

**Sabine Parish Tourist Commission**  
**MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, July 11, 2017**  
**12:00 pm**

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**Board Members Present:**

Kyle Martinez  
Martha Henderson  
Bonnie Fox-Miles  
Edith Palmer  
Randy Ziegler, III  
Geri Alford

**Not Present:**

Barbara Peterson  
Wanda Rivers

**Staff Present:**

Linda Curtis-Sparks  
Whitney Hart

**Guests:**

Eugene Fremaux  
Randy Rollins

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Kyle Martinez, President, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission to order.

The prayer and pledge were led by Linda Curtis-Sparks.

**Action #1:** Bonnie Fox-Miles made a motion to approve the July 2017 agenda of the Sabine Parish Tourist Commission Board meeting. Randy Ziegler, III seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Kyle Martinez welcomed the guests, Randy Rollins from Cypress Bend Resort and SPTC auditor Eugene Fremaux. Linda Curtis-Sparks made the board aware of an employment change. Whitney Hart transitioned from full time employment to part time.

**Action #2:** Geri Alford made a motion to approve the March 2017 minutes. Edith Palmer seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Linda-Curtis Sparks presented the March, April, May and June 2017 financials. She explained that the Tourist Commission is right on track with income and expenditures for the year. She stated that we have cut out the Oilmen's ads and 1 BASS ad due to unanticipated cost overruns in other programs. We are over budget on postage for the year, but that the postage is a positive issue because it is a result of increased requests for information from potential visitors.

**Action #3:** Bonnie Fox-Miles made a motion to approve the March, April, May and June 2017 financials of the SPTC. Geri Alford seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Linda Curtis-Sparks made the board aware of the additional cost of the wide band width service through Tan-Mar for the Bassmaster Elite event and asked that an additional \$2,500 be added to the budget for these costs.

**Action #4:** Edith Palmer made a motion to approve that an additional \$2,500 be added to the budget. Geri Alford seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Eugene Fremaux presented the annual audit report he performed for the Legislative Auditor's Office. He explained that the loss shown in December on the SPTC financial report had decreased because of

additional funds added by the State Treasurer's Office through the state rebate. The only additional asset was the addition of the phone system.

**Action #5:** Edith Palmer made a motion to approve the audit report. Martha Henderson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Linda Curtis-Sparks gave an update on the parish litter program and that the SPTC will fund the printing of litter bags. She will ask the area businesses to reimburse the cost.

She discussed the issue of future funding for the Tourist Commission and that she recommends holding a board workshop between now and September to hear everyone's individual ideas on ways to handle this issue. She discussed the need for more cabins and hotels on the lake to service the visitors and to continue tourism growth as an economic engine for Sabine Parish. There also would never be the needed funds from occupancy tax by overnight room sales to sufficiently market the parish until there is a large increase in the number of rental units available. She presented the board with the idea of participating in two studies. One would need to be an economic development study to show the impact to area businesses and governing bodies. These numbers help to show the need and to provide information for funding from grants or state or federal funding for infrastructure. The second study would need to be done to see what type facilities would be most successful. The information from this study would help attract future investors and to help secure financing for such facilities. The board expressed a deep interest in having this study done, but the study will cost approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000. The board expressed their desire to raise this money in and that the study would be imperative to the future of the Tourist Commission and other governing bodies in the parish that receive taxes from sales generated by tourism. She presented the board with the budget comparison from 2006 – 2016 and explained that over the last 10 years, 46% of the Tourist Commission's funding has come from outside sources and that in the future when the next Director takes over, it will need to be someone that is aggressive when seeking funding and maintains the relationships that have been formed. She stated that at the August 2017 board meeting, they will look at possible partners for the study. The workshop would address the 2018 budget, plus other ideas for future funding.

Linda Curtis-Sparks explained to the board that a compliance questionnaire for the audit was available to be signed.

**Action #6:** Randy Ziegler, III made a motion to allow Kyle Martinez to sign the questionnaire. Bonnie Fox-Miles seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Action #7:** Edith Palmer made a motion to accept the Director's Report which included:

April

- a. Bassmaster Elite Update
- b. Public Relations Articles in Sabine Index

May

- a. Occupancy and Google Analytics Numbers are Strong and Up From 2016 – January – June 30th
- b. LA Encore Retirement Meeting in Baton Rouge on April 12th
- c. Virtual Reality Film Crews on Toledo Bend April 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>
- d. Louisiana Office of Tourism Highlighting Toledo Bend in October
- e. Additional Agreed Upon Procedures for Auditing Purposes Discussed at LACVB
- f. Matador Ads for Millennials Ran on Websites in May
- g. Los Adaes Announced Grand Opening for May 6

- h. LA North Newsletter Covered Sabine Parish in May
- i. Tourism Awareness Event Held at North Toledo Bend State Park Attended by Lt. Governor and Staff
- j. Sealy's Big Bass Splash Coming to Toledo Bend for 33 Years

#### June

- a. Update on Social Media Followers and Record Occupancy Numbers
- b. LA Outdoors TV Show To Be Paid For By LOT and Filmed August 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> on Toledo Bend
- c. Chinese Photography FAM Coming to Toledo Bend July 15<sup>th</sup>
- d. Audit Procedures for Future
- e. National Wire Press Release and Photo on Times Square Marquee in New York City reached 9.1 Million in 121 Publications and Online Articles
- f. Sealy Outdoors Big Bass Splash Saw 72 Lunkers Awarded by TBLA
- g. Louisiana Fishing & Outdoor Adventures Guide Has One of Our Toledo Bend Photos on Front Cover

#### July

- a. Update on TBLA Grant Process
  - 1. Sign Request to the Lieutenant Governor's Assistant
    - A. Gateway Sign at Toledo Town
    - B. Signage Along Hwy 191 Scenic Byway
  - 2. Addition of Landscape Architect
- b. Wrap Up on Legislation
- c. Bass Times Cover Was a Pictures of John Murray After Winning Our Toledo Bend Elite Event
- d. Public Relations Articles in Index To Date
  - 1. Tourist Commission Works to Attract International Visitors (Japanese)
  - 2. Win Prizes, Help Local Businesses Win Best of Louisiana Outdoors
  - 3. Sabine Tourism Promoted By Lt. Governor Nungesser
  - 4. Best Fishing Event in Nation Hits Toledo Bend This Weekend
  - 5. Tourist Commission to Exhibit at Bassmaster Classic Expo
  - 6. Writers Promote Travel Along El Camino Real
  - 7. Toledo Bend Receives National Press in Times Square Marquee in New York City
  - 8. Bassmaster 2017 Top Lakes – Toledo Bend is 4<sup>th</sup> in Central Region

Randy Ziegler, III seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Martha Henderson asked about the status of the social media policy and Linda Curtis-Sparks explained that it would be an item on the agenda at next month's meeting. Randy Ziegler expressed the importance of the Tourist Commission making sure that all cabins are remitting occupancy tax and also how he feels strongly that all high school and college fishing tournaments should be brought to the lake because of the tremendous economic impact they have. It was agreed that the SPTC would move forward to secure three BASS events for 2018 that would include a BASS High School, a BASS College, and a BASS Nations Tournament.

**Action #8:** Randy Ziegler, III made a motion to adjourn. Edith Palmer seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.