

CFHLA - The Insider: The Hospitality Industry's Political Advocate Newsletter - October 2017

1 message

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TALLAHASSEE ALERT

Earlier today, a number of **concerning developments** relating to the Hospitality Industry were announced in Tallahassee.

CFHLA is monitoring **House Bill 3** (Rep. Grant - Charlotte County), which would place invasive and burdensome **regulations** and **audit** requirements on local **economic development agencies** such as **Visit Orlando, Experience Kissimmee** and others. This bill would significantly impact the ability of these agencies to successfully market our destination across the globe, especially at a time when competing destinations such as Las Vegas, New York and California are doubling down their efforts to attract both business and leisure travelers.

Additionally, CFHLA is monitoring **Senate Bill 658** (Sen. Brandes - Pinellas County) that would **expand the existing Tourist Development Tax (TDT) Statute**, allowing TDT funds to be utilized for **"public**

Florida Governor Rick Scott

State of Florida Senate

State of Florida House of Representatives

Orange County

Osceola County

Seminole County

City of Orlando

City of Kissimmee

City of Sanford

facilities...that would increase tourist-related business activities.”

The bill contains dangerously broad language that would vastly expand the allowed uses of TDT funds. A recent editorial by **State Representative Randy Fine** indicated that TDT funds should be used for sewage repairs and improvements of other “public facilities” that would “enhance” a region’s appeal to tourists. This legislation could open a “Pandora’s Box” which would allow County governments to use TDT funds on non-tourism promotion purposes such as transportation, public safety, utilities, etc. These types of expenditures are often paid for through Sales Tax revenues and careful County budgeting measures. As a reminder, visitors to Central Florida alone generate over **\$436 Million** a year in **Sales Tax revenue**, which is the appropriate source of funding for public projects.

Finally, State House Speaker Richard Corcoran has filed a lawsuit against the City of Tampa for their role in the development of a “**Tourism Marketing Assessment**” fee that Tampa-area hoteliers have been collecting in addition to the existing **5% Tourist Development Tax** to raise funds for additional tourism generation and marketing. This lawsuit could provide the Legislature with ammunition in their continued attempts to abuse the Tourist Development Tax and “penalize” Tourism Marketing agencies.

CFHLA Leadership has begun coordinating with statewide and regional Hospitality Industry associations and organizations to ensure a “**unified**” response, as the **upcoming 2018 Session may be one of the most threatening the Industry has faced in 20 years.**

SIPLIN

On **Wednesday, October 11th**, **Orange County Commissioner Victoria Siplin** met with **CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee** members at the Walt Disney World BoardWalk Resort to discuss a range of Orange County Hospitality Industry issues. Commissioner Siplin provided detailed updates on the **Orange County Convention Center**, **Orange County’s Sports Bid Fund** and the **Orange County Application Review Committee**. Additionally, Commissioner Siplin expressed her continued support of Visit Orlando’s mission and efforts in marketing the Central Florida destination to the World.

Following the Committee’s meeting with Commissioner Siplin, GA Members conducted a number of business meeting items, including the approval of the first draft of the **Association’s 2018 Legislative Priorities**. The Legislative Priorities draft will next be placed before the full CFHLA Board of Directors for review at the **November 16th CFHLA Board Retreat**, and if approved, will be shared with all CFHLA Members on the CFHLA website.

CFHLA Board Secretary Keith Wolling, CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Member Adrianna Sekula of Walt Disney World Resort, Orange County Commissioner Victoria Siplin (District 6) and CFHLA Board First Vice Chairman Fred Sawyers, Complex General Manager of Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort

The next CFHLA Governmental Affairs Committee Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 8th** with **Orange County Commissioner Betsy VanderLey**.

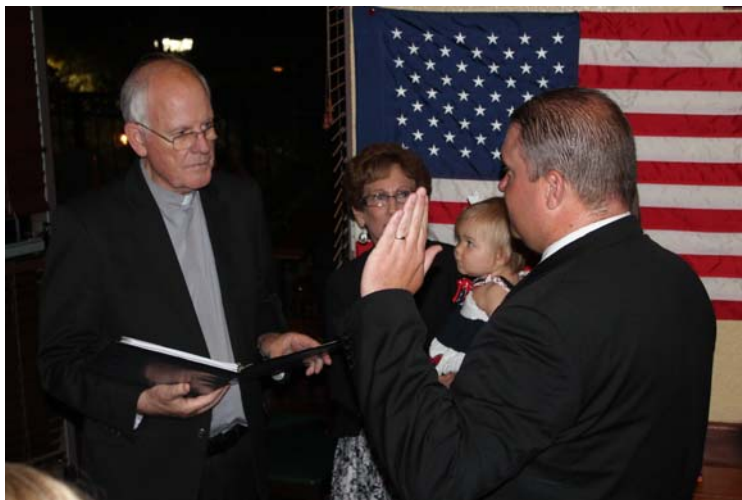
OLSZEWSKI

CFHLA-Endorsed candidate for **State House District 44**, **Robert “Bobby O” Olszewski**, was elected on Tuesday, October 10th to serve out the remaining term of former State Representative Eric Eisnaugle.

“Bobby O,” a former Winter Garden commissioner, won approximately 56 percent of the vote to 44 percent for the Democratic candidate, Eddy Dominguez. The seat represents parts of southwest Orange County, including Windermere and the Walt Disney World Resort area.

A number of CFHLA members and staff were in attendance for Representative Olszewski’s “Victory Party,” where he was formally “sworn-in” to office.

CFHLA congratulates “Bobby O” and looks forward to his **“Pro-Hospitality”** efforts in the State Capitol.



CFHLA-Endorsed candidate for State House District 44, Robert "Bobby O" Olszewski being "sworn-in" to office.



CFHLA Allied Member Chadwick Hardee of APDC Services, CFHLA-PAC Board Member Chuck Simikian of Paramount Hospitality Management, State Representative Bobby Olszewski (District 44), CFHLA Board Assistant Treasurer Sonja Giselbrecht, General Manager of the Sheraton Suites Orlando Airport, and CFHLA-PAC Chairman Jay Leonard, General Manager of the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort Disney Springs Resort Area

ORLANDO

The CFHLA-PAC and CFHLA-PC has endorsed the re-election campaigns of the following **City of Orlando Commissioners**, who will be “on the ballot” on **Tuesday, November 7th**:

District 1: Jim Gray

District 3: Robert Stuart, Sr.

District 5: Regina Hill

These Commissioners have proven to be “**Hospitality-Friendly**” and have served as dedicated public servants within our Central Florida community. CFHLA looks forward to their continued service in Orlando City Hall.

CFHLA encourages any Members residing within City of Orlando Districts 1, 3, or 5 to vote on **Tuesday, November 7th!**

OSCEOLA

On the evening of Tuesday, October 17th, the **Osceola County Board of Adjustment** listened to five hours of public testimony relating to a “**Noise Variance**” request from the developers of the proposed Orlando Motorsports Park, a project planned to be placed at the southwest corner of W-192 and the S.R. 429 beltway interchange.

A number of CFHLA Lodging Members located near the proposed project have opposed the request for the noise variance, out of concern for guest comfort, as well as many nearby Osceola County residents.

During the Board of Adjustment meeting, over 25 concerned members of the public expressed their disapproval of the request, with only 1 public speaker indicating support of the noise variance.

Following public testimony, **Board of Adjustment Chairman Ken Komara** expressed that, in his opinion, the developers failed to make a convincing legal case for the variance because they couldn't specify “a special circumstance or hardship tied to the property.”

Near the end of the meeting, when the Board was about to vote (seemingly against) the proposed noise variance, the developers pulled their request so that they could potentially bring a new request back for consideration at a future meeting.

PAC/PC ELECTIONS

Time to nominate potential PAC/PC Board Members!

If you are a CFHLA-PAC dues paying member, you have received two emails in the past week containing a “**PAC/PC Boards Nomination Form**” that allows you to nominate qualified CFHLA Members to serve on the **CFHLA Political Action Committee** and **CFHLA Political Committee** Boards.

PAC/PC Board nominations will be accepted until **4:00 PM on Tuesday, October 31st**. PAC/PC election ballots will be distributed on **Tuesday, November 7th**.

If you are a PAC-dues paying CFHLA Member and have not yet received any correspondence on this subject, please contact CFHLA Public Policy Director Kevin Craig at publicpolicy@cfhla.org.

TOURISM DAY

Save the date!

On **Wednesday, January 17th**, CFHLA will be making the Association's annual trip to Tallahassee for "**Florida Tourism Day**" at the State Capitol.

Each year, over 25 CFHLA Members spend a full day in meetings with State Representatives, State Senators and traditionally with Governor Rick Scott.

This "lobbying day" allows CFHLA members to meet face-to-face with decision makers in Tallahassee to advance the Association's Legislative Priorities, primarily focusing on support for **VISIT FLORIDA**, preserving the Tourist Development Tax, fighting casino gambling expansion and advocating for a "level playing field" between "Shared Lodging" websites and traditional lodging establishments.



CFHLA Members pose for a group photo during the 2017 Florida Tourism Day.

If you are interested in attending 2018 Florida Tourism Day with CFHLA, please contact CFHLA Public Policy Director Kevin Craig at publicpolicy@cfhla.org.

LINKS

Below please find news articles relating to the political interests of the Hospitality Industry:

Opinion: Protect Florida tourists and neighborhoods by stopping illegal hotel operators


Visit Florida aims to keep tourist goal of 120 million

Osceola County Considers Putting Hold on Certain

Types of Development


Rene Plasencia endorses Jim Gray for Orlando
District 1 commissioner

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