

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2004- 1:00 P.M.

City of Fort Lauderdale

100 North Andrews Avenue

8th Floor Conference Room

Economic Development Advisory Board	Current Meeting	Cumulative Attendance*		Y-T-D # Meetings
		Present	Absent	
<u>MEMBERS</u>				
Pat Du Mont, Chair	P	2	0	2
Ruchel Louis, Vice Chair	P	2	0	2
Alan Forgea	A	0	2	0
Michael F. McGinn	A	0	2	0
Andy Mittelman	A	1	1	1
Cort Neimark	P	2	0	2
Tim Schiavone	A	1	1	1
Gwen Watson	A	0	2	0
Dr. Niara Sudarkasa	P	2	0	2
Mark Budwig	P	1	0	1
Total Members Present	5			

Staff

Alan Silva, Acting City Manager

Faye Outlaw, Director, Community & Economic Development

Lisa Edmondson, Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order

Chair Du Mont called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

II. Approval of February 2004 Minutes

Deferred due to lack of quorum.

III. Reorganization and New Department of Planning and Development

Mr. Silva reviewed his concepts for departmental reorganization, as well as transitional issues and challenges. There had been indications from the City Commission that although restructuring may be necessary, no changes should be implemented until a new City Manager has been hired.

One of Mr. Silva's conceptual ideas included having a department spanning the planning-to-development spectrum, including regulatory, enforcement, and economic development divisions. He stated that regulatory and enforcement issues are closely integrated with economic development. He indicated that development has to be looked at from both inside and outside the CRA, and perhaps merging the current two CRAs under one director, but keeping the two areas separate for purposes of financial accountability and accounting. The office of economic development would include both CRA and non-CRA activities and staff support for both the CRA and economic development. A "vision" would be articulated with planning and zoning, and the building department, providing developers with a clearly articulated understanding of the City's direction in terms of growth, business retention, outreach, and promotion. The idea would be a true one-stop shop activity enabling a developer to understand the process from the beginning, how long it would be, how it could be fast-tracked, and necessary permitting. Mr. Silva added that, as this structure is not currently in place, flexibility would have to be built into the upcoming budget, with positions identified and recruited.

Mr. Silva stated they would be looking at the budget as far as numbers of positions and finances available so that if the new City Manager wishes to implement the changes he/she may. It is hoped a new City Manager will be identified within a month and in place within two to three months. He anticipated by August or September some initiatives may be able to be undertaken.

Critical issues include the loss of the Engineering Director, creating a director of public works, having a construction management unit, and the question of succession planning.

On the economic development side, Mr. Silva indicated that if he receives a positive response from the City Commission for staffing the department, he would start recruiting for various positions.

Chair Du Mont inquired regarding the status of Ms. Outlaw and Ms. Lee. Mr. Silva anticipated that a separate office of economic development would be established as a division within Community and Economic Development with its own director and support staff dealing with financing and land acquisition. Within economic development would be two separate units: the CRA and the non-CRA. The idea of the restructuring would be to tie the CRA into the economic development effort with the same basic objectives. Any enterprise funds would be placed in a department named "Business Enterprises," including airport, marine, parking, cemeteries, and certain recreation facilities such as the War Memorial, Lockhart Stadium, and the Aquatic Center. He suggested that community and economic development be linked with the construction services bureau of public works, as they deal with zoning, building, planning, and permitting.

Ms. Louis expressed concern regarding losing the momentum to entice new businesses and building projects to the City.

Mr. Silva invited the Board Members to meet and speak with the City Manager candidates in May during a “meet and greet” forum.

Mr. Neimark asked if the reorganization was an “all or nothing” type of plan or whether individual components could be undertaken. Mr. Silva indicated that the City Commission does not anticipate that he will take any action at this time. He also stated that the budget now being contemplated considers the departments retaining their structure, but building in flexibility to allow for future reorganization. The budget presented in July to the Commission will include slots for economic development.

Mr. Budwig suggested the Board work to “sell” this plan to the Commission.

Mr. Silva stated that he would be interested in consulting the Board for their input prior to the budget being submitted to the Commission.

It was suggested by Mr. Neimark that a study be undertaken of successful municipal economic development programs existing in other communities. Mr. Silva recommended focusing on Florida cities.

Dr. Sudarkasa stated that generally CRAs would be under economic development, asking specifically the areas of the City that economic development should be concerning itself. Mr. Silva replied that the Board should concern itself with the entire City, focusing on areas not being addressed by the CRAs.

Ms. Louis stated that the Board should be focusing on retention of existing businesses in the City and attracting new businesses. Mr. Silva cautioned regarding overlapping economic development with commercial and industrial development, indicating that the question of affordable housing and creating public and private partnerships to attract housing development should be addressed.

Ms. Outlaw gave a brief history of the City’s previous focus on economic development. She stated that they should start by looking at the work already accomplished and rebuilding of the economic development team. Ms. Outlaw stressed the importance of solving the City’s problems with the permitting process. She concurred with the reorganization suggestions made by Mr. Silva. Mr. Silva added that rotating personnel through regulatory functions would provide fresh ideas and a facilitative approach to moving forward potential development.

Mr. Silva suggested the Board look at critical staffing needs, long-term goals to include in the budget, and linking economic development to future growth to develop a sustainable and growing tax base in the future.

Chair Du Mont suggested having last year’s meeting minutes and correspondence compiled for review by Dr. Sudarkasa.

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It was suggested that the Board have a work session in May to review proposed plans and Board suggestions

IV. Old/New Business

None.

V. Manager's Report

None.

Thereupon the meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.