

APPROVED

COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD MEETING January 12, 2009 - 7:00 P.M.

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS – 1ST FLOOR 100 N. ANDREWS AVENUE

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Board Members</u> <u>Cumulative</u> <u>From 10/08</u>	
			<u>(P)</u>	<u>(A)</u>
Marjorie Davis		A	0	4
William Goetz	P		4	0
Michael Kimmey	P		3	1
Avery Dial	P		4	0
Margaret Birch		A	3	1
Emmett Kater		A	2	2
P.J. Espinal		A	3	1
David Maymon	P		4	0
Christopher Priester		A	3	1
James Currier	P		4	0
Nadia Locke	P		4	0
Kevin Hull		A	2	2
Donald Karney	P		4	0

Staff Present:

Angelia Basto, Administrative Support
Susan Batchelder, Assistant Community Development Manager
Stephen Scott, Director of Economic Development

Margaret A. Muhl, Recording Secretary

Call to Order

Chair David Maymon called the meeting to order at approximately 7:08 p.m. Roll call was taken, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum was not present this evening.

Board and Staff Introductions

Ms. Batchelder proceeded to introduce staff who was present this evening.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes could not be approved since there was not a quorum of the Board present.

Cultural Arts and Tourism Report

Stephen Scott, Director of Economic Development, stated that he would be handling this portion of the meeting. He proceeded to introduce Nicki Grossman, Convention and Visitors Bureau, who would provide a presentation this evening.

Ms. Grossman stated that she wanted to speak about what the Convention and Visitors Bureau does. She continued stating that they have tried to market Broward County since 1980 when the bed tax was initially approved as a variety of destinations. She advised that there was not an organization that marketed the entire County. The bed tax is collected from all 689 hotels throughout the hotel. There are approximately 33,000 hotel rooms in the County. When the tax was first approved, it was at 2%, and it is called the Tourist Development Tax which applied to individuals checking into a leased or rented unit of any type. In 1987, the tax was increased to 3%. She proceeded to explain Spring Break that occurred in the past. In 1985 it became the goal of the tourist industry to use the bed tax monies to promote the destination. After 1985, the hotels stated that if a new market was found for them, they would invest in their properties and bring the destination up into a different level.

Ms. Grossman explained that this City went to the voters and passed a bond issue in 1986 which was to start consolidating properties on Fort Lauderdale beaches. The investment turned into a \$2.5 Billion private/public investment in tourism infrastructure. In 1990, the County contributed substantial monies to the Performing Arts Center, the Museum of Art, and other important properties, including the Convention Center. There was a different market being created for the City, and in 1998 the tax was expanded to 5%. The original 2% was pledged to pay the bond on the Sunrise Arena, and the performance of such tax allowed them to have an over collection of tax. Each percent at this time is worth approximately \$8.7 Million in collections which is divided between operation, marketing, and maintenance of the Center and marketing of the destination, along with paying the debt service on the bonds.

Ms. Grossman further stated that the County Commission to date has pushed the over collection of the tax into a beach renourishment fund. In the past two years, the County has provided \$800,000 annually towards the Baltimore Orioles Spring Training facility. Recently, an agreement was signed to extend their contract for an additional three years. She explained that Fort Meyers is going to lose the Boston Red Sox and will be courting the Orioles to move to that location. She further explained that the agreement made with the Orioles was that the \$800,000 would yield a \$1.2 Million advertising agreement. She stated that the Visitors Bureau had a \$5.4 Million advertising budget. She explained that they are solely funded by the bed tax. She stated that in 2008 international travelers became more important because domestic travelers were reduced in number due to the economy.

Ms. Grossman stated that after 2001, they were destination against inclination because Americans were slowing down in terms of their interest in travel. In the past four years, 3,500 new hotel rooms have been added to the inventory which are all four star facilities. She said further that this City has to be congratulated for having the guts to hold their breath and wait out the change that would come to this destination. The tourism industry made the change and improved the quality of life

for residents of this City. This year, the County Commissioners are taking \$256,000 from the bed tax to pay for the turtle conservation program. Another \$150,000 was put into a program for mooring buoys. The Museum of Art also received \$1 Million from this tax, along with the Museum of Discovery and Science. She stated that the Cultural Arts community came forward and stated that even though they get \$600,000 from the bed tax, they still find their budgets being cut and want the cuts made up from the bed tax. Staff's position, as well as that of the Tourist Development Council, was that less than 11% of visitors to the County go to a cultural facility, and if they do, it is something like the King Tut exhibit. She stated that they spent \$800,000 of the bed tax on the promotion of such exhibit. She further advised that there was going to be a joint meeting of the County Commissioners and the Development Council on February 17, 2009 regarding the matter. She stated that they are going to oppose any effort to increase funding to the Arts from the bed tax.

Ms. Grossman stated that they had major events and conventions come to this City. Since 1980, they have attempted to build a hotel on their site, and they are in the process to have a 1,000 room Hilton Hotel built. The plan is to have the hotel open in 2012 or 2013. She explained that the bed tax could not be used toward the construction of such a hotel, but could be used for marketing if a shortfall exists of up to \$7 Million per year. If the hotel falls short in paying the last \$7 Million for its marketing expenses, the bed tax could be used for about three years to supplement the marketing budget. There is an agreement that permits the Visitors Bureau to do the marketing for both the hotel and the convention center with the shortfall.

Ms. Grossman added that in 2010, they would be hosting the Superbowl, their headquarters would hold all activities in the City that year. She advised that the average group visitor coming for conventions to this City spends \$1458 on the 3.6 days they are in town. Superbowl attendees and other individuals coming for major sports events spent around \$2430 while in town. For the first time in 30 years, the Pro-Bowl would be held in 2010 in the Superbowl city and not in Hawaii. She stated their largest annual convention is ARVO (The Association for Research and Vision in Ophthalmology) who last year had 13,000 attendees.

Ms. Grossman proceeded to distribute some information to the Board.

Chair David Maymon explained that this Board's charge was to try to advance in a broad and general perspective cultural arts and tourism in this City. He stated that Ms. Grossman had great experience, knowledge, and wisdom in the field, and asked how this Board could work with her office.

Ms. Grossman stated that one of the things this community needs is a signature event. She said they need a sense of enthusiasm and welcome to such groups when visiting the City. She said they need something that would identify the Greater Fort Lauderdale area distinguishing them from other beach communities.

Ms. Grossman added that they have 23 miles through the County of Blue Wave Beach which is in conjunction with the National Clean Beaches Council. In Europe, it is known as a Blue Flag Beach Program. People also identify the area with Sawgrass Mills. Disney counts its gate by its various theme parks, and the largest of their gates has been The Magic Kingdom with 28 million visitors, while Sawgrass

Mills had 24 million visitors. She further stated that possibly they did not need an event to identify the area, but a separate identity. She stated that they have broken through many barriers in terms of minority business.

Chair David Maymon stated that this City lacked a brand.

Ms. Grossman stated that one of the things they have tried was Beach Chic to give the visitor a sense of luxury products, while still showing the area to be a down comfortable family type beach product as well. They have not capitalized on inland facilities, except for the Seminoles. She added that the City did not have a spotlight brand due to all the changes that have occurred during the last 20 years.

Mr. Currier asked when the reclamation would take place in regard to the beach.

Ms. Grossman advised that 68% of everyone coming to this City goes to the beach. She further stated that the next beach project for Broward County would be the sand bypass issue. She stated that they did not have a problem with the bed tax being utilized for the beach renourishment project. She reiterated that there are no monies at this time and getting such projects approved is much harder at this point in time.

Mr. Goetz stated that this City has changed for the better over the years.

Ms. Grossman stated that another project that could become an identity for the City was the Gospel Complex being considered.

Mr. Currier stated further that he believed the City could capitalize on sporting events, such as golf.

Ms. Grossman stated that they had marketing advisory committee meetings, and she would see if this Board could be invited to those meetings to give them a feel for what is being done. She asked if tourism and cultural entities were being considered separately by this Board.

Chair David Maymon stated that they would be separate entities, and he was not sure that this Board has yet to identify what they would be doing along those lines. He believed the clearest advice they received was that a signature event was needed to identify the City.

Mr. Scott stated that at the last meeting there was discussion regarding a visit to Bonnet House and other destinations. He stated that he was willing and able to make that happen, but understands that official business has to be conducted in February. He stated that possibly they could decide whether that was a possibility or not.

2009-2010 CDBG Funding Cycle

Ms. Batchelder stated that the cycle was just beginning, and she has not yet received the entitlement amount. Planning meetings would be held in January and are tentatively scheduled for the 24th and 29th. Normally, one meeting is held in the afternoon, and one in the evening, and another one on the third day in the evening which is only for the HOPWA and ESG grants. They would be advertised in the

newspaper. This year the reins have to be tightened due to less monies being available, and therefore, they are going to require applicants for the CDBG funds for public services to attend the planning meetings and submit a preliminary idea of what they would be applying for. They felt that in the past they had received numerous applications that were not of the quality and capacity needed. The Board would be informed of the time and location of the planning meetings. The Board is urged to attend at least one of those meetings so they could see what the public input was. Ms. Batchelder reiterated that in the past the applicants only had to submit an application.

Mr. Goetz asked when the applications would be due.

Ms. Batchelder explained that normally they were open for a 30-day period, and usually were due around March 1st. The exact schedule has not yet been determined. She advised that the Board would receive all information prior to their April, 2009 meeting.

Ms. Batchelder stated that she believes there is one more certificate for public convenience, and in February and March this Board should focus more on the cultural and arts tourism aspects.

Chair David Maymon stated that possibly sites could be visited in February once Ms. Batchelder checked the calendar. Ms. Batchelder stated that she would be in touch with the Board to confirm. She further stated that the certificate could be heard in March. Chair David Maymon reiterated that he would not want a business to wait another 30 days for their certificate. Ms. Batchelder would check on the issue.

Mr. Scott stated that if the Board meets as usual, they could convene and conduct their necessary business, and then visit the sites.

Chair David Maymon felt that would be a good idea and the Board agreed.

Mr. Goetz reminded everyone that the Bonnet House should be visited during daylight, and therefore, the Board would have to meet at a different time.

Chair David Maymon stated that moving the time could be a problem for this Board.

Mr. Scott agreed and other locations might have to be chosen for the visits. He stated that he would attempt to see what could be coordinated and would report back to the Board.

Chair David Maymon added that they were also discussing visiting Dillard for the museum. He believed there was also a third venue mentioned.

Mr. Goetz suggested that they visit the Riverwalk area.

Chair David Maymon felt they would have time to visit three venues. Mr. Goetz felt that was too many for one evening. He believed they should visit sites one at a time.

It was suggested that the Board meet at 5:30 to visit the site, and then meet at their regular time to conduct business.

Chair David Maymon asked if the Board could be available at 5:30 for the next scheduled meeting, and at 6:00 p.m. visit the chosen site. In reading through the minutes, it appears that the Board discussed focusing on the City's history. Therefore, the Board could possibly visit the Bonnet House and Dillard to incorporate the African-American aspect of the City. He felt those two sites would address what members of the Board had suggested.

Mr. Scott stated that he would work on visiting the sites and be in touch with the Chair.

Other Business

Ms. Batchelder stated that at last month's meeting, staff was asked about CAPER. She advised that standard policy was that it was accepted by HUD, and then it was printed and bound. HUD has been inundated with questions regarding the NSP Program, and therefore, they had not yet reviewed the CAPER. Staff made copies of the report and would continue to do so due to the size of the document if the Board wanted those copies. She did not anticipate an approval from HUD for at least a couple of months.

Chair David Maymon suggested that the available copies be distributed, and then recycled through the Board.

Ms. Batchelder explained that the most important part was the narrative section which contained the numbers.

Ms. Batchelder stated that at Thursday at 2:00 p.m. would be the open house for Margarett Hayes at their offices. She would provide the announcement to the Board for those who wanted to attend.

Chair David Maymon asked if it was possible for the Board to do something nice for Ms. Hayes due to her years of service with this Board.

Mr. Goetz agreed that possibly a certificate of appreciation could be presented to her.

Ms. Batchelder stated that she would check with the Clerk's Office to make sure the Board could do such an acknowledgment. The Board agreed to do something to show their appreciation as long as it was permitted.

Chair David Maymon suggested that the formal resolution could be done at the Board's next meeting and hopefully Ms. Hayes could attend to receive their appreciation.

Good of the Order

Nothing was discussed.

There being no other business to come before this Board, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret A. Muhl,
Recording Secretary