Tourist Development Council

September 24, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Brevard County Government Center, Viera

The Tourist Development Council met on September 24, 2025, at 2:00 PM, at the Brevard County Government Center, Viera. Members present were Chair Rob Feltner, Vice Chair Tom Hermansen, Alex Litras, John Moran, Mayor Connors, Wayne Soard, and Julie Braga via Zoom. The staff present were Justin Caron from the County Attorney's Office, Peter Cranis, John Giantonio, Laura Beebe, Angela Essing, and Juawana Brooks from the Tourism Development Office. The guests present were Mike McGarry, Beaches, Boating, and Waterways Programs Manager; Gaell Francois, Brevard County Budget Office; and Sherill Spaccio, Co-Founder of Waterway Warriors.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Action: Hermansen motions to allow Julie Braga to vote via Zoom. Litras seconded the motion.

Result: Approved
Mover: Tom Hermansen
Seconder: Alex Litras
Ayes: Soard, Litras, Braga, Moran, Vice Chair Hermansen, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Mayor Medina, Larry Jarnes, and Mayor Connors.

Action: Hermansen motions to approve the August 27, 2025, TDC Minutes. Soard seconded the motion.

Result: Approved
Mover: Tom Hermansen
Seconder: Wayne Soard
Ayes: Soard, Litras, Braga, Moran, Vice Chair Hermansen, and Chair Feltner
Nays: None
Absent: Mayor Medina, Larry Jarnes, and Mayor Connors.

Director's Report/ Budget Report

(Mayor Connor arrives at 2:05 PM)

Cranis informed the committee that there were no items requiring a vote at this meeting but provided several updates and highlights for future consideration. He noted that two more TDC meetings are scheduled for this

calendar year, followed by a short break in December before resuming in January. He also mentioned several topics he is considering for the next fiscal year.

Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Update

July: TDT revenues were just under 2% higher than the previous year. While collections have flattened in recent months, they remain above last year's levels.

August: Based on STR daily reports, collections are tracking closely to last year. Cranis uses this data to project results, which vary depending on the share of TDT collected from hotels versus short-term rentals. With that share holding steady, he anticipates August collections will reach approximately 1.8 million, similar to last year.

September Projection: If September closes near last year's level, total collections are expected to reach about $26 million. Cranis expressed optimism that TDT could exceed $26 million but emphasized that September performance will be key.

Transition of TDT Collections - Beginning next fiscal year, the Brevard County Clerk's Office will assume responsibility for TDT collections, previously handled by the Tax Collector's Office. The Clerk's Office has purchased specialized software and is currently undergoing training.

Cranis noted that some hoteliers might be unaware of this change. He encouraged committee members to direct questions from hotels to him for proper connection with the Clerk's Office.

Hermansen asked the reason for the change. According to the Tax Collector, "Since the Board of County Commissioners decided to scrutinize the budgets of Constitutional Offices, I made the decision to eliminate a function rather than hire additional personnel."

Chair Feltner asked whether records had been transferred and if TDT account holders were notified. According to the Tax Collector, "The Tax Collector's Office has given the Clerk of the Court and Comptroller all information needed to transition into the collection of the tourist development tax."

The TDO has sent follow-up emails to hotels (general managers), though no comprehensive list exists for short-term rental owners. Contracts with Airbnb and Expedia are still pending.

Chair Feltner suggested inviting Marty Miller, the contact at the Clerk's Office, to the next TDC meeting to provide an update on the new TDT procedures.

Cranis highlighted a Department of Revenue report showing that if all eligible revenues were collected, TDT would total about $28 million between July 2024 and June 2025. The actual collections for that period of time were closer to $26 million; it is believed the shortfall was largely from short-term rentals—an area the new software purchased by the Clerk's office is expected to address.

Cranis stated the other Items for Committee Consideration are 1) TDC Operating Procedure Manual: Currently requires a minimum of 10 meetings per year. Cranis suggested considering a lower number, as Florida statutes

require only quarterly meetings. Agendas, STR reports, and other updates could still be distributed via email, reducing the need for in-person meetings when substantive material is limited. Several members of the TDC said they would be willing to entertain that change at the next meeting in October. And 2) Waterway Warriors: Cranis gave a heads-up about this organization, which conducts beach clean-ups countywide, primarily at Pineda Beach. Waterway Warriors have 35 barrel-sized trash receptacles and coordinate with KBB, the contractor with whom the TDC has a three-year contract for beach causeway clean-up on Eau Gallie Causeway.

Public Comment

Waterway Warriors Trash Barrel Initiative

Sherill Spaccio, Co-Founder of Waterway Warriors of Florida, Inc., explained that the organization's top priority is protecting the beach from trash and pollution left behind by both visitors and locals. To support this effort, Waterway Warriors is requesting assistance with maintaining 35 trash barrels on Pineda Causeway Beach. A contractor has provided a quote of $20,000 per year to manage the barrels, while the organization will supply trash bags and the necessary maintenance equipment. In the event of a hurricane or severe storm, the contractor has agreed to remove the barrels from the beach and store them safely in the Waterway Warriors' storage unit.

Chair Feltner asked Spaccio to provide more detail on the organization's current situation, including what is working well and what challenges remain.

Spaccio explained that Waterway Warriors is now in its third year of maintaining trash barrels on Pineda Causeway Beach. Initially, a 4-member crew managed 20 barrels, but balancing maintenance with full-time jobs proved challenging. Despite this, the program has expanded successfully. The number of barrels increased first to 15 and now to 35, and the group is now in a "maintenance mode" for Pineda Causeway. The introduction of barrels has significantly reduced trash washing from the riverbank onto the beaches, as visitors have consistently used the barrels. Additionally, 22 monofilament trash barrel containers were built with the assistance of local Boy Scouts.

Chair Feltner then asked for an update on the relationship with KBB and how it affects the trash barrels. Spaccio explained that when KBB was awarded the contract to clean Pineda Causeway Beach, they agreed to remove trash from the barrels and deposit it in an FDOT-designated area for pickup by the FDOT contractor. After one year, however, Waterway Warriors were informed that they have stopped emptying the barrels as of September 9, 2025.

Spaccio also noted that Waterway Warriors hopes to expand the program to Eau Gallie Causeway by installing additional trash barrels to improve cleanliness there.

Committee members inquired about the differences between KBB's clean-up operations and those conducted alongside Waterway Warriors, including the pros and cons of each approach regarding efficiency, coverage, volunteer involvement, and overall impact.

Cranis asked the TDC for time for staff to review this with KBB and come back to the next meeting with recommendations.

Board Reports

Braga, as Chair of the Beach Committee, announced that the next Beach Improvement Committee meeting is scheduled for October 21, 2025.

Mayor Connors thanked the Space Coast Office of Tourism for their hard work and efforts to make processes easier for the committee, expressing appreciation for the Tourism Office staff.

Litras explained that his restaurant, Café Margaux, is participating in the Space Coast "Fall is for Foodies" program and has a special prix-fixe menu for the event. He also asked Cranis whether the new Cocoa Village Main Street executive director is more proactive than the previous director.

Cranis explained that he was a speaker at the Cocoa Village Main Street business expo last month. Prior to the event, he had reviewed their marketing efforts and noted that they are actively promoting themselves, including creating a TV commercial. Cranis asked if they would be open to including the Florida Space Coast logo in the commercial and they agreed. He added that the new executive director appears to be proactive and focused on marketing.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Tourist Development Council meeting will be held on October 22, 2025, at 2:00 PM at the Viera Government Center, Building C, 3rd Floor, Florida Room.

The next Marketing Committee Meeting is to be determined.

The next Beach Committee Meeting date is October 21st.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM.