



Tampa Bay Regional Collaboration Committee Amateur Sports Development & Marketing Roundtable Minutes

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November 16, 2012
9:30 a.m.

Committee Members Present:

Commissioner Larry Bustle, Chair
Mr. Robert Kersteen
Mayor Bob Minning
Mr. Andy Nunez
Mr. Tim Schock

Committee Members Absent:

Commissioner Victor Crist, Vice Chair
Council Member Doreen DiPolito
Commissioner Bill Dodson
Commissioner Jack Mariano
Council Member Janice Miller
Councilman Wengay Newton
Ms. Barbara Sheen Todd

Staff:

Manny Pumariega, Executive Director
Wren Krahl, Director of Administration/Public Information
Avera Wynne, Planning Director

The TBRCC meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m.

1. Due to the lack of a quorum, the minutes from the October 19, 2012 meeting were not approved.
2. **Mission of the Regional Collaboration Committee - Chair Bustle**

The mission of the Regional Collaboration Committee (RCC) is to develop a process for assessing opportunities to collaborate on regional endeavors within the Tampa Bay area. Anticipated outcome is a *Findings and Recommendations Report*. The report will identify and recommend regional assets and activities that the committee determines could significantly benefit from improved regional collaboration. When feasible, specific steps to collaboration will be identified. Otherwise, the issue will be identified for action by the appropriate stakeholders. The report will be distributed to the Governor, Bay Area Legislative Delegation, local governments, and other appropriate stakeholders. The Committee will address issues in a roundtable format at a separate time from council meetings with Stakeholders, RCC members, interested council members, and interested parties in attendance. The six issues currently scheduled to be addressed by year end are: Seaports; Airports; Amateur Sports; Area Branding; Transportation; and Health Insurance. The ultimate goal of this committee is

to improve the quality of life and services for the citizens of Tampa Bay by creating a more cooperative community.

We have had good success with Airports, Area Branding, and Transportation. Some very unlikely areas for future investigation like transit with more emphasis on public transit to get people around. You truly don't have much of a way to get people around in the bay area other than rental cars or taxis. There are some buses and if you get off an airplane at Tampa International and you want to go to the beach with your family the only way to get there is to rent a car or take a taxi or shuttle. TBARTA recognizes this problem and are looking at options for the future. That is the purpose of this committee.

3. **Presentations:**

Rob Higgins, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Sports Commission

Our mission plan is simple. It's doable, it's social and provides an economic impact through sports. On the social impact side of things, we run and operate 14 local events that help create scholarship exposure for our kids. Since 2004 we have done over 500 scholarships for our kids. We do this through a handful of events such as Allstar Games and recruiting. We do the Recruiting Fair a couple of weeks after the national signing day for football. These are kids that have played their entire lives who have been looking forward to getting a college scholarship, then national signing day comes and goes and they didn't get that phone call or offer from a college coach. A couple of weeks later we bring in 60 to 80 small colleges from all over the country and they get a chance to visit with high school coaches, review transcripts on site, they review the intake, they look to see what needs they might have and then the following day they invite the kids they have an interest in. You have usually 500 kids and their families that come back on the second day and literally take a college visit in a high school gym area. They see video from these small schools about what the dorms look like and what their campus looks like. Some are offered scholarships on-site. We try to provide that service from a social side of things.

From an economic side of things we work to bid on and attract sporting events of all shapes and sizes to our communities in Hillsborough County specifically. We have been fortunate to have some major sporting events over the last five years. We brought in the ACC Men's Basketball Tournament, the first time its ever been in the State of Florida, the FCC Men's Basketball Tournament, the Super Bowl in 2009, Women's Volleyball Championship and just this past April we had the NCAA Men's Frozen Four. Not only is that the first time that's been held in the state, it's the first time in its 64 year history to the entire southeast. We worked as the lead agency to make the bid efforts and make a lot of promises to get those events here, and then we fulfill those promises once we are awarded the bid.

We also spend a tremendous amount of time on youth manager events which is a growing industry. A lot of organizations and a lot of municipalities from around the entire country has seen that it provides a great return on investment. It represents about \$47 million hotel visitor room nights throughout the sports travel industry. When I started this position about eight years ago there were 100 agencies around the entire country that were doing this on behalf of communities. Now there are over 500-600 agencies of this nature. There's 21 throughout the state and I think the best are right here in front of you today. In the overall sports industry Florida represents about \$36 billion. The great thing, even though it has certainly been challenging economic times over the last few years, is that it is proven that youth amateur sports is resilient and thriving in this economy. Our opinion is that its based on a couple of different factors; 1) I alluded earlier about parents trying to get scholarship exposure for their kids and as family budgets have consolidated they continue to make sure their kids are provided every opportunity. 2) we are a phenomenal destination community. We are forced in a situation where previously, four or five years ago, you may take your family vacation

and then go to your child's sporting event a few weeks or months later, now event organizers are being savvy in terms of making sure they put their events in communities where they can arrive a day early or stay a day later and make it more of a "playcation" and take advantage of the destination. We are on a pretty good roll. In Hillsborough County specifically this past year, our fiscal year ended September 30, there were 114 events brought in 130,000 visitor room nights. That's up from 109,000 the prior year. That represents over \$100 million in direct visitor spending.

We are fortunate from a facilities standpoint. Over the last year we have had over \$120 million in improvements to the major facilities. The Tampa Bay Times Forum underwent a \$47 million renovation. Once the Lightning hit the ice this year you will see a \$5 million video board that is the biggest in North America which is another great tool in bringing those major events back into the community. The USF athletic district has taken on more as a college athletic department in terms of facility renovations than anybody ever has. Over \$70 million in improvements there. You may have read recently that there are three proposed youth and amateur facilities that could be coming to Hillsborough County. One has already been funded. It's a \$15 million multi-purpose for predominately soccer and football which will be located in the east of the county. There's the Westshore Indoor Amateur facility which we have gotten a private investor who is taking on this project for the Westshore Business District. If you are familiar with Westshore it has a tremendous amount of hotel rooms in that area that stay full from a business standpoint Monday through Thursday. They would like a solution for the weekends and take advantage of those hotel rooms. The third is a proposed baseball/softball complex which would most likely be in the southern part of Hillsborough County.

We are also discovering, in terms of our board of directors, to continue to put an emphasis on the synergy between sports and entertainment. There was an announcement recently that Kenny Chesney would be coming back to Raymond James Stadium. We are actually leveraging a lot of our services that we use on sports in terms of marketing and accommodations to make sure that event is a success. The great thing about it is it takes place in the heart of college spring break. We have identified 230 colleges that are on spring break throughout the country that, based on a lot of our relationships on campuses that we may be able to draw additional students to visit here and take advantage of spring break in the Tampa Bay area. We also have an emphasis on event innovation. We like to look at potential events to be able to start from the ground up, have us own and operate, that can also increase tourism for the overall community. One great example in terms of innovation is an event that we worked on this past summer with Redbull. It was a first year event and we brought in orders from all over the world to downtown Tampa to compete in the heart of downtown Tampa during the summer. It checked all the boxes for a lot of different reasons. One is that our community has been looking for a summer event for quite some time that can capitalize on the need to help with tourism. Two is that it took advantage of our waterfront. It is a showcase jewel of the entire community to be able to help leverage for future business. Three, it was live on NBC for two hours. That was their only event that was live this past year. To have that promotional postcard to go out through the entire country for a two hour span with a lot of great shots of our community certainly helps. We look to hopefully build on the success of that event, bringing it back as well as looking at other opportunities where we can start from scratch on events, own and operate those events locally, and that way we keep a lot more of the funds in addition to the influx of tourism dollars.

One of the questions posed, when we received the invitation to present to you today, is to take a look at the potential regional opportunities that we could possibly collaborate on. One thing that we've already had some preliminary discussions is the opportunity for multi-sport events and sport festivals. I think each of us here today certainly have their specific niche in the sports market and being able to bring youth and amateur events to each of our communities. If we took a collaborative approach to look at where each of our "wheelhouses" exist and if there is a potential sports festival,

we are talking about multi-sport disciplines where it could be anywhere from ten to fifty or however many sports that could spread across the entire region and give everybody a piece of that pie. From a marketing standpoint we have done some things really well in terms of coming together and having a presence at different trade shows, sales opportunities, and I think if we continue to keep an eye on the ball there - I mentioned event innovation and opportunities where we could come together and pull together some events from scratch. If you look at it from across the country there are certain qualifying events that have point systems, maybe there is an opportunity to put together some events where there are qualifiers throughout each of our regions and then we have an overall championship that rotates on an annual basis. Just as I mentioned with the multi-sport event, specifically if we look at our facilities and look at opportunities to layer or expand business throughout the region, whether it be based on age division, size of facility, that's another opportunity.

If you look at our logo you see water, the sun and the most important thing from our standpoint is the game day every day. I wouldn't call it a slogan, it's more of a promise. Everybody on our staff and in the community is going to treat everyday like game day. We treat each day with passion and if we can treat every event like that I think the overall community will be better off.

Questions & Comments:

- Q. How do you go about contacting organizations like AAU? Do they contact you or do you contact them? How do you identify potential events?
- A. AAU has a long relationship with us and having them right up the road certainly helps. One of our staff members used to be on their staff. For the first time this past year they posted an annual staff retreat that we hosted and we are planning on hosting again this upcoming year. Traditionally, we use any method we possibly can to increase our communication and relationship with perspective events. So whether its sales trips, trade shows, grass roots efforts we try to create as big and as best of a relationship between potential events and our organization. We use any method we can to sell and market.
- Q. How do you identify those potentials?
- A. Over the past ten years we have built relationships, and having 100 events annually we have those relationships and we build on that based on facilities we have available for potential events, and then we work up a strategic plan to target them.
- Q. How do you identify and market the specific students that are going to be potential candidates for the scholarship opportunity and what kind of sport? You mentioned football.
- A. We realize it's not just about football in our community. Over the years we continue to add combine All Star games. From a combine standpoint, in addition to football, we also do softball, girls softball, girls volleyball, baseball as well as girls basketball and boys basketball. Our intention is to be able to create a three prong approach for each sport. The way we have it right now in football is the way we want it for every sport and we are adding that incrementally as we continue to increase resources. At the end of the prospect's junior year we host their combine to give them a chance to get their initial exposure to colleges. They then go play their senior year. We host their All Star Game at Raymond James Stadium in December and in February we have the recruiting fair. Right now we have combines in some sports, we have combines in All Star games and as we continue to add resources we would like to get where we can get that three prong recruiting approach. To answer your question about how we identify prospects - we work through our county's athletic department to be able to engage every high school coach in the community. They know their players best. They know their talent level best as well as where the transcripts and academics sit. You could think of the State of Florida as the umbrella organization FHSAA. They have the counties underneath them so we work directly through the Hillsborough County Athletic Department. Now we do take on prospects from all counties at those events but traditionally because we are based in Hillsborough County you will see Hillsborough County kids in those events.
- Q. You say that sports are recession proof. That doesn't explain the Bucs problems.
- A. As far as tourism. We have only seen our numbers from the sports travel standpoint go up. I can't speak to local sports attendance. One of the things we try to continue to work with is our board of

directors is not for profit, a 501(c)(3) and our board and leadership is made up of each of the professional franchises as well as the local colleges throughout the entire Tampa Bay area. We work with each of those franchises while we have these events in town to make sure they are aware of those events - whether it's a Bucs game or the Lightning or Rays, so that they don't schedule competition and we offer ticket discounts and find ways to get them to the games and capitalize on that sport.

Q. What is the composition of your commission? Do you appoint or elect people?

A. We have a board of directors. It is a big group of 52 people from throughout the community. It's made up of the franchises, colleges, private investors or partners that have seen a great return on their investment and we also have an executive committee of 12. That is the group that focuses more on the day to day operation in conjunction with the staff. There is a nomination process that takes place annually and then those individuals that the executive committee votes on get inducted at our annual meeting each year in December.

Q. You mentioned sports generally drive, some of your youth sports, and 47 million sports annually. I would assume at 130,000 groups annually for Florida so that's less than half of one percent. Is there something that, from your point of view, is hindering a greater travel into the regional area?

A. That's for Hillsborough County. One way that you can look at increasing sports tourism is by increasing your places to play. Whether they are pro facilities and trying to get additional facilities here because the more fields we have the more opportunities we have to be able to bring events into the community. That is first and foremost and our biggest challenge, but I can say the growth to get to that 130,000, as figures go that would be 22,000 roommates. We try to take advantage of the facilities we do have, but this talk and tangible talk in terms of future potential facilities that seem to be coming on-line is going to increase that return on investment.

Q. You mentioned three proposed youth facilities on the Hillsborough side. What are the things that are roadblocks or hurdles?

A. Out of the three, if you look at each of them individually - the first one is funded and will be built. They are identifying the site right now. That's the Youth Soccer Complex. It should have 16 to 20 fields in Hillsborough County and its funded at \$15 million. The second is the Westshore Indoor Facility where a private investor has stepped up and it is down to site selection. The third one isn't far down the path, the county has been working on. The first two I feel great about and I think we will be in good shape. The third one continues to go through the same channels for processing.

Joe Pickett, Executive Director, Bradenton Area Sports Commission

This is a very new industry and I think it is very important for everyone in the room to realize it caught a wave at a time when a lot of things were changing in the country overall. For my group of people and above there was a lot of middle school sports when we grew up. There were a lot of grade school sports in Florida, and high school sports. I would like to point out the fact that youth travel sports took the place of a lot of those middle school and elementary school sports around the country. You may have schools in your area that still offer middle school sports, but for the most part schools are getting out of it, even on a national basis (except for private schools).

The mission of the Bradenton Area Sports Commission is to promote the economic development and enhance the way of life in Manatee County through the promotion and development of amateur, professional and recreational sports. We really are more amateur and recreational. Those are our key markets from our Sports Commission, but we do have the Pirates and we do work with them.

The Florida Gulf Coast Sports Commission was established as a private entity in 2001. We were a smaller community at that time and there were not a lot of sports opportunities. I had fifteen years of my life prior to working with AAU and USA and all the other sports organizations around the country. They were trying to grow and at the same time the sports industry was starting to take off. The FGSC became the 13th appointed Sports Commission the State of Florida. In January 2012, the FGSC was renamed the Bradenton Area Sports Commission (BASC), a non profit 501(c)(3). The BASC is charged with creating revenue. We are not county government, we are strictly private and

with that we are also charged with our own growth. We have to own our events and create our own events, very much like Rob does. Since 2001, our Sports Commission has hosted over 1,000 events with an economic impact of over \$395 million to our local community. We are a little community in comparison to the other communities that are here today. We have about a 6,000 room bed stock. We share that heavily between January and Easter each year with our senior traveler who comes down. We have a large blackout period of time in our market. We have heavy holiday traffic to our hotels and to our beaches so we have to be very cognizant in how we bring in events because at the end of the day our hotel room stock balances what we can and cannot do. We would like to bring in some great events but at the end of the day we can't because there is no where to put them.

We do very well with smaller events and had a great year. In 2012 there were 143 events. It's nothing for our community to have 3 to 5 events in a weekend in all different kinds of disciplines. We may have ice hockey going on in one place and softball going on somewhere else. They aren't the mega events simply because of the design of our community. What we try to do is have a very diverse calendar. I have learned over the years that incentives change and consequently what you think you have today you do not have tomorrow. The sports community is highly competitive. We are a great fraternity in our region and have each others back. But I can guarantee you that we are competitors with each other. That's the way we are structured in the State of Florida and in the country. We negotiate for Florida first, and we negotiate for our community second when we are looking at events. A lot of times we work together very heavily. You can see by what we do we touch every aspect of our community, we touch all of our facility base and we do a lot of different things.

We have already secured 84 events for 2013. We are looking pretty far out on our calendar of events. We are negotiating now for 2015, 2016 and 2017. I know 2013 and 2014 will fill in quickly. We are targeting three years out. We are looking for long term deals and we do a lot of bundling. We negotiate very hard to where that maybe there is an event that wants to come to town and they want to come in for one time, we will turn them down unless we can get 3 or 4 other events during that same year period or a long term contract. We try to make sure that when we touch something we deliver the highest quality product for the community, but more than that, we try to deliver a product that will have a return value.

Our community is a hub for private facilities. 71% of our budget goes to our parks and recreation because they are good. I have great fields because they take those dollars and put them back into their fields. We have great parks and recreation facilities. We have the IMG Academies which for many years was a closed facility for lack for a better word. They were all about their basic business model which was kids coming in, being educated and trained. Starting last year we started meeting and have now been able to work with them and use their facilities to bring events to their facilities and they have geared up as well to be proactive to work with the Sports Commission. We are limited on time that we can bring events in, but it is a first class facility to be able to bring outsiders to. The Ellenton Ice Sports Complex - our Sports Commission does a lot of work out there. It is a two-rink center. For a community our size it is amazing that we have an ice center. The Premier Sports Campus is a new product and they are just starting to get traction in the industry. 22 soccer fields and they just added another 10 which are dedicated to lacrosse and are adding another regulation track and field area which will be done within the next 2 years. We have a new field house which is looking to be built there from a private entity with a sports hotel. The east side of our town is going to be able to have some structure. Our biggest problem in that area are hotel rooms. The Bradenton Area Convention Center has had a revamp, it is a 33,000 sq. ft. facility. It is a fantastic facility for floor beams and gymnastics and cheerleading and those kind of events. We do a lot of bowling and we happen to have one of the only 64 lanes centers in the area. This year we did bowling events that attracted about 12,000.

We do a lot with St. Pete/Clearwater. Their office and our office work together and we do a lot of over the water events. There are events, because they happen to have some facilities on the south end near the Skyway and some of our facilities bridge out that way. We can do softball events, baseball and basketball. They have used our hotels as well. We have had a couple of events posted this year at our Premier Sports Campus where they were actually the hotel partner because the event fell at a blackout time for us. Sarasota is a tremendous partner. We bridge with them on a lot of events. We also bridge with Port Charlotte with their sports commission. I think Rob's vision of a sports festival is something that I think would be great for the area. We haven't done a lot with Tampa, or Pasco but that's just because of geographic location. We do work with Polk County on some of their baseball camps and different things. We are a small budget community and with a budget of \$90,000 we aren't a major market but we like that, it makes us strong in negotiations.

Eric Keaton, Office of Tourism, Development, Public Communications Manager, Visit Pasco County

I was here for the tourism branding component and as I mentioned at that time our office of two has a lot of responsibilities. We have been described by the Polk County Sports Commission and the St. Pete/Clearwater Sports Commission as the hybrid office. We are the youngest sports commission with the Florida Sports Foundation, our Sports Commission is actually made up of our Board of County Commissioners. That is different than how Tampa is set up. Our Board created the Sports Commission in 2007. Whenever we have a bid that we take to our Sports Commission they act like a local planning agency with the Sunshine Law and help to bring events in. Due to our number of duties we sit in our office across the hall from the County Administrator, John Gallagher.

Pasco County doesn't have the big facilities but we do have a lot of amateur facilities and those are primarily for our public: little league, the youth organizations, Wesley Chapel Athletic Organization, the Central Pasco Soccer Organizations. Those agencies use those facilities for league play. Our mission for the Tourist Development Planning was built on sports. To construct a sports facility and to also build our brand through attracting sports events and make them a tourist destination. Some of our events that stand out - we have one of the larger lacrosse tournaments coming up. We built our sports plan around that. The Dick's Sporting Good's Tournament of Champions brings in about 80 teams every year around the New Year holiday. They fill up Saddlebrook Resort and ever since they started doing that in 2008 they have been able to create a few more tournaments based off that large one. This weekend there will hold one of the final two national qualifiers for this championship and they bring in about 80 - 90 teams to the Wesley Chapel District Park. There is also another qualifier in Texas. Dick's Sporting Good's Tournament of Champions, that brand is owned by NDP Lacrosse and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment. That's a big name in the sports and entertainment world out of Denver. They own several major sports franchises. We thought it would be a very good partner in having a national sports organization and retailer like Dick's Sporting Goods and the Kroenke sports family to set up a four year agreement. We are also working on bringing in a Gran Fondo Central Florida, a cycling event. I mentioned the national championship for the 5K. Some of our past events, the Powerman Duathlon, Ragnar Relay which is an event of about 1,200 runners in teams of 10-12. They start on this side of the state in a waterfront park in Port Richey and they run as a team relay all the way over to Daytona Beach. That event has since left us and it is now done in the Florida Keys. We are trying to bring similar events back like that, on a smaller scale. If there's one thing Pasco County has it is land. And our land for eco-tourism, cycling, and running events seem to be our bread and butter. Events like Dick's Sporting Goods and soccer and lacrosse probably are second and third on that list due to our facilities.

We do have one major private venue which is a little out of place. They list a number of mud obstacle runs and they have also in the past been the host for the State Championships cross country. It's a great facility and they hold a number of events, unfortunately on a high school level this event will be in Tallahassee this year. They also used to host a steeple chase. The steeple chase is our

version of a Kentucky Derby. I agree with Ron, sports and amateur sports has improved, however, that event because of its major sponsorship through Mercedes Benz, once those sponsorships go from the private industry that event went away. We hope to bring it back but it all has to do with major sponsorship. It's not expensive to put on a cross country event but when you throw in horses and the number of things that go on, that's when the costs start to increase.

Slides were shown of other events that were hosted at the ranch, or on the other side of the coast. There was a swim race on a lake in the New Port Richey/Trinity area, an Olympic Triathlon that's similar to the Clearwater Triathlon. We hold a 50 mile adventure run in the Green Swamp which is one of four national events that is a part of the Dances with Dirt series. We hold that event every March and work with SWFWMD and some of their property. It only brings in roughly 400-500 participants but more than half of them come from out of state. Bringing in out of state participants helps with the economic impact and they spend money. The Fellowship Christian Athletes bring in about 5 teams every year to the Dick's Sporting Goods Tournament of Champions. It is a small meet and they bring in about 800 people to Saddlebrook Resort and hold an annual banquet. Some of the sports tournaments we have are basically the small meetings market as well.

We are all partners with the Florida Sports Foundation and every year we go to one of the major conferences like Teams '12 this year in Detroit and represent our individual communities. We are also on what you would call "Florida Row." We all try to recruit events to bring in that out of state economic impact and bring in those overnight accommodations to the State of Florida, and then we compete with each other. We do try to work together as well. Some of those events you heard about, if not for the Tampa Sports Commission recruiting some of the big soccer tournaments we would not have been able to show how we can host some of those big events in Pasco. We partnered with Tampa Sports Commission in bringing in Super Y Soccer or the USL Soccer Tournaments. They would go out to bid and they would do the majority of the work and then they would work with our Parks and Recreation in our office to use our facilities. You need that when you have those big events because you are looking at a turn-key event and they need 20-30 fields. You have to share accommodations and share fields. We also do traditional marketing through mobile, billboards, competitor ads where we build our brand for cycling and the mud running.

I first started working for Pasco County in 2006 and on the docket they had a tennis stadium which was going to be next to Saddlebrook Resort. I am for any facility that will spend our nearly \$12 million in construction funds. That may seem small for counties like Hillsborough and Pinellas but we are one of the smallest tourism and tax collection counties in the state at 2% and with roughly 3,000 beds. Since then we have started to work on a complex in the Wiregrass development. Wiregrass and Wesley Chapel are probably one of the fastest growing areas in the Tampa Bay area, and probably in the state. A new community college, they just opened a hospital in Wesley Chapel, we have the Shops at Wiregrass which is extremely popular. This facility is probably a mile and a half off the I-75 exit and probably a mile and a half north of New Tampa. This is proposed and the Wiregrass development just donated nearly 200 acres of land and the county will close on this probably by the end of the year. There will be a baseball field, multi-purpose fields. The layout will be primarily baseball and softball. So the county, over the next two years, will be looking for a private partner. If there is one thing that our county has learned is that we can build these facilities but we cannot operate them. If we have to operate them then we will have to change our strategic plan, not only for the county and how these facilities are funded but also our tourist plan because, as I mentioned, we only have a couple of people on staff. Due to our commitments with Dick's Sporting Goods Tournament of Champions and their growth we have been using some high school fields in order to accommodate their size. In order to not use those facilities anymore we will have two fields added to the complex by the end of next year and in phase II we will be adding the super stadium with all the bells and whistles. We will have the ability to have a track, locker rooms, the web-

internet infrastructure, press box, TV. We will have everything except for the big jumbo-tron or mini jumbo-tron, we would have to bring that in for temporary usage for streaming events on TV or possibly one of our two government access television channels. Phase III of this plan will be south of that, it is all county property that was recently purchased. We will be adding more rectangular fields which would bring this complex up in the near future to 16 fields. As of right now Parks and Recreation and Tourism and Development would be operating this facility unless we come to an agreement with the Wesley Chapel Athletic Association. That's good for them as well plus they will be able to use those facilities. They are already at 100% capacity.

How can we all work together? We all work together with the Florida Sports. We like to work with folks face to face and get our brand out there in the media. We've had a couple of successful media fan tours where we bring in the client and outdoor riders whether they be for eco-tourism or travel. The next tour we are looking at is what we call the Adrenaline Sports FAM Tour where we can work with everybody within the Tampa Bay area. They have jet packs at the Tradewinds and we would like to put them in a parachute and push them out the door at Zephyrhills for skydiving. That facility is a \$10 million economic impact and we would like to join together this area and there's nothing better than word of mouth advertising and get these folks who maybe write for a men's journal to talk about our facilities and what Tampa Bay's brand has to offer for the sports and the outdoors sportsman. Maybe working on a micro-website, social media. The baby boomers like to golf and that's something we have to talk about as more of them retire and maybe setting up one of those festivals where it's around a tournament of golf or a golf FAM tour. It seems like Manatee/Bradenton work with Pinellas, and there is definitely some teamwork here. I think you will see that more from the sports side than you saw from the tourism side.

Angel Natal, Senior Sports Sales Manager, St. Pete/Clearwater Sports Commission

The St. Petersburg/Clearwater Sports Commission is Pinellas County Government. Our mission is to generate economic impact through hosting sports/tourism related events. A lot of the logos and colors and partners were displayed. We all work well and communicate as we travel throughout the country. If something doesn't fit in our community then we will talk to Rob or Joe. We can't do everything but if we can't do it within our community we will branch out and figure out where we can host an event within the state.

We do a lot of non-traditional endurance related events which are unique within our area because you can do them year round. We compete against smaller communities in the USA where an event in the summer for them is their only event and they pull all their resources to make it happen. We are one of the most populated counties in the state and we are limited with our facilities. We have to take advantage in using some of our area such as Oldsmar and their racetrack. Non-traditional sports are unique within itself, lacrosse is a growing industry. Although we have a lot of baseball fields they can be used for multi-purpose venues. Golf is in our area and is a huge generator both on the leisure traveler as well as events.

New events that are being hosted this year are endurance sports - the Tap 'N' Run 4K with 1300-1400 participants; the Land Rover Tri Rock in Clearwater; The Color Run; ISA World Singles Championships; the USBC Tournament; and the ASA 18U Gold Softball Tournament. We want everyone to be able to participate in these events and we make them inclusive of our local citizens. Bowling is significant in our area and it engages Largo and Seminole as hubs for those types of events. Those are two small cities that aren't really engaged like the hubs of St. Pete and Clearwater. One thing we can control are schedules. If its an opportunity because it's summertime and we have the rain and weather patterns and we all know that tourism is constant February through early April so if we can leverage the appropriate parks to do multiple events you can engage those tourists and sports visitors by saying that if we start the event on Thursday it might be more cost effective. Some

of these events are spectator events. You might only have 14 in the final four, but you are talking about tens of thousands of people coming to the event. Or you can target a 100 team lacrosse tournament. There is a good balance there because there is still a way to engage the economic benefits.

One of our marketing initiatives is Attraction and Retention of Sports Tourism Partners. It's always nice attracting business but it's also important for us to retain the same business. I think all of us have a good retention model. Some of the things we are challenged with is the proximity to the venue from hotels. We have 33,000-35,000 hotel rooms in our community but no one wants to travel particularly outside the 25-30 mile radius from our venues. Team needs are also important, such as laundry service on site. And a rental car facility on site, ice, etc. Those types of things add value. One of the things about our area is that we also have arts and cultural with all of the museums, beaches and all the things we have to offer. A lot of times we like to shut down events, especially in the summer, by 2pm or 3pm because we know it will rain at 4pm or 5pm. And we engage them by saying, enjoy the Clearwater Marine Aquarium or the Dali. Those are exposures and opportunities that our area doesn't have to work hard at because there are so many other things to do.

The partnerships that we are challenged with is once again, there is a lot of work to bring these events into the area. All of us can attest to that. It's also just as important to understand that the community wants these types of events in participating, purchasing tickets, being a spectator. If it isn't a city partner or a community that wants that event we have to figure out where that best fits. We have to get partners to make it a successful event. If you don't have those elements, and once again in our case, we struggle with facilities. We lack facilities and we try to maintain the ones we have to a certain standard because we do know all across the country people are improving their facilities and we don't have that capability in Pinellas.

Sports industry trends are endurance, non-traditional, lacrosse. The sports tourism economic impact to Pinellas County FY 11-12 was \$22,249,357. We see some room for growth for the non-traditional and endurance type sports.

4. **Questions and Answers:**

Q. What crossed my mind are the impacts, not only for hotels.

A. We are on the side of caution and always invite someone to come in and be a part of the event. We always ask for an independent economic impact study so people can actually interview people. Those indicators are very impressive when you look at the numbers.

Q. Rob, your name is Tampa Bay Sports Commission but you primarily focus on Hillsborough.

A. Our board and a lot of the partners that are involved are regional in nature. Part of our funding comes just from Hillsborough. We are a public/private partnership. The only source of public funding we receive is from Hillsborough County. We know where our bread is buttered and where our business takes place. The good thing in terms of some of those major events that we talked about is they are regional. That's where more of the regional attraction is taking place.

Q. Why not more regional facilities? Why wouldn't it make sense to have a major regional baseball or ... certainly we are looking at growing in Manatee County. Wouldn't it make sense to draw all four counties and maybe 5 counties together and have a regional facility?

A. The first thing would be the facility itself. It's going to have a lot of time where it wouldn't have any kind of return at all during the weekdays. It would be very expensive facility to operate. There's been a lot of talk in the industry in different areas of the country to try to build that mega-center. They are trying to do it in north Atlanta and it continues to fall on its face. Part of it is understanding the animal that we deal with, which is the organization. The

organizations have gotten very savvy as far as negotiations and as far as the way they do things. Could it be done? Sure. It would take a lot of thought, a lot of effort, and it would have to be a concept that would probably not fit in today's youth sports travel market organizers mentality. They don't want to come to Bradenton, Florida probably longer than 2-3 years. They want to move their events, they like to move their events. There's more value and more money if they move their events because every time they move their event then that event's attraction and economic impact from where they were creates a higher value to where they are going. In fact, even the State of Florida grant guidelines state that it has a three year term for any kind of funding. Fishing for larger events to come to a regional location, there's not prior to the economic downturn, I think a lot of your organizations like your AU's and your other places wouldn't be interested. Their membership was severely hammered during that time and they had to readjust. They had to move to more regional type events simply because their membership couldn't travel and spend the dollars. Our area, for a regional center, would go up against Disney. They are the boss. They are hard to compete with, not because of their pricing, not because of their facility, but its because of what the value added is to that athlete and to that organization who takes their event to Disney. I just don't know in our community, and I'm not being negative, I think we would be a tough sell to go against Disney. I don't see a pro baseball team or a pro hockey team go long term into one community.

All of us thought this question would be brought forth but we have a 40 minute threshold where no one complains about driving to the next venue. We do get a lot of complaints during the spring in our area, but competing areas like Arizona where a team would go in and they are telling us they have to drive an hour and a half between fields to get to an amateur high school field. That's not the experience any of us want to provide. We want to share. When you are talking about driving 35-40 minutes it also lends to an operating issue because to get somewhere centrally located it wouldn't be conducive to time as it relates to the event. We also have to be cautious with that. A lot of time if you are looking at different organizations and you have a 20 field complex - there aren't many events that warrant a 20 field complex. A lot of us are discussing doing different disciplines at the same facility.

I think once we enhance our transportation network across the region it would improve that way with all of these big events such as the Final 4 at Tropicana Field. And you could have an event over at the Tampa Bay Times Forum and you would have that transportation going back and forth instead of buses like we had for the RNC, or even a cab or private vehicle. If we had better transportation I think we would have better regional cooperation with regional sports. Maybe if we would have had the 2012 Olympics that was brought up in the late 1990s all this transportation would have been in place.

Q. I didn't hear anything about partnering in the media. What role does the media play?

A. It is huge. When we are talking to a potential event it is a major factor and it is the natural infrastructure that we offer. It comes down to what facilities we have, what hotels we have, and what marketing and media exposure we can provide. We just worked with a handful of media on a promotional blitz for a potential upcoming event. It was on the radio this morning about the current state of sports. We were fortunate to have a cross of all media and some really good partners that we lean on. It's important to engage them on the importance of sports, tourism, and the great job that all these folks are doing as well as getting down to the nitty gritty about specific events and exposure that we can provide. The fact that we are the 13th or 14th largest media market in the country, the fact that it's the largest media market in the state, that's something that we are constantly hitting over the head of potential events.

In our case, because of county government, we do have a PR staff that we work with in-

house.

For a couple of our events you have to look at what they are good at. For the lacrosse events they have their own national following to their magazines, their own lacrosse channels on You Tube so they are bringing in that media exposure. The same thing with those big endurance events. When Tough Mudder came in they had their own Tough Mudder channel on You Tube and a social media impact where they had 3 million followers and that's how they wanted to get out their message. On the other hand if you look at the event that he just had, they are owned by a competitor group and they have national magazines, their own channel as well. Another story for lacrosse, we try to bring in the major players and take them on a round robin for local media. One year we brought in Gary Gage who is like the Michael Jordan of lacrosse and took him to the individual sports stations in the Tampa Bay area and had him on Chip Carter's show. Media is very important and I think each one of them have their own individual ways of reaching out. We hire those turn-key operations and we work with them.

Social media is very important as well. Two weeks ago we had the gold medal gymnastics team where we did a social media blitz and it got over 5 million impressions. It was pictures at Busch Gardens and the Aquarium and the Columbia and a lot of other destinations. The more we can combine the promotion and the access we have from a sports standpoint and leverage the overall destination as well, the better off we will be.

- Q. We have the St. Pete Yacht Club and they do the international championships, they do national championships right on the bay. It's free and you can publicize the things that they are going to do and attract more business and more opportunities for the community to engage and enjoy. But if you aren't a member you're not going to know what's happening and you have national caliber people competing in the bay. Would you partner with somebody like that to attract more opportunities for the community?
- A. We probably don't know about 30% of the events unless we go on-line that are tourist-based. We are a county resource. We aren't trying to reinvent the wheel, all of us are good at what we do but we only know as much as people tell us. A lot of times there are people that just want to be here and don't want to be inclusive. We just found out about the brother and sister from Clearwater who will be representing USA in the Olympics. Most of us in the sports industry are easy to get a hold of, and if you can't get a hold of one of us I don't think they are trying very hard. There are so many mechanisms that we can assist with. One great resource we have is a print shop. It's a county print shop and it's a service we can provide and it is very cost effective for us and for a third party client. Those are some of the basic amenities we can provide. A lot of times it isn't the funding but it is the resource to provide a different direction and opportunity.
- Q. It seems to me that the more people know about an event the more people would show up for that event. You will be getting a phone call and hopefully we can work together. Disney doesn't have our bay.
- A. We do a lot of marketing to the Orlando region just so we can be referred to as Orlando's beaches as well. In a fantasy world we have international visitors, there's a significant sporting event at the Tampa Bay Times Forum and they will drive there, go to that activity, and stay in Tampa. It's a marketing effort that we always try to implement because there are so many things that you can do within this region that you can stay in one location and drive to get to all these different experiences, 12 months out of the year.
- Q. If you get a phone call and you are working with USA softball, they may call and say, we are going to need 50 fields. Is there a place to go to find out if 50 fields are available, or do you have all this knowledge, or do you have to pick up the phone every time and say, how many fields does Pasco have? Have many does Bradenton have?

- A. We pretty much know each others stock to some degree. It might be unique and we may not know times of the year they are available, but we have a good idea of who has what.
- Q. Each one of you said we have “x” facilities, “x” hotel rooms, but there would power in saying in our 4-7 county region “within a 40 minute drive” there are this many of this and this many of that. You talked about competing against the mouse, if they want to pull the switch they have the resources to do it. But, you have your northeast traditions, and we built spring training here on repetition and tradition and people coming back to the same place year after year. They have seasonal homes. And Hillsborough County had the tradition of the northeast schools coming down.
- A. We are getting better. The Bradenton Area Sports Commission really is not involved in the day to day. They are a separate organization. They have been established as a separate organization. They do their own scheduling. On a day to day basis our paths do not cross. We do monitor what they are doing. Its phenomenal what’s going on down in Sarasota. The Sarasota Sports Commission is involved with that more than our Sports Commission is. The vendors and facilities in Sarasota County. There is the Fort Hammer facility that is built on the Manatee River which is a phenomenal location for hopefully a festival that we could put together because of its ability for the training, rowing, and those kinds of components. Our Sports Commission can market that property through their efforts or through working with them. They are keeping it under their wing. It’s very exciting. I know you met Elliott from the CVB of Manatee County and that group is in Switzerland right now gearing up on the 2017 bid which if awarded will dramatically affect our areas. The events are international mega type events.
- Q. You mentioned soccer or baseball, they want to rotate around. But some things like rowing, maybe shooting sports, or things like that it seems to me that there is some measurement to your social mission to try and find scholarships and help people that way. There are so many sports that have grown and there are a lot of scholarships out there that are pretty easy to get if you can get a couple of years access to rowing or shooting.
- A. I think you are going to find that as rowing grows - the big thing about rowing is that it is facility specific. If you have a facility rowing is going to come. If you tour one of the competitors like I have, which is Oklahoma City, the facility that’s going in on the west coast of Florida is far and above where that facility is going to be and that was one of the frontrunners. Is there going to be another facility built by another community in the country? Probably. At the end of the day we are going to have the best facility for the international type of events. The Title Nine will find its own mark and take its own path, hopefully more of the schools will engage into the rowing campaign. And for the entire west coast region we will grow that product. We are doing very well with Yale and Harvard coming down for spring training. It falls in our heavy time of the year for traffic but at the end of the day its working. Rowing is facility specific. When we get into the majority of the youth travel sports, that’s really what we do. These kids are moving around the country, venue to venue and it is pretty much based upon where the organizer of those events wants to go and how he wants to go. Here we are, as four of the top in the country, and yet our competitors outside of Florida - their competition to us is their checkbook. What people don’t realize is how much money is being thrown around by other cities and other sports commissions around the country. We have weather on our side but we don’t get every event that comes to the door just because we are on the west coast of Florida. We loose as many events, if not more, than we get. Part of Florida’s role that we work hard on is keeping the organizations in check on the real value of their product. It’s hard to do. Golf happens to be one that’s out of control. Junior golf is just insane. A \$35,000 bid for a weekend golf course is crazy. Our competitors don’t know the value and they have massive checkbooks. That’s the difference. We are old school, we have been around a long time and a lot of the newer sports commissions out there are new. They don’t know how to do this so they approach it more as

a tourism program instead of a sports industry program so they are used to paying dollars that don't really have a value. We do a business model plan that is based upon overnight room stays, economic impact to the community, and we all have a different way of coming out to make that event work for our community. I can tell you that if anyone calls with a 100 team tournament the next phone call will be to one of us because once again, if you have that potential business, that event will never leave your community.

Q. Do you ever lose money on the athletic field?

A. Yes. No doubt about it. That's been known within our organization with the various elected officials as well as within the Governor's office, to make sure it's understood. This is what we are targeting, this is our strategy and everyone is on board with that strategy.

Q. We have had this discussion with the Convention and Visitor Bureaus. Pasco has space where Hillsborough and Pinellas do not. Pasco has a fantastic jump zone for skydiving. That's not going to work very well in Hillsborough or Pinellas. As a planning council we have the ability to help coordinate and make recommendations to some of the other bodies what will help the region as a whole. The Frozen Four and bringing in some of those alternatives and drawing people to it - the Frozen Four - I grew up in Minnesota. I never went to a Frozen Four in all my years of living in Minnesota until I was living here in the Tampa Bay region. When there were intermissions between games that patio outside of the Tampa Bay Times Forum was a huge plus because you could go outside. It wasn't something that could be done at any of the traditional venues. I love the fact that you are going after extreme sports as well. You mentioned Sport Enterprises. For those of us that don't know, Stan Kroenke owns many major sports franchises. He owns most of the sports franchises in Colorado with the exception of the Rockies and the Broncos. He owns the Rapids which is a major league soccer team, the Denver Nuggets basketball team, the Avalanche Hockey team, he owns a lacrosse team. And he is married to Ann Walton whose father founded Walmart. There is a lot of money there, there's a lot of draw. He's doing a lot of things in sports in general. You also mentioned idea academies. How have those partnerships and how can some planning organizations and some of the other organizations in the region help with partnerships and draw out incentives to draw those partnerships in as well as let them drive folks here as well?

A. As far as Pasco goes with Dick's Sporting Goods Tournament, they are looking to expand their brand into other sports. They naturally have a fit with our county. We have built that relationship. I don't think our relationship would work very well with IMG simply for the fact that they are a private organization, for profit. We're not. We are looking for having an economic impact for our partners to collect tourist tax so we can repay it back as our form of marketing to bring in these events. Someone like IMG or a similar organization would love to have that tournament for their own. If that happens our county for that event alone loses a \$3 million impact and Saddlebrook probably loses 2 or 3 events around one of their lowest revenue times.

One thing is having a greater awareness of the values of sports tourism in terms of economic development. Take an ACC Men's Basketball Tournament where the event has been sold out for years and years and the top donors are the ones that actually get the tickets. You are talking about a very fluid crowd that's coming to town. Some of the biggest and best decision makers across the entire country come into our community. There's certainly an advantage to that but you have to have ways to market the region to those folks as they come in. They are coming in January to Tropicana Field and for the last three or four years here the owner, Ron Kroenke, has been on the sideline. There has to be some advantage to that as well. Whether it's a NCAA event, Super Bowl, you are bringing in a lot of the top decision makers from around the country who control "x" number of jobs and "x" number of economic development opportunities. There has to be a way to maybe work a little bit more,

interface, to be able to take advantage of really having those folks in town for these different events and getting access to our current community leadership like the Glasers.

Q. Do you depend on the marketplace to provide the bed stock or are you actively or pro-actively involved with hotel companies, saying - you need to build a hotel in this location?

A. We have done reports when they are requested for economic impact studies for Holiday Inn and other hotels. We are constantly talking to any developer, builder, ownership to build anything in our area for hotels. We can use any bed stock that we can get.

In my case as far as an event goes, hotels are secondary because if we don't have a facility that's available, accessible and affordable you don't have to worry about selling a hotel. In Pinellas County there are different hotel options that are going up and going down but all in all that's a secondary element for us. We like to make sure all the other elements of the event are in place and then you can go into hotel leases.

Our occupancy at our hotels in Pasco is probably in the low 50s. Fortunately we have some of the older hotels on US 19 that probably need some help. Some of our newer brands like the Hampton Inn Suites, do very well in Wesley Chapel. With a lot of the developments, once the recession is over, we will have about 4 or 5 hotels that have pin points of land near the Wesley Chapel and the development. Hopefully once we get that going, the hotels and the town center and everything will take its place.

Q. You mentioned quite a few times economic impact benefits for different events and I just wanted to let you know that we have an economic model at the Council and we may be able to help you to get more precise on your return on investment. As you look at new events that you may bring in we can run some models for you. We do that at the county level.

5. **Wrap-up:**

Chair Bustle: Thank you for participating.

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Larry Bustle, Chair

Lori Denman, Admin. Assistant