

SJC Roundtable - Minutes of January 9, 2012

Meeting called to order at 9:05 am – followed by Pledge of Allegiance

Information shared - President Bosco – 16 members participated in the Home Again St Johns Food Sharing which was greatly appreciated. Treasurer Mary Saunders shared the news of the passing of local activist Robin Nadeau – Robin was well known, liked and will be sorely missed by all.

First Guest Speaker **Melissa S. Glasgow** – her contact information is Office of the County Administrator St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners - 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084
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Ms. Glasgow has now been on the job 6 months and is excited about pooling all of our community resources. She believes there was a lack of focus and coordination. Her job includes recruitment and development of incentive programs for potential new business and equally as important servicing businesses that are already here to create an atmosphere of cooperation and growth. Ms. Glasgow indicated a need to leverage our number one industry, tourism to help create new economic opportunities. When asked about K-Mart leaving and the retail situation Ms. Glasgow suggested the K-Mart building is still a viable location and she would be working with community leaders to develop a retail strategy. She also stated that balancing quality of life and economic development is always a concern. Ms. Glasgow also mentioned several positives and stated the county would continue to try and improve the way it conducts business. Some of the positives include the Doctors Village under way in the NW part of the county, the new Silver Creek assisted living project and the development of a Foreign Trade Zone.

Ms. Glasgow reaffirmed that because of the mix of good schools, transportation, taxes and educated workforce that SJC was still the location of choice in the NE Florida area. The County and the Chamber are partnering and the Chamber will be the first point of contact for prospects. Ms. Glasgow did state there was some concern among citizens about what businesses we might attract. Ms. Glasgow closed by saying the county legally must accept any business that meets county ordinance requirements. She stated that the county can still choose not to incentivize any industry or business they feel would be undesirable.

Minutes were Approved by acclamation

Treasurer's report – bank balance of \$3117.61 was accepted and approved.

Second Speaker – Mr. Glen Hastings of SJC Tourism and Development Commission. Mr. Hastings shared information on how 9-11 changed tourism habits. He also shared about how Cultural Tourism has evolved. Affinity travel groups are busy learning about the locations they visit. Over 192 billion is spent annually on Cultural tourism. Static museums have been forced to change and become interactive to improve appeal. Florida is currently ranked number one in cultural tourism.

Mr. Hastings moved on to the Cultural Council – TDC relationship. Mr. Hastings went through Cultural Council's budget line by line explaining the philosophy behind each spending line. While his explanation of the Cultural Council doing more than just overseeing Category funding seemed to satisfy some in the room, others remained skeptical about duplication of services and some of the budget items. Dr. Mary Khonke was concerned about the size of the reserve fund and why more TDC money was not being sent directly to the groups that produce events. Commissioner Cyndi Stevenson was also concerned about the duplication of efforts and some of the expenses. She stated the BCC had checks and balances in place to insure funds were spent according to statute and policy. Mr. Hastings suggested that the Cultural Council under the new leadership of Mr. Andrew Witt would be looking closely at some of the community's concerns including the \$85K website, utilizing the same ad agency as the TDC and leveraging the relationship with the University of Florida and its resources. It was suggested that Mr. Witt be invited to speak before the Roundtable now that he is here full time.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am