



September 18, 2013

Mr. George Touart
County Administrator
Escambia County Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 1591
Pensacola, FL 32591

Dear George:

Now that the much anticipated proposal from the destination marketers organization (DMO) has been made available to the Escambia County Board of Commissioners, I am compelled to inform you that this proposal has not been approved by the Greater Pensacola Chamber Board of Directors and we do not believe they would agree to support the plan in its present form.

The plan under review by the Commission is not the Chamber's proposal. We do not oppose the Commission's desire to transfer responsibility for tourism administration to a stand-alone, public-private body dedicated solely for that purpose. We have not, however, agreed to support the terms of the proposal under consideration by your Board. Moreover, we have not been asked to provide input regarding the proposed management model or governance structure.

In a letter dated September 9, 2013, (copy attached), Jerry Maygarden, Interim President of the Greater Pensacola Chamber, provided a copy of a resolution that the Chamber's executive committee adopted and agreed to place on the agenda of the full board at a future, regularly scheduled, session. The resolution calls for the administrative staff of the Chamber to "fully cooperate with the County in making an "orderly transition" of tourism administration to a new governing body.

Our staff has discussed elements of transition with representatives of the DMO and members of the County's staff, but we have not agreed to support the proposed governance structure and we are not close to resolving issues related to the distribution of assets and the transfer of duties. We must restate our primary concern: There is not enough time available between now and October 1 to enact an orderly transition. The push to effect this change quickly is reckless, and it does not bode well for the County or the Chamber. There are too many unresolved issues. We recommend that the Commission grant up to 90-days for transition.

We understand that the Commission is determined to transfer tourism to another organization but, as a practical matter, we are deeply concerned with the existing DMO proposal. The plan does not provide assurances that the new entity has the capacity to meet all the obligations associated with managing an \$8 million enterprise—funded by public money. The business plan does not offer a path to improvement; it is a replica of the Chamber's current activities. The board composition does not reflect all elements of the industry or the community. In short, the proposal creates a governance structure that does not have the breadth of community involvement available in your current arrangement.

We would like to suggest that a more responsible course of action would be to take the next 90 days to unravel the current contract with the Chamber and draft a new governance structure that will function in the best interests of all of Escambia County. There is no reason why a plan couldn't be prepared that includes representation by area attractions, tourism tax collectors, as well as the minority community. We want to respectfully suggest that you appoint a task force to resolve all transition issues and draft a governance plan for approval by January 1, 2014. We are prepared to help you with this transition.

Very truly yours,



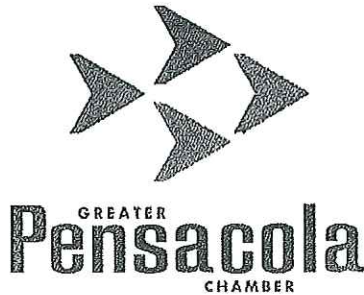
Gary Huston
Chairman-elect, Greater Pensacola Chamber



Jerry Maygarden
Interim President, Greater Pensacola Chamber

CC: The Escambia County Board of Commissioners





September 9, 2013

Mr. George Touart
County Administrator
Escambia County Board of County Commissioners
P.O. Box 1591
Pensacola, FL 32591

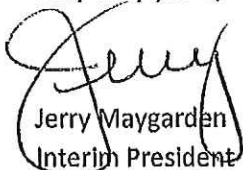
Dear George:

The executive committee of the Greater Pensacola Chamber recently voted unanimously to place the attached resolution on the agenda of their full board of directors at a future meeting. As you can see, the resolution calls for the orderly transition of tourism administration from the Chamber to another entity to be approved by the Escambia County Board of Commissioners. We are in the midst of electing a new board of directors that will be seated on October 1, 2013. I do not anticipate a vote on this resolution until the new board has been sworn in and takes its place for the coming year.

Because timing has become a matter of some concern, I am writing this letter to encourage the Escambia Board of County Commissioners to carefully consider the myriad problems associated with transitioning tourism administration away from the Chamber and into the care of a new entity. There is real property, office furniture, and computers to consider, as well as outstanding invoices and the disposition of cash balances that must be satisfied prior to finalizing the change. It shouldn't take more than 60 to 90-days to resolve all of the outstanding issues, but it will take some time to do the job correctly. In short, I don't believe we can get everything accomplished prior to the beginning of your new fiscal year.

If you decide to make a change in tourism leadership, please allow some grace period in order to accomplish an orderly transition.

Very truly yours,



Jerry Maygarden
Interim President

Greater Pensacola Chamber

RESOLUTION 1: 9-2013
Greater Pensacola Chamber

Whereas, the tourism industry is a primary generator of economic sustenance for the people of the greater Pensacola area (the region) of Florida; and

Whereas, the Greater Pensacola Chamber (the Chamber) has faithfully served as the administrator of record for the management and promotion of tourism for the region; and

Whereas, the Chamber agrees that a stand-alone, governing body, focused entirely on the conduct of tourism business and the lawful distribution of tourism tax revenue, will be in the best interest of the community; and

Whereas, the Chamber has been working diligently with industry representatives to establish a plan of succession to accomplish the orderly transition of tourism administration to a new governing body comprised of representatives from the industry, local government and the Greater Pensacola Chamber; now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Greater Pensacola Chamber does hereby state and affirm for all persons to hear and know that, if the County Commission of Escambia County acts to transition tourism affairs to another entity, the Chamber will fully cooperate with those efforts.

Moreover, the Chamber leadership wants all persons to know and understand that it has been a great honor and a privilege to serve the community for nearly three (3) decades as the administrator of record for the tourism industry.

Furthermore, the Chamber stands ready to provide the community with whatever business acumen and assistance may be necessary for successful transition of tourism administration and the continuing conduct of tourism promotion.

In final resolve, I have, hereunto, set my hand and affixed the seal of the Greater Pensacola Chamber on this the ____ day of _____, 2013.

Chairman of the Board of Directors
Greater Pensacola Chamber

Resolution 1: 9-2013
JLM:jl