Post-Event Report Form** acceptable to VSPC.

G. Elite Events utilizing Pinellas County property during their event must adhere to and abide by the County's Special Events & Facilities Use Guide available at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/Events/pdf/Special-Events-Users-Guide.pdf>.

V. Application Process & Review

A. Application Submittal.

- i. Each applicant must submit a fully completed **Funding Application** ("Application") per the **Application Requirements & Instructions**.
- ii. All Applications must be submitted by the deadline established in the **Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline**.
- iii. Incomplete or late Applications will disqualify the applicant.

B. Review & Evaluation Process.

- i. County Attorney.
 - a. Each application will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office to ensure compliance with state statutes, county ordinances and these Guidelines regarding proper usage of Bed Tax funds.
- ii. TDC Committee Review.
 - a. The TDC Chair shall appoint, in addition to the TDC Chair, no more than six (6) TDC members, of which four (4) must be tourism industry appointees, to serve on the Elite Event Committee ("Committee").
 - b. Each application deemed eligible by the County Attorney will be reviewed and scored at a meeting of the Committee, at which:
 1. The Committee will determine funding recommendations for each application within the TDC's recommended budget and in accordance with these Guidelines and Rating Criteria below.
 2. Applicants may be invited to attend, make presentations and answer questions of the Committee members.
 3. At conclusion of applicant presentations, Committee members will complete scoring.
 4. Category 1 applications will be scored first by the Committee, followed by Category 2, Category 3, and Category IV.
 5. The average score of each remaining Committee score will be announced by VSPC staff as the applicant's score.
 6. Once all applications have been reviewed and scored, VSPC staff will provide a ranking of highest to lowest scoring applicants.
 7. Beginning with the highest scoring applications, the Committee will determine recommended funding amounts for each application on an "up to" not-to-exceed basis.

However, absent objection by VSPC staff or any TDC member based on a past or current non-compliance with funding guidelines, misrepresentation, material change in the scope or economic benefits from the event, or failure to deliver marketing and or sponsorship benefits as agreed to, events that have received funding for the prior 5 years and which have consistently complied with all funding guideline requirements and submitted a complete Elite Event funding application herein shall bypass the evaluation review and scoring process and will be eligible for funding consideration in and up to amounts as requested, subject to staff negotiations, concurrence by the TDC, and subsequent approval by the BCC.

- c. The Committee will present its funding recommendations to the TDC for approval. Funding recommendations will be a maximum "up to" not-to-exceed amount and subject to negotiation by VSPC staff.
 - iii. TDC Review & Recommendations.
 - a. The TDC will review and consider approval of the funding recommendations presented by the Committee.
 - b. The TDC will vote on funding recommendations for review and consideration of approval by the BCC.
 - iv. BCC Review.
 - a. The BCC will review the funding recommendations provided by the TDC.
 - b. Funding recommendations will be considered for approval by the BCC.

C. Rating Criteria.

- i. Unique Attendees & Room Nights (200 points) – Ability of the Elite Event to generate unique attendees (Category I, II, III, and IV) AND room nights in excess of the threshold established to be eligible for funding (Category I, II, and III).
- ii. Marketing Plan (400 points) – The value of the applicant’s proposed Marketing Plan in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the plan exceeds the funding request.
- iii. Sponsorship Benefits (200 points) – The value of the applicant’s proposed Sponsorship Benefits in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the benefits exceeds the funding request (includes onsite benefits).
- iv. Timing of Event: Peak vs. Offseason & Non-Conflicting (100 points) – Timing of the Elite Event to coincide with non-peak or shoulder seasons in Pinellas County tourism. Preference will be given to Elite Events which occur during “off season” periods, including January 1 through February 15, May 1 through June 30, and September 1 through December 31. In addition, timing of the Elite Event should not conflict with other Elite Events or other special events taking place in Pinellas County.
- v. Event History & Community Support (100 points) – Demonstration of widespread community support and charitable contributions by the Elite Event applicant that benefit the Pinellas County community. Ability of the Elite Event to fulfill any previous contractual obligations with Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to attract high caliber and high profile artists, athletes and/or participants to perform and/or attend in Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to enhance the overall image of Pinellas County.

D. Application Scoring.

- i. Committee members will base their scores on the substance of the applications relative to the goals and objectives of the Elite Event Funding Program for each of the categories above in the following rating scale:

0% - 9%	unresponsive to the requirements of that item being rated
10% - 39%	does not meet current requirements of the item being rated
40% - 69%	partially meets requirements of that item being rated
70% - 89%	fully responsive to the requirements of the item being rated
90% - 100%	exceeds all requirements of the item being rated
- ii. All applications receiving an average score of 700 points or above out of the maximum 1000 points will be considered eligible for funding consideration. A score of 700 points or higher does not guarantee funding.

E. Program Timeline

- i. VSPC staff, with TDC approval, will annually establish a schedule for consideration and award of funding, which will generally comply with the following timeline:

March	Commence application process
April	Deadline for receipt of applications
May	Legal, Staff and Committee review of applications
May/June	Initial Elite Event Committee meeting
May/June	2 nd Committee Meeting to Determine Funding (if necessary)
June/July	TDC reviews and considers the Committee report
July	BCC final funding approval
TBD	Elite Event Funding Agreement executed
- ii. Each year’s timeline will be published in the **Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline**.

VI. Key Documents

In addition to the Funding Guidelines, the Elite Event Funding Program is supported by other key documents, including:

- A. Program Overview
- B. Application Requirements & Instructions
- C. Funding Application
- D. Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline
- E. Post-Event Report Form
- F. Elite Event Funding Agreement

**Tourist Development Council
Pinellas County
June 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, met in regular session on this date at 9:04 AM in the Magnolia Room at the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida.

Present

Dave Eggers, Chair, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair
Russ Kimball, Vice-Chair, Sheraton Sand Key Resort
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Rick Kriseman, City of St. Petersburg Mayor
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.
Melinda Pletcher, City of St. Pete Beach Commissioner (late arrival)
Charles Prather, The Birchwood Inn
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises
Frank Hibbard, City of Clearwater Mayor

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Leroy Bridges, VSPC Vice President of Digital and Communications
Tim Ramsberger, VSPC Chief Operating Officer
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Jim Abernathy, Sr. Financial Management and Budget Analyst
Shirley Westfall, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE/ROLL CALL

Chair Eggers called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM and requested that Mayor Kriseman lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Eggers expressed his gratitude and welcomed the agency team members in attendance.

APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES – MAY 18, 2021

Upon motion by Ms. Moore, seconded by Mr. Kimball and carried unanimously, the minutes of the May 18 meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Upon invitation by Chair Eggers, EndorFUN Sports Chief Operating Officer Ryan Jordan appeared and expressed why the St. Petersburg Run Fest should be included in the Elite Event Funding Program, stating that the event is much like a festival in terms of merging local heritage and economic impact with wellness, charities, arts, and music.

FINANCE UPDATES

Revenues

Mr. Abernathy referred to a report and presented an update of revenues and projections for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and FY 2022 and indicated that Tourist Development Tax revenue is projected at \$63.1 million in the budget request; and that operating and capital reserves are \$41 million and \$40.7 million, respectively. He noted that the one-time use of \$4.4 million from reserves and used for additional marketing expenses in the current budget year will be repaid in FY 2022; and that operating reserves will be more than adequate moving forward.

In response to a query by Mr. Prather, Mr. Abernathy indicated that the budget will have a \$61.2 million fund balance beginning FY 2022.

Expenses

Mr. Hayes referred to a document titled *Financial Statement for May 2021* and discussed the items included under Personal Services, Operational Expenses, and Promotional Expenses, noting that the statement reflects what has been paid to date; and that certain payment data is often delayed up to three months, particularly in relation to advertising.

Referring to a document titled *Finance Report – May 2021*, Mr. Hayes explained that the report captures expenses that are still in progress but have not yet been paid; and that it includes an adjusted budget indicating a more accurate account of the amount of funds

remaining in the current budget; whereupon, he discussed several categories reflected in the document.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Hayes stated that advertising expenses would increase in July to boost fall travel; that VSPC has several open positions; and that tourism is increasing to reach pre-pandemic levels, and discussion ensued.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

FY 2022 Elite Events Recommendations

Mr. Ramsberger referred to a document titled *FY22 Elite Events Funding Program TDC Committee Review, June 11, 2021*, listing the elite events, scoring, and funding amounts recommended by the Elite Events Funding Committee. He related that the following three events did not qualify for funding:

1. Books at the Beach Convention – the application did not meet requirements.
2. Localtopia, “A Community Celebration of All Things Local” – received a score below the recommended guidelines for consideration.
3. St Pete Run Fest – did not meet the “cultural heritage” definition of the criteria.

LOCALTOPIA

Mayor Kriseman stated that Localtopia’s attendance has grown each year; that City staff has to close certain streets during the event as it has outgrown its assigned location; and that the TDC had a similar discussion last year as to what qualifies an event for funding; whereupon, Ms. Rodriguez stated that she values the event and its purpose and offered to adjust her scoring of the application.

Discussion ensued regarding the definition and scoring of cultural events. Mr. Prather stated that Localtopia certainly celebrates the cultural diversity of local businesses within St. Petersburg. Mayor Bujalski indicated that approving the event would open the door to other similar events throughout Pinellas County, and discussion ensued.

Responding to a query by Mayor Kriseman, Attorney Zas stated that allowing an application to be rescored would be inappropriate and recommended that the Council ask the BCC to waive the score requirement and approve the application as presented.

Mayor Kriseman moved, seconded by Mr. Kimball, that the Elite Events list as recommended by the Funding Committee include a request to waive the score

requirement for Localtopia, and be amended to include the event for approved funding. Following discussion, Chair Eggers called for the vote and the motion carried 7 to 1, with Mayor Bujalski dissenting.

ST PETE RUN FEST

Mayor Kriseman stated that the St Pete Run Fest should be considered for funding as it meets the definition of “an elite event that recognizes and celebrates community history and identity bonds to the past, present, future, and/or values and traditions that attract tourists.” He noted that the event also meets the definition of an elite event; and that the event focuses on wellness which is something the City promotes through the Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg; whereupon, he asked the members to find that the event qualifies for the requested funding based on the current language of the program.

Attorney Zas indicated that should the members wish to include this event, the first threshold for members to determine is whether the event meets the category definition; and that the Elite Events Funding Committee would then be asked to score the event and determine if it reaches the required 700 points.

Mayor Bujalski related that the Committee excluded this event due to it not meeting the definition of “cultural heritage”; and that staff had stated that the event was to receive a portion of funding via a separate mechanism through VSPC’s other programs, and discussion ensued.

Mayor Kriseman moved, seconded by Mr. Williams, that the Council find the St Pete Run Fest meets the category definition.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Ramsberger explained that prior guidelines prohibiting an event from obtaining funding elsewhere were removed several years ago. Mr. Prather noted that he is in favor of both Localtopia and the St Pete Run Fest; and that there is money remaining in the budget to fund both events. Mayor Bujalski suggested that the event should not be approved at this time; and that the TDC should revisit the Elite Events guidelines, definitions, and categories in the fall.

Following further discussion and upon call for the vote, the motion failed by a vote of 3 to 5, with Messrs. Eggers and Kimball, Mayor Bujalski, and Mses. Moore, and Rodriguez dissenting.

Upon call by Chair Eggers, Mayor Bujalski moved, seconded by Mr. Williams and carried unanimously, that the amended list to include Localtopia as stated be the final recommendation of the TDC to the BCC for approval.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Department Reports

Mr. Hayes related that staff and agency partners are preparing a 12-month strategic and tactical plan; and that the plan will be presented in two parts, in September and January.

Department reports can be found online at partners.visitstpeteclearwater.com.

VSPC PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT

Agency Partner Summit

Mr. Hayes introduced Carmen Boyce of BVK, Kimberly Vince-Cruz of Destination Analysts, Scott Bacon of Miles Partnership, and Laura Lopez of NJF, who each presented the objectives of their organization, illustrating the partnership between their agency and VSPC and highlighting certain accomplishments of the prior year. Mr. Hayes concluded by discussion the ongoing and collaborative communication between VSPC and all of its partners, and brief discussion ensued.

Melinda Pletcher arrived at 10:20 A.M.

Red Tide Update

Mr. Hayes noted that they are working closely with county staff to keep residents and visitors informed as to where Red Tide may be located each day; and that it has not yet hindered visitor attendance.

Responding to queries by the members, Mr. Hayes related continuous updates are located on the county website to include the location presence of Red Tide and the associated level of respiratory risk. Mr. Bridges indicated that current Red Tide levels are not nearly as high as they were in 2018, and discussion ensued.

Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Hayes encouraged members to schedule a one-on-one meeting with HCP Associates regarding the strategic plan; and that the meeting is exceptionally critical for members holding multiple roles.

Key Destination Metrics

Mr. Hayes referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Tourism Economic Snapshot, June 2021 TDC meeting* and reviewed the data for the month of April year-to-date, including

occupancy, supply and demand, tourist development tax year-to-date and a five-year comparison, and destination origin market arrivals outside of Florida. He clarified that all key destination metrics for 2021 were compared to 2019 rather than 2020 due to the reduction in tourism as a result of the pandemic.

In response to queries by members, Mr. Bridges indicated that he will add the in-Florida market breakdown of occupancy to the report; and that the new website will launch the third week of July.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ DISCUSSION

Chair Eggers indicated that members should consider their location preference for TDC meetings prior to the July 17 meeting, brief discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 AM.

Tourist Development Council
Elite Events Funding Committee
Pinellas County
June 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC) Elite Events Funding Committee met at 9:00 AM on this date in the Magnolia Room at the Pinellas County Cooperative Extension, 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo, Florida.

Present

Dave Eggers, TDC Chair, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises
Melinda Pletcher, City of St. Pete Beach Commissioner
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, VSPC Chief Operating Officer
Craig Campbell, VSPC Community and Brand Engagement Director
Liz McCann, VSPC Executive Administrative Assistant
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Teresa Ribble, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE/ROLL CALL

Chair Eggers called the meeting to order at 9:07 AM and thanked the Committee members for volunteering their time for this process. He noted that Ms. Rodriguez would not be present; that she evaluated and scored the applications prior to today's meeting; and that Attorney Zas indicated that her scores may be utilized.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

No report was provided by the County Attorney.

APPLICATION REVIEW – ELITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Mr. Ramsberger explained that the scoring recommendations determined today will be presented to the full TDC; and that the recommendations of the TDC will be presented to the BCC for final funding approval.

Fast Track Applications

Mr. Ramsberger related that the following applications qualify for the Fast Track provision; and that these events have been funded for at least the last five years:

Valspar Championship (funding request: \$125,000)
Clearwater Beach Day & Outback Bowl (funding request: \$75,000)
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival (funding request: \$75,000)
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals (funding request: \$75,000)
Clearwater Jazz Holiday (funding request: \$75,000)
28th Annual Fall King of the Beach (funding request: \$25,000)

Mr. Williams noted that he would not score the Valspar Championship Event due to a conflict of interest and, in accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Conduct Law, a Memorandum of Voting Conflict form has been filed and made a part of the record; whereupon, Mr. Henderson moved, seconded by Mayor Bujalski, that the applications stated be approved for evaluation bypass consideration. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Category One Events

PELICAN LPGA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP (FUNDING REQUEST: \$125,000)

In response to queries by members, Outlyr Vice President Kyle Draper elaborated on the event's marketing plan, estimated attendance, preliminary ticket sales, and charitable donations, and noted that the typical commitment from the LPGA is on a three-year basis.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mr. Henderson, 795; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 705. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 750.

Category Two Events

ENCHANT CHRISTMAS ST. PETERSBURG (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

Responding to queries by Messrs. Henderson and Williams, Enchant Christmas St. Petersburg General Manager Nancy Hutson discussed community support, total attendees at last year's event, and anticipated attendance this year.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the December 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Ms. Pletcher, 775; Mayor Bujalski, 700; Mr. Williams, 775; Mr. Henderson, 805; and Ms. Rodriguez, 930. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 797.5.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARADE WEEKEND (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

In response to a query by Mr. Henderson, Advantage Village Academy Office Manager Anthony Hart explained that event sponsors are promoted online and during the parade; that VSPC would have the opportunity to provide a float for the parade; and that banners for each sponsor are located along the parade route.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the January 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 775; Mr. Henderson, 705; Ms. Pletcher, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 740. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 761.7.

ST PETE PRIDEFEST AND PARADE (FUNDING REQUEST: \$75,000)

St Pete Pride representative Tiffany Freisberg introduced herself and noted that next year will mark 20 years for the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the June 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Mr. Williams, 800; Mr. Henderson, 775; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 1000; and Ms. Rodriguez, 925. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 854.2.

Category Three Events

DTSP SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Responding to queries by Messrs. Henderson and Williams, Cox Media Group Tampa Director of Branding and Programming Dan Connelly discussed sponsorship benefits and the increase in room night projections over last year's event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 725; Mr. Henderson, 735; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 650; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 805. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 735.8.

12TH ANNUAL SANDING OVATIONS MASTERS CUP (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

City of Treasure Island Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Justin Tramble introduced himself and noted that the event is international and held on the beach at Treasure Island.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Ms. Pletcher, 800; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 850; Mr. Henderson, 865; and Ms. Rodriguez, 905. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 836.7.

ST. PETE BIKEFEST (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

OCC Roadhouse and Museum Manager Keith Overton introduced himself and provided historical and economic impact information.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the November 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 900; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mr. Williams, 800; Mr. Henderson, 850; Ms. Pletcher, 900; and Ms. Rodriguez, 900. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 866.7.

GASPARILLA BOWL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

In response to a request by Chair Eggers, ESPN Events – Gasparilla Bowl Executive Director Scott Glaser addressed how the event benefits various local charitable organizations.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the December 2021 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 800; Mr. Williams, 900; Mr. Henderson, 735; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 775; and Ms. Rodriguez, 680. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 785.8.

FESTIVALS OF SPEED (FUNDING REQUEST: (\$25,000)

Responding to queries by Mr. Henderson, Festivals of Speed Founder and CEO Joe Sabatini indicated that the event will be marketed outside of Pinellas County; that VSPC's logo can be present on all promotional items; and that free tickets and sponsorships are given to charities and businesses.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring for the January 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 750; Mr. Williams, 800; Ms. Pletcher, 775; Mayor Bujalski, 650; Mr. Henderson, 805; and Ms. Rodriguez, 830. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 768.3.

DUNEDIN HIGHLAND GAMES AND FESTIVAL (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Mr. Ramsberger, with input by Attorney Zas, related that this event qualifies as either a Category Three or as a cultural vendor under Category Four; that consideration under Category Four is advantageous to the applicant since there is no room night requirement; and that, in this case, staff placed the application into Category Three.

Following discussion, Chair Eggers' indicated that there is consensus among the members to score the application under Category Three; whereupon, Dunedin Highland Games Historian Dr. Patricia Snair responded to queries by Chair Eggers and Ms. Pletcher, clarifying the timing and length of the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the March/April 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 850; Mr. Williams, 750; Mr. Henderson, 750; Ms. Pletcher, 750; Mayor Bujalski, 900; and Ms. Rodriguez, 600. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 766.7.

29TH ANNUAL SPRING KING OF THE BEACH (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Old Salt Fishing Foundation representative Amy Verdensky introduced herself and provided brief comments regarding the event.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the April 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 700; Mr. Henderson, 790; Ms. Pletcher, 825; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 745. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 760.

Category Four Events

ST PETE RUN FEST (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Referring to the TDC's definition of a cultural heritage event, Attorney Zas suggested that the members make a determination as to whether this event meets the definition. Mr. Ramsberger clarified that category placement is based upon the information supplied in the application.

At the request of Chair Eggers, EndorFUN Sports Chief Operations Officer Ryan Jordan provided information regarding the nature of the event, including statistical data and

marketing efforts. Responding to comments and queries by the members, Mr. Jordan indicated that the event is a festival celebrating St. Petersburg; and that the race is one piece of the event.

Lengthy discussion ensued, with Attorney Zas noting that the cultural heritage category was created to fund events with ties to the history of the community and provided the Martin Luther King, Jr., event as an example. Mr. Williams related that the event could be scored at face value and then discussed further at the TDC meeting. Ms. Pletcher indicated that she believes the event will be difficult to score in this category, and Mayor Bujalski concurred; whereupon, a motion was made by Ms. Pletcher, and seconded by Mayor Bujalski, that the St Pete Run Fest would not qualify as a cultural event. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Henderson recommended that despite the decision not to recommend funding to the TDC for this event, VSPC should still provide some form of event support, as has been done in the past.

LOCALTOPIA, "A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION OF ALL THINGS LOCAL" (FUNDING REQUEST: \$25,000)

Keep Saint Petersburg Local Founder and Executive Director Olga Bof appeared and provided information regarding the scale of the event and its significance to the community.

In response to a query by Chair Eggers, Mr. Ramsberger related that the event was funded as a cultural event last year, and discussion ensued; whereupon, Mr. Henderson moved, seconded by Mr. Williams, to consider Localtopia as a cultural event. Following further discussion, and upon call for the vote, the motion carried 3 to 2, with Mayor Bujalski and Ms. Pletcher casting the dissenting votes.

Upon Chair Eggers' call for scoring the February 2022 event, the members responded as follows: Chair Eggers, 700; Mr. Henderson, 725; Ms. Pletcher, 600; Mayor Bujalski, 700; Mr. Williams, 750; and Ms. Rodriguez, 550. Mr. Campbell tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 670.8.

Applications Not Meeting Minimum Criteria

BOOKS AT THE BEACH CONVENTION (FUNDING REQUEST: \$10,000)

Mr. Ramsberger indicated that the application failed to meet the minimum requirements for committee review; and that the applicant has been notified.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS

Deviating from the agenda and at the request of Chair Eggers, Mr. Hayes indicated that he would like to schedule a workshop in the fall to discuss further refinement of the Elite Events funding process; that an email has been sent to TDC members requesting input regarding the strategic plan; and that he is in communication with County staff, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the State Emergency Operations Center, to remain apprised of developments regarding Red Tide; whereupon, he responded to queries by the members, with input by Mr. Ramsberger.

Responding to a query by Mr. Williams, Mr. Ramsberger indicated that TDC members have been provided an analysis of economic impact for previously funded Elite Events at an earlier TDC meeting; and that staff is prepared to discuss the information, when needed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 AM.



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 20-1600A, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: 9/10/2020

Subject:

Fiscal Year 2021 Elite Event funding recommendations from the Tourist Development Council, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines scoring requirements.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Tourist Development Council's (TDC) funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2021 Elite Events, including a waiver of the Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines (Guidelines) scoring requirements as to the Localtopia event.

- This program provides funding for eligible major events that meet the criteria in the Guidelines, which requires Category 1-3 events to generate a large number of event attendees and substantial room nights in the County, and requires Cultural Heritage events (Category 4), to generate a large number of attendees.
- There are sixteen Elite Events recommended by the TDC to be funded for a cumulative total not exceeding \$1 million dollars. Staff will negotiate final funding amounts for each event agreement to ensure a return on investment.
- The TDC approved for the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to consider a waiver of the Guidelines as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia.
- As funding agreements are negotiated, consistent with Board approval and Board Delegated Authority, the County Administrator will execute the agreements and they will appear as Non-Procurement Delegated items on the Board meeting agenda.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Summary:

With Board approval, the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will administer the Elite Event Funding Program which provides funding to qualified, high-profile events that meet the minimum criteria for room night generation and/or attendance, as well as media and/or marketing exposure for the County. The CVB will negotiate the terms and final funding amounts of each agreement for increased tourism promotional benefits in accordance with the Guidelines.

Background Information:

On March 10, 2020, the Board approved revisions to the Guidelines to allow events that apply for and receive sponsorship funding to use that funding toward event operating expenses, which was not previously allowed.

The Guidelines require Category 1 events to generate at least 50,000 unique attendees and at least 25,000 room nights, Category 2 events at least 20,000 attendees and 10,000 room nights, Category 3 events, at least 10,000 attendees and 5,000 room nights. However, Category 4 events have a

minimum of at least 20,000 attendees and no room night requirement.

On August 7, 2020, the TDC's Elite Event Committee met virtually to evaluate and score those applications, which had been reviewed by staff and determined eligible for consideration. Those scores and funding considerations, as set forth below, went to the full TDC for their consideration.

On August 19, 2020, during the full regular TDC meeting, the TDC members discussed and considered a request from the Localtopia applicant who did not receive the minimum scoring requirements to advance to consideration. After discussion and consideration, the TDC approved for the Board to consider a waiver of the Guidelines as to the minimum scoring criteria for Localtopia. The TDC further approved the additional recommendations of the Elite Event Committee including the following maximum (or "up to") funding amounts. Council member Williams abstained from voting due to a voting conflict, and Council member Henderson was not in attendance.

Total Category 1 Events: \$375,000 (\$125,000 per event)

Valspar PGA Championship
Pelican Women's Championship (Fall)
Pelican Women's Championship (Spring)

Total Category 2 Events: \$450,000 (\$75,000 per event)

Outback Bowl & Clearwater Beach Day
Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals
Clearwater Jazz Holiday
Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival
Martin Luther King Jr. Parade Weekend
St. Pete Pride

Total Category 3 Events: \$125,000 (\$25,000 per event)

John's Pass Seafood Festival
King of the Beach (Fall)
King of the Beach (Spring)
Sanding Ovations Masters Cup
Gasparilla Bowl

Total Category 4 Events: \$50,000 (\$25,000 per event)

Localtopia
2nd Annual Pier Fest

Total Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4 Events: \$1,000,000

Fiscal Impact:

FY21 Elite Event maximum expenditure: \$1,000,000

Funding to support Elite Events is provided through the CVB's Annual Operating Budget. The source of funding is the Tourist Development Tax Fund.

Staff Member Responsible:

Steve Hayes, Director, Convention and Visitors Bureau

Partners:

Tourist Development Council
City of Treasure Island

Attachments:

Elite Event Funding Program Guidelines



I. Background & Overview

Pinellas County collects a six-percent Tourist Development Tax ("Bed Tax") on all overnight tourism accommodations in the County. This tax is levied on customers of hotels, motels, condominiums, campgrounds, apartments and private homes that rent accommodations for less than six months in duration. The Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC") has developed a Tourist Development Plan ("Plan") to guide how these proceeds are spent. Bed Taxes are spent, in large part, on marketing Pinellas County as a destination for leisure, business, conference, sports, film production, and other tourist travel. In support of these tourism marketing efforts, the Plan authorizes the expenditure of up to \$2,000,000 annually for: (i) marketing special events and programs; (ii) providing promotional or operating support for exhibits or programs provided by museums owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; (iii) providing promotional support for zoological parks that are owned and operated by not-for-profit organizations and open to the public; and (iv) event and program sponsorships. The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council ("TDC") was established to make recommendations on how best to spend Bed Tax proceeds, including proposing an annual budget and funding for marketing and promotion activities related to special events.

One of the marketing programs administrated by Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater ("VSPC") on behalf of the TDC is the **Elite Event Funding Program** for major events meeting the criteria to receive funding from TDT funds. The genesis of the Elite Event program was called "New Product" funding, which then became "Special Events" funding and is now operated under the current name. Prior to the New Products program, events were funded on an ad hoc basis. The New Product (now Elite Event) program was created with the intent to provide a more systematic means for funding applications, review and recommendations for funding. The goal moving forward is to continue the program to allow maximum 1) **consistency**; 2) **return on investment and sustainability of the individual events and the overall program**; and 3) **transparency**.

Examples of events that have received funding in the past include the Clearwater Jazz Holiday, Firestone Grand Prix of St. Petersburg, Outback Bowl, St. Petersburg Bowl, Tampa Bay Rays, Valspar PGA Golf Tournament, Clearwater Super Boat National Championship, and the Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon of St. Petersburg. Many of these events either generated or are projected to generate significant attendance and/or room nights, although not necessarily at the level of traditional Elite Events.

The County's fiscal year begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year. Therefore, applications for Elite Event funding are for annual events that are held within the next fiscal year after the application submittal date between October 1 and the following September 30. However, events that are annually held during either the last week of September or the first week of October are eligible to apply for funding for two annual events in those instances when both annual events fall within the same fiscal year.

II. Definitions

In the context of this tourism marketing/promotion program, the following definitions apply:

- A. "Cultural Heritage Event" shall mean an Elite Event that recognizes and/or celebrates community history and identity, bonds to the past, present, and future, and/or values and traditions that attracts Tourists from VSPC's targeted markets.
- B. "Elite Event" shall mean a new or existing organized sporting event, concert, exhibition, festival, fair, special event or celebration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule that is generally less than seven (7) days in duration, and that: (i) is marketed to tourists that would consider visiting the destination and staying overnight to observe or participate in the Elite Event; and (ii) is conducted at a venue in Pinellas County, generating at least the minimum number of required room nights in Pinellas County and/or unique event attendees for funding eligibility as set out herein.
- C. "Marketing" shall mean advertising (print, electronic, digital, etc.), direct sales, public relations, promotions, or research, exclusive of professional fees and services, designed to increase tourist-related business activity from outside Pinellas County.

D. "Sponsorship" shall mean a mutually beneficial business arrangement between VSPC, on behalf of the County, and an eligible applicant producing an Elite Event, wherein VSPC receives event assets and opportunities to promote VSPC brand and the Pinellas County destination not included in the Marketing Plan.

E. "Tourist" shall mean a person who participates in trade or recreational activities outside the county of his/her residence and who rents or leases transient accommodations in Pinellas County as described in Section 125.0104(3)(a), Florida Statutes.

F. "Unique Attendees" shall mean a single individual attending the event whether for a single day or multiple days. Examples of Unique Attendees:

- a worker issued a 2-day credential is considered one (1) Unique Attendee
- an individual purchasing a 3-day package is considered one (1) Unique Attendee

III. Funding Categories & Eligibility

A. Funding Categories are as follows:

- Category I** – generates at least 50,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 25,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$125,000. Category 1 events must be broadcast on national television.
- Category II** – generates at least 20,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 10,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$75,000.
- Category III** - generates at least 10,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees AND at least 5,000 room nights in Pinellas County with maximum funding eligibility up to \$25,000.
- Category IV** - a Cultural Heritage Event that generates at least 20,000 "unique" paid, credentialed and/or otherwise documented attendees with maximum funding eligibility up to \$25,000.

B. To be considered eligible for funding, each applicant must:

- conduct, produce, manage, and/or operate an Elite Event at a venue in Pinellas County;
- for Category I, II, and III events, generate the required room nights in Pinellas County as set forth herein, regardless of attendance at the Elite Event;
- for Category IV events, generate the required attendees, and attract Tourists from VSPC's targeted markets.
- demonstrate it will attract Tourist to Pinellas County;
- provide Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits that satisfies the Marketing rating criteria in Section V. C. and that has a media value equal to or greater than the Sponsorship payment or Marketing plan funding, as determined by VSPC and/or its advertising agency of record; and
- provide VSPC exclusivity as the only CVB and Destination Marketing Organization ("DMO") recognized supporter of the Elite Event.

IV. Conditions of Funding

A. Funds may only be used in accordance with Chapter 125, Florida Statutes for the Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits as agreed upon with VSPC. Funds may not be used for event operating expenses, except and only to the extent any funds received by applicant are allocated by VSPC for sponsorship benefits.

B. Applicants receiving Elite Event funding will be required to enter into and sign a Tourism Promotions Agreement prepared by the Pinellas County Attorney's Office. This Agreement will include Marketing and/or Sponsorship benefits to be negotiated and received by VSPC.

C. Applicant's Marketing and/or Sponsorship proposal must have a direct correlation with VSPC's targeted markets and should specifically indicate how that correlation exists.

D. For Elite Events held between October 1 and December 31, expenditures incurred prior to the beginning of the fiscal year may be reimbursed in the fiscal year the Elite Event is held if expressly allowed in the Funding Agreement.

E. By accepting Elite Event funding, the applicant agrees to allow the VSPC's staff and/or research firm of record access to the venue to conduct on site intercepts with attendees to determine the value of the event, festival, program, or project to tourism and its potential for future growth.

F. Funding will be paid in a lump sum on a post-event basis or as otherwise provided in the Tourism Promotions Agreement, subject to submittal of a fully completed and signed **Post-Event Report Form** acceptable to VSPC.

G. Elite Events utilizing Pinellas County property during their event must adhere to and abide by the County's Special Events & Facilities Use Guide available at <http://www.pinellascounty.org/Events/pdf/Special-Events-Users-Guide.pdf>.

V. Application Process & Review

A. Application Submittal.

- i. Each applicant must submit a fully completed **Funding Application** ("Application") per the **Application Requirements & Instructions**.
- ii. All Applications must be submitted by the deadline established in the **Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline**.
- iii. Incomplete or late Applications will disqualify the applicant.

B. Review & Evaluation Process.

- i. County Attorney.
 - a. Each application will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office to ensure compliance with state statutes, county ordinances and these Guidelines regarding proper usage of Bed Tax funds.
- ii. TDC Committee Review.
 - a. The TDC Chair shall appoint, in addition to the TDC Chair, no more than six (6) TDC members, of which four (4) must be tourism industry appointees, to serve on the Elite Event Committee ("Committee").
 - b. Each application deemed eligible by the County Attorney will be reviewed and scored at a meeting of the Committee, at which:
 1. The Committee will determine funding recommendations for each application within the TDC's recommended budget and in accordance with these Guidelines and Rating Criteria below.
 2. Applicants may be invited to attend, make presentations and answer questions of the Committee members.
 3. At conclusion of applicant presentations, Committee members will complete scoring.
 4. Category 1 applications will be scored first by the Committee, followed by Category 2, Category 3, and Category IV.
 5. The average score of each remaining Committee score will be announced by VSPC staff as the applicant's score.
 6. Once all applications have been reviewed and scored, VSPC staff will provide a ranking of highest to lowest scoring applicants.
 7. Beginning with the highest scoring applications, the Committee will determine recommended funding amounts for each application on an "up to" not-to-exceed basis.

However, absent objection by VSPC staff or any TDC member based on a past or current non-compliance with funding guidelines, misrepresentation, material change in the scope or economic benefits from the event, or failure to deliver marketing and or sponsorship benefits as agreed to, events that have received funding for the prior 5 years and which have consistently complied with all funding guideline requirements and submitted a complete Elite Event funding application herein shall bypass the evaluation review and scoring process and will be eligible for funding consideration in and up to amounts as requested, subject to staff negotiations, concurrence by the TDC, and subsequent approval by the BCC.

- c. The Committee will present its funding recommendations to the TDC for approval. Funding recommendations will be a maximum "up to" not-to-exceed amount and subject to negotiation by VSPC staff.
- iii. TDC Review & Recommendations.
 - a. The TDC will review and consider approval of the funding recommendations presented by the Committee.
 - b. The TDC will vote on funding recommendations for review and consideration of approval by the BCC.
- iv. BCC Review.
 - a. The BCC will review the funding recommendations provided by the TDC.
 - b. Funding recommendations will be considered for approval by the BCC.

C. Rating Criteria.

- i. Unique Attendees & Room Nights (200 points) – Ability of the Elite Event to generate unique attendees (Category I, II, III, and IV) AND room nights in excess of the threshold established to be eligible for funding (Category I, II, and III).
- ii. Marketing Plan (400 points) – The value of the applicant’s proposed Marketing Plan in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the plan exceeds the funding request.
- iii. Sponsorship Benefits (200 points) – The value of the applicant’s proposed Sponsorship Benefits in promoting Pinellas County as a tourist destination and the extent the value of the benefits exceeds the funding request (includes onsite benefits).
- iv. Timing of Event: Peak vs. Offseason & Non-Conflicting (100 points) – Timing of the Elite Event to coincide with non-peak or shoulder seasons in Pinellas County tourism. Preference will be given to Elite Events which occur during “off season” periods, including January 1 through February 15, May 1 through June 30, and September 1 through December 31. In addition, timing of the Elite Event should not conflict with other Elite Events or other special events taking place in Pinellas County.
- v. Event History & Community Support (100 points) – Demonstration of widespread community support and charitable contributions by the Elite Event applicant that benefit the Pinellas County community. Ability of the Elite Event to fulfill any previous contractual obligations with Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to attract high caliber and high profile artists, athletes and/or participants to perform and/or attend in Pinellas County. Ability of the Elite Event to enhance the overall image of Pinellas County.

D. Application Scoring.

- i. Committee members will base their scores on the substance of the applications relative to the goals and objectives of the Elite Event Funding Program for each of the categories above in the following rating scale:

0% - 9%	unresponsive to the requirements of that item being rated
10% - 39%	does not meet current requirements of the item being rated
40% - 69%	partially meets requirements of that item being rated
70% - 89%	fully responsive to the requirements of the item being rated
90% - 100%	exceeds all requirements of the item being rated
- ii. All applications receiving an average score of 700 points or above out of the maximum 1000 points will be considered eligible for funding consideration. A score of 700 points or higher does not guarantee funding.

E. Program Timeline

- i. VSPC staff, with TDC approval, will annually establish a schedule for consideration and award of funding, which will generally comply with the following timeline:

March	Commence application process
April	Deadline for receipt of applications
May	Legal, Staff and Committee review of applications
May/June	Initial Elite Event Committee meeting
May/June	2 nd Committee Meeting to Determine Funding (if necessary)
June/July	TDC reviews and considers the Committee report
July	BCC final funding approval
TBD	Elite Event Funding Agreement executed
- ii. Each year’s timeline will be published in the **Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline**.

VI. Key Documents

In addition to the Funding Guidelines, the Elite Event Funding Program is supported by other key documents, including:

- A. Program Overview
- B. Application Requirements & Instructions
- C. Funding Application
- D. Program Process Flow Chart & Timeline
- E. Post-Event Report Form
- F. Elite Event Funding Agreement

PINELLAS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

August 19, 2020

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC), as created under Pinellas County Ordinance 78-20 pursuant to Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes, met online in regular session using the Zoom virtual meeting platform at 10:00 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Pat Gerard, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair, Chair
Russ Kimball, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Vice-Chair
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Frank Hibbard, City of Clearwater Mayor
Joanne “Cookie” Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach Mayor
Rick Kriseman, City of St. Petersburg Mayor
Doreen Moore, Travel Resort Services, Inc.
Charles Prather, The Birchwood Inn
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry
Anthony Satterfield, Alden Suites
Michael Williams, Innisbrook Golf Resort

Not Present

Phil Henderson, Jr., StarLite Cruises

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, Chief Operating Officer
Katie Bridges, Senior Advertising Manager
Leroy Bridges, Vice-President, Digital & Communications
Liz McCann, Executive Administrative Assistant
Teri Tuxhorn, Administrative Director
James Abernathy, Budget and Financial Management Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Other Interested Individuals
Jenny Masinovsky, Senior Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

Agenda

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Pat Gerard
- II. CHAIR COMMENTS
- III. APPROVAL OF TDC MINUTES – June 26 and July 15, 2020 TDC Meetings (not available)

- IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- V. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE – Steve Hayes
- VI. FY21 ELITE EVENT FUNDING PROGRAM – Tim Ramsberger
- VII. MARKETING UPDATE
 - A. Digital & Communications – Leroy Bridges
 - B. Advertising – Katie Bridges
- VIII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS
- IX. VSPC PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT – Steve Hayes
 - A. Tourism Economics Snapshot – June 2020
 - B. Pinellas County Bed Tax – June 2020
- X. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS
- XI. ADJOURNMENT

All documents and presentations provided to the Clerk’s Office have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Gerard called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

CHAIR COMMENTS – None.

MINUTES OF THE JUNE 26 AND JULY 15, 2020 MEETINGS – DEFERRED

Chair Gerard indicated that the minutes of the June 26 and July 15, 2020 meetings are not available at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Keep Saint Petersburg Local Executive Director Olga Bof stated that Localtopia, an applicant for the Fiscal Year 2021 Elite Event Funding Program, should receive the requested funding; whereupon, she characterized Localtopia as the largest community celebration of all things local, showcasing over 250 of St. Petersburg’s favorite independent businesses and community

organizations, and discussed the event's benefits to the community, its awards, popularity, and economic impact.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Abernathy referred to a report titled *Visit St. Pete Clearwater FY 2020 Budget July 2020* and indicated that it shows revenue collected through the month of May; that an additional \$4.3 million was collected in June; and that a total of \$38.3 million was collected through June, indicating that while that is approximately \$9.7 million below the revenue expected to be collected under normal circumstances, it is better than the updated projection that was made taking into consideration the COVID-19 impact on tourism. Responding to query by Mr. Prather, Mr. Abernathy provided further comparative information relating to pre- and post-COVID-19 revenue forecasts for the current fiscal year.

Mr. Hayes referred to the report and discussed the items included under Personal Services, Operational Expenses, and Promotional Expenses, noting that savings achieved in each category will help offset the drop in revenue; whereupon, he pointed out that the expense associated with Chambers Visitor Services Support was kept at almost the full amount.

FISCAL YEAR 21 ELITE EVENT FUNDING PROGRAM

Mr. Ramsberger referred to a document titled *FY21 Elite Event Funding Program TDC Committee Review 8-7-2020*, listing the elite events, scoring, and funding amounts recommended by the Elite Event Funding Subcommittee and related that the Enchant St. Petersburg event has been cancelled; that Localtopia did not obtain the required average score of 700; and that the St. Pete Run Fest and Martin Luther King Jr. Culture & Arts Festival events were not scored due to ineligibility. He indicated that the total "up to" funding recommendation by the subcommittee is \$975,000; and that upon approval by the TDC, it will be forwarded for consideration to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC); whereupon, Mayor Kennedy moved that the recommendation be approved.

Mayor Kriseman discussed the impact of Localtopia on the local business community, the City of St. Petersburg, and the county, inquiring whether the event could be funded in spite of not achieving the scoring threshold, and Mr. Ramsberger and Attorney Zas agreed that the Elite Event Funding Guidelines do not prevent the TDC from making a recommendation to include it in the

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program. Attorney Zas suggested that if the Council agrees to approve Localtopia for the funding request in the amount of up to \$25,000, the recommendation to the BCC should include a waiver of obtaining the 700 scoring threshold during the Subcommittee review. Mayor Kriseman made a motion to fund the event; whereupon, Mayor Kennedy withdrew her motion, and discussion ensued.

Responding to query by Mayor Hibbard, Attorney Zas indicated that being a member of the Pelican Golf Club does not present a conflict of interest with respect to the Women's Championship event.

Responding to queries by Mayor Bujalski, Mr. Ramsberger stated that Localtopia was considered in the category of elite events that does not have a room night minimum requirement; that it is the only event that did not qualify for funding on the basis of scoring; and that there was not a particular concern with the event; whereupon, Mayor Bujalski inquired about the possibility of adding a temporary category to the program, allowing other events supporting local businesses to apply for funding, noting that many businesses are financially suffering due to COVID-19. Attorney Zas indicated that in order to include such a category, the guidelines would need to be amended. Mr. Ramsberger pointed out that funding of Localtopia would bring the total funding amount up to the maximum of \$1 million allocated for the program, and Chair Gerard commented that she would not be in support of creating a new category for local events, as the program is intended to attract tourism.

During further discussion, Ms. Rodriguez shared that as a member of the Subcommittee, she gave a lower score to Localtopia based on the room nights factor; and that she would like to add 150 points to it. Attorney Zas advised that the correction would be appropriate, as the score was clearly based on an incorrect interpretation of category requirements; whereupon, Ms. Rodriguez requested that her score be modified by adding 150 points, and Chair Gerard indicated that the additional points would not be enough to bring Localtopia up to the 700 score.

Mr. Kimball moved, seconded by Mayor Kennedy, that the elite events list recommended by the subcommittee be amended to include Localtopia.

Mr. Williams related that he would abstain from voting on the matter due to a conflict of interest with respect to the Valspar Championship event, and a Memorandum of Voting Conflict has been submitted and made a part of the record in accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Conduct law.

Upon call for the vote, the motion carried 10 to 0, with Mr. Williams abstaining.

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Mayor Kennedy moved, seconded by Mr. Prather, that the amended elite events list be recommended to the BCC for approval. Attorney Zas clarified that the motion should include a request that the BCC waive the minimum scoring requirement for Localtopia, and no objections were noted. Mr. Kimball related that he is also a member of the Pelican Golf Club; and that he has been a member of Copperhead Charities, Inc.

Upon call for the vote, the motion carried 10 to 0, with Mr. Williams abstaining.

Mr. Satterfield provided comments regarding funding for the Gasparilla Bowl elite event, and Ms. Rodriguez remarked that the County is a leader in the elite event best practices and urged everyone to protect the environment by employing ocean-friendly practices.

MARKETING UPDATE

Digital and Communications/Advertising

Ms. Bridges and Mr. Bridges referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *August TDC* and provided an update regarding the current traditional and digital advertising programs and discussed the purpose, benefits, production, and timeline of the Visiting Safely and Responsibly campaign, highlighting the following:

- Marketing is still challenging as a result of traveler sentiment due to COVID-19; staff is focused on advancing the industry in a positive direction, as the slowest tourism months of September through November are approaching.
- Digital and traditional programs would run concurrently with the Visiting Safely and Responsibly campaign.
- The digital program has performed well since the second week of May, generating over 2.8 million video views, 9 million impressions, and \$342,120 in hotel revenue.
- Paid traditional advertising programs include television, magazines, billboards, advertising at local airports, and a promotion with the Tampa Bay Rays.
- The Visiting Safely and Responsibly campaign involved collaboration with the Chambers of Commerce, municipalities, and other partners, and is based on creative and uplifting messages,

such as “rise to shine” and “spread out, mask up,” emphasizing the safety of the destination, promoting a safe and responsible visitation experience, and providing tips regarding the same.

- The campaign is aimed to benefit visitors, local communities, business owners, tourism, and economic development.
- In-market engagement will include the campaign messaging presented on various materials which will be provided to partners, Chambers of Commerce, St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport, and popular tourist sites, and advertised to visitors through traditional and digital media.
- The campaign will run September 1 to December 15, at the cost of \$1.95 million for media and production, and will engage 2,000 businesses to amplify its messages.

Mr. Bridges indicated that the County approved Phase II Pinellas CARES Act funding that includes a program for financial assistance to businesses, noting that applicant eligibility has been expanded, as compared to the business assistance program under the Phase I of CARES Act funding distribution.

In response to queries and comments by the members, Mr. Bridges provided information regarding distribution of the campaign materials and explained the objectives and challenges behind the campaign’s poster illustration, and Ms. Bridges provided input. Messrs. Hayes and Bridges discussed the importance of continuing marketing efforts in order to establish the expectation of a safe destination and to target and attract individuals who are currently interested in travel, while preparing for a future broader campaign.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Mr. Hayes indicated that the reports can be found online at partners.visitstpeteclearwater.com.

VSPC PRESIDENT AND CEO REPORT

Tourism Economics Snapshot and Pinellas County Bed Tax – June 2020

Mr. Hayes recognized staff for their efforts to position and sell the destination virtually, noting the challenges with regard to the current meetings and conventions component of tourism, and

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reiterated the importance of conveying the message concerning the destination's safety for the benefit of tourists and local residents.

Mr. Hayes referred to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Tourism Economics Snapshot, August 2020 TDC Meeting* and reviewed the data for the month of June and/or year-to-date, including rooms sold, average daily rate, revenue per available room, market comparison, tax revenue year-to-date and a five-year comparison, and vacation rentals. He indicated that the area is doing well in relation to the rest of the state; that the June data shows a 25.6-percent revenue drop as compared to June of last year; that revenue has been slowly climbing up after the drops in March and April; and that the vacation rental market is faring better than the hotels, with the room nights sold numbers for June and year-to-date being flat, as compared to last year.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Hayes related that VSPC staff members worked with Economic Development and Creative Pinellas, assisting the local business and arts community with grants, noting the value of local businesses to tourism; whereupon, he indicated that VSPC is working with the three surrounding counties on a regional application for funding under the CARES Act that could be used for a recovery message.

Mr. Hayes also recognized staff members who worked at the Supervisor of Elections' Office for the Primary Election and plan to work there again for the General Election, and Chair Gerard thanked Mr. Hayes for doing so, noting that 183 County employees will be working at the polls in November.

Mr. Hayes indicated that VSPC's crisis communication plan will be emailed to the members.

Mr. Prather commended VSPC leadership and staff for their hard work in these challenging times, noting the efforts in redirecting the advertising strategies and operating under a reduced budget.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 A.M.

PINELLAS COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
ELITE EVENT FUNDING SUBCOMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
August 7, 2020

The Pinellas County Tourist Development Council (TDC) Elite Event Subcommittee met online using the Zoom virtual meeting platform at 9:12 A.M. on this date with the following members present:

Pat Gerard, Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Chair, Chair
Russ Kimball, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Vice-Chair
Julie Ward Bujalski, City of Dunedin Mayor
Joanne “Cookie” Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach Mayor
Trisha Rodriguez, Clearwater Ferry
Anthony Satterfield, Alden Suites

Others Present

Steve Hayes, Visit St. Pete/Clearwater (VSPC) President and CEO
Tim Ramsberger, Chief Operating Officer
Leroy Bridges, Digital and Communications, Vice-President (Zoom Technology Moderator)
Craig Campbell, Director of Community and Brand Engagement
Liz McCann, Executive Administrative Assistant
Teri Tuxhorn, Administrative Director
Michael Zas, Managing Assistant County Attorney
Jim Abernathy, Pinellas County Office of Management and Budget
Other Interested Individuals
Jenny Masinovsky, Senior Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – Chair Pat Gerard
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT – Michael Zas
- IV. APPLICATION REVIEW – Elite Event Evaluation Committee
 - A. Fast Track
 - Valspar Championship

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- Clearwater Jazz Holiday
- Outback Bowl & Clearwater Beach Day
- Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival
- Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals

B. Category 1

- Pelican Women's Championship – November 2020
- Pelican Women's Championship – May 2021

C. Category 2

- Enchant St. Petersburg
- Martin Luther King Jr. Parade Weekend
- St. Pete Pride

D. Category 3

- John's Pass Seafood Festival
- Rock n Roll Clearwater 5K Half Marathon
- 27th Annual Fall King of the Beach
- 28th Annual Spring King of the Beach
- DTSP Songwriters Festival
- 12th Annual Sanding Ovations Master Cup
- Gasparilla Bowl
- Tall Ships St. Petersburg 2021

E. Category 4

- LOCALTOPIA, "A Community Celebration of All Things Local"
- 2nd Annual Pier Fest

F. Does not meet funding requirements

- St. Pete Run Fest
- Martin Luther King Jr. Culture & Arts Festival

V. ADJOURNMENT

All documents provided to the Clerk have been made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER/CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Gerard called the meeting to order at 9:12 A.M. and conducted a roll call of the members; whereupon, she asked Attorney Zas to outline the Elite Event review process.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

Attorney Zas related that he provided a memorandum regarding the parameters for the Elite Event funding review and arranged the events into three categories: those that are fast-track eligible, ones that are eligible for scoring and funding consideration under the category requirements, and applicants that did not meet the minimum requirements for committee review.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one responded to the Chair's call for public comment.

APPLICATION REVIEW

(MINIMUM AVERAGE SCORE OF 700 REQUIRED FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING)

Mr. Ramsberger explained that the scoring recommendations determined today will be presented to the full TDC and BCC for approval; whereupon, he indicated that four applications have been withdrawn: Rock n Roll Clearwater 5K Half Marathon, Tall Ships St. Petersburg 2021, DTSP Songwriters Festival, and Clearwater Sea-Blues Festival, which was not listed on the agenda.

Mr. Ramsberger explained that COVID-19 impacts will not be considered when scoring the applications; whereupon, in response to queries and comments by the members, Messrs. Ramsberger and Bridges indicated that information provided by Destination Analysts could be taken into consideration; and that the numbers are derived from both self-reported attendance figures and information from vendors and sponsors, and discussion ensued.

FAST TRACK

Mr. Ramsberger related that the following applications qualify for the Fast-Track provision:

- Valspar Championship (funding request: \$125,000)
- Clearwater Jazz Holiday (funding request: \$75,000)
- Outback Bowl & Clearwater Beach Day (funding request: \$75,000)
- Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival (funding request: \$75,000)
- Hooters Clearwater Offshore Nationals (funding request: \$75,000)

Mayor Bujalski moved, seconded by Ms. Rodriguez, that the applications stated be approved for evaluation bypass consideration. Upon call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

CATEGORY ONE EVENTS

Pelican Women's Championship Events – November 2020 (funding request: \$125,000) – Average score: 724 and May 2021 (funding request: \$125,000) – Average score: 724

Mr. Ramsberger indicated that the Pelican Women's Championship has two events this fiscal year, one in November and a second in May, that need to be scored separately; whereupon, Chair Gerard expressed concern with the lack of background information regarding attendance and other matters in both applications, and lengthy discussion ensued with input by Attorney Zas.

Eiger Marketing Group Vice President Kyle Draper stated that his company oversees various Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) events; that the spectator count ranges from 25,000 to 100,000 people; and that he could provide more details regarding the projections for the May and November events; whereupon, responding to query by Mr. Satterfield, he provided details regarding parking.

A motion was made by Mayor Bujalski, seconded by Mr. Satterfield, that scoring on the Pelican Women's Championship events be deferred to provide staff time to gather supplemental information regarding room nights and attendance. The motion failed by a vote of 3 to 3 with Mayor Kennedy, Mr. Kimball, and Ms. Rodriguez dissenting.

Following further discussion and upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring for the November event, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 770; Mr. Kimball, 820; Ms.

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Rodriguez, 705; and Mr. Satterfield, 600. Mayor Bujalski deferred scoring pending further review. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 724 points.

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring for the May event, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 770; Mr. Kimball, 820; Ms. Rodriguez, 705; and Mr. Satterfield, 600. Mayor Bujalski deferred scoring pending further review. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 724 points.

CATEGORY TWO EVENTS

Enchant St. Petersburg (funding request: \$75,000) – Average score: 765.8

In response to query by Mr. Satterfield, Enchant Christmas Vice-President of Operations Jayson Babel explained the event's economic impact analysis.

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 725; Mayor Bujalski, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 770; Mr. Kimball, 765; Ms. Rodriguez, 910; and Mr. Satterfield, 700. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 765.8 points.

Martin Luther King Jr. Parade Weekend (funding request: \$75,000) – Average score: 808.3

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 800; Mayor Bujalski, 825; Mayor Kennedy, 900; Mr. Kimball, 845; Ms. Rodriguez, 780; and Mr. Satterfield, 700. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 808.3 points.

St. Pete Pride (funding request: \$75,000) – Average score: 927.5

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 950; Mayor Bujalski, 975; Mayor Kennedy, 930; Mr. Kimball, 890; Ms. Rodriguez, 895; and Mr. Satterfield, 925. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 927.5 points.

CATEGORY THREE EVENTS

John's Pass Seafood Festival (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 797.5

Mr. Ramsberger indicated that the event has been postponed but is expected to be rescheduled in January 2021; whereupon, in response to query by Ms. Rodriguez, Johns Pass Village Association President Sonny Flynn indicated that the Festival is an annual event.

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 950; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mayor Kennedy, 860; Mr. Kimball, 890; Ms. Rodriguez, 710; and Mr. Satterfield, 625. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 797.5 points.

27th Annual Fall King of the Beach (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 854.2

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 900; Mayor Bujalski, 750; Mayor Kennedy, 855; Mr. Kimball, 875; Ms. Rodriguez, 845; and Mr. Satterfield, 900. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 854.2 points.

28th Annual Spring King of the Beach (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 816.7

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 850; Mayor Bujalski, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 835; Mr. Kimball, 870; Ms. Rodriguez, 745; and Mr. Satterfield, 875. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 816.7 points.

12th Annual Sanding Ovarions Master Cup (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 862.5

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 900; Mayor Bujalski, 800; Mayor Kennedy, 935; Mr. Kimball, 910; Ms. Rodriguez, 905; and Mr. Satterfield, 725. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 862.5 points.

Gasparilla Bowl (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 736.7

In response to queries by Mr. Satterfield, ESPN Gasparilla Bowl Executive Director Scott Glaser provided information regarding funding contributions received by the Tampa Bureau, marketing efforts, and projected benefits to Pinellas County.

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Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 850; Mayor Bujalski, 850; Mayor Kennedy, 890; Mr. Kimball, 725; Ms. Rodriguez, 680; and Mr. Satterfield, 425. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 736.7 points.

CATEGORY FOUR EVENTS

LOCALTOPIA, "A Community Celebration of All Things Local" (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 610

In response to query by Chair Gerard, Mr. Ramsberger indicated that the TDC supported the event last fiscal year.

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 725; Mayor Bujalski, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 700; Mr. Kimball, 710; Ms. Rodriguez, 400; and Mr. Satterfield, 400. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 610 points.

Later in the meeting, Keep Saint Petersburg Local Executive Director Olga Bof expressed concern regarding the average score for the event; whereupon, Attorney Zas and Chair Gerard indicated that she could contest the scoring at the next TDC meeting.

2nd Annual Pier Fest (funding request: \$25,000) – Average score: 752.5

In response to queries by Chair Gerard and Mr. Kimball, Mr. Ramsberger and Attorney Zas indicated that the event was previously funded and was cancelled due to the delay with the pier opening; and that since it is a Category 4 application, the event does not require room nights.

Upon Chair Gerard's call for scoring, the members responded as follows: Chair Gerard, 675; Mayor Bujalski, 725; Mayor Kennedy, 750; Mr. Kimball, 780; Ms. Rodriguez, 835; and Mr. Satterfield, 750. Mr. Ramsberger tabulated the numbers and announced an average score of 752.5 points.

DOES NOT MEET FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

St. Pete Run Festival (funding request: \$25,000) and Martin Luther King Jr. Culture and Arts Festival (funding request: \$25,000)

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Attorney Zas indicated that the applications failed to meet the minimum requirements for committee review, and the members concurred with his conclusion.

In response to query by Advantage Village Academy Chief Executive Officer Toriano Parker regarding why the Martin Luther King Jr. Culture and Arts Festival did not qualify for Category 4 funding, Chair Gerard explained that the minimum attendance to qualify for funding is 20,000 people.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gerard adjourned the meeting at 10:38 A.M.