

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

August 11, 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	3	0	3
Ruchel Louis, Vice Chair	P	3	0	3
Alan Forgea	A	0	3	0
Michael F. McGinn	A	0	3	0
Andy Mittelman	A	1	2	1
Cort Neimark	P	3	0	3
Tim Schiavone	A	1	2	1
Gwen Watson	P	1	2	1
Dr. Niara Sudarkasa	A	2	1	2
Mark Budwig	P	2	0	2
Total Members Present	5			

Staff

Marisol Lotito, NCIP/BCIP

Hal Barnes, NCIP/BCIP

Faye Outlaw, Director, Community & Economic Development

Jamie Opperlee, Recording Clerk

I. Call to Order

Chair Du Mont called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Chair Du Mont announced that Dr. Sudarkasa had accepted a seat on the Education Advisory Board and expressed her thanks for her service on the Economic Development Advisory Board.

Commissioner Moore had a pending appointment for Mr. William Wilson Jr. to join the EDAB; Chair Du Mont noted that there was one remaining seat open to be appointed by Commissioner Trantalis. She requested any of Commissioner Trantalis' appointees who might be present to remind him of this.

In July, an invitation had been extended to the new City Manager, George Gretsas, to attend today's meeting. Ms. Outlaw announced that she had spoken with Mr. Gretsas' Executive Secretary and Mr. Gretsas would most probably not be able to attend. Chair Du Mont felt it important that the EDAB "get in front" of Mr. Gretsas and suggested that a meeting be arranged with Chair Du Mont, Ms. Louis, and Mr. Gretsas to discuss economic development, funding for the Economic Development Department, and the role of the Economic Development Advisory Board. If needed, a special meeting of the EDAB could be called to accommodate everyone's schedules.

Chair Du Mont noted that the approval of the April meeting minutes would be delayed until a quorum was present.

III. Presentation on Business Capitol Improvement Program (BCIP)
Marisol Lotito BCIP/NCIP

Mr. Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager, Neighborhood Services, for BCIP/NCIP, explained that the BCIP and NCIP were now combined.

Ms. Marisol Lotito, BCIP/NCIP program manager, explained that the BCIP had been "in limbo" for two years after Katherine Glenwinkle, the former administrator, had left the City in 2002. Ms. Lotito had taken this program over last year.

Ms. Lotito stated that she was soliciting the help of the EDAB to create awareness in the business community about the BCIP, and perhaps create an outreach program. Businesses also needed guidance in the process of creating an association within a specific geographical boundary.

Ms. Lotito's organization had created the Business Capitol Improvement Grant Program (BCIGP) and the Neighborhood Capitol Improvement Grant Program (BCIGP) to allow associations to obtain funding for their own projects. This had begun as a reimbursement program, but now the project funds were provided up front.

To develop the outreach program, Ms. Lotito and Mr. Barnes had created a package comprising guidelines for business associations and a program handbook. She explained that the grant cycle this year had opened on May 3 and had closed on July 29. Two applications had been received; one had already been denied as the application was incomplete and the other Ms. Lotito had not yet finished reviewing. After passing checks for technical feasibility, location feasibility, and documentation review, the project would be presented to the EDAB. The board would review the project and make a recommendation and Ms. Lotito would then take the project to the City Commission.

Ms. Louis asked if all the associations had received the package. Ms. Lotito had sent the package to all the associations that she was aware of. Since the Commission would make a total of \$100,000 available and the one pending project could only receive \$25,000, Ms. Louis wondered if it would be possible to extend the deadline. Ms. Lotito felt the Commission would need to be approached with this idea. She explained that in the past, the leftover money had been rolled over to the next year, but because of the City's recent budget woes, this was no longer happening. Mr. Barnes explained that their goal was to have more applications on the table than they had money available and then ask the Commission to increase their allocation from \$100,000 to perhaps \$200,000. Ms. Louis noted that this had been the case a couple of years ago.

Mr. Neimark wondered if the lack of applications this year could be due to publicity regarding the City's budget problems. Mr. Barnes felt it was more likely due to apathy. Ms. Lotito noted that she had advertised the program aggressively and there were still few applications. Individual businesses had expressed an interest, but Ms. Lotito informed them that this was for business associations only.

Chair Du Mont felt that considering the set-up costs for associations, the neediest groups were often at a disadvantage right from the start. She acknowledged that in Victoria Park and Rio Vista, there were many lawyers who donated their expertise to creating these groups, but a typical downtown business group would not have the same resources at its disposal. Ms. Lotito had, in fact, collected a large amount of information the groups could use to get themselves set up, but had been warned by the City that they should not be putting that information out in the form of a "how to" package.

Ms. Lotito noted that she was the sole administrator for both programs and there were legal issues regarding how much help she could accept. Mr. Barnes pointed out that the office was staffed by volunteers who were only allowed to come in for specific, limited tasks. The City had refused to allow them to use these volunteers on a continuing basis because this would displace a City employee who may have been laid off. In the upcoming budget year they were hoping to re-staff one administrative assistant assigned to Ms. Lotito and one engineering technician to assist the project engineer.

Chair Du Mont asked if there was a way that some groups that did not technically fit the criteria could be set up in some way to enable them to access some of the money. Ms. Lotito stated that they could create another group that was structured as an association.

Chair Du Mont felt they should review the associations list and perhaps be able to suggest groups that could be added. She suggested one member of the EDAB become a point person to share information from Ms. Lotito and Mr. Neimark volunteered. Ms. Lotito had also spoken with Genia Ellis, President of the Council of Ft. Lauderdale Civic Associations, who was working on the guidelines for developing recognized business associations. Ms. Lotito felt that she and someone from the EDAB should be a part of that.

Ms. Lotito agreed to let the Board know when she had completed her review of the application she was currently considering so they could then set up a meeting for the EDAB to review the project. Chair Du Mont stated that she would keep September 29 open as a tentative date.

II. Approval of April 2004 Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Louis and seconded by Mr. Budwig to approve the minutes of the April 28 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Budget Update

Ms. Outlaw announced that the Acting City Manager had passed the proposed budget on to the new City Manager. In the proposed budget, the two Economic Development positions Ms. Outlaw had submitted: an Economic Development Director and an Economic Development Representative, had been left in the budget. The proposal also included retaining the Administrative Assistant position and restructuring it to an Economic Development Representative.

Ms. Outlaw noted that the budget hearings were scheduled for September 8 and September 15 at 6 p.m. The tentative millage rate was approximately 6.02; it was expected that this would be lowered for next year.

VI. Manager's Report

Ms. Outlaw announced that the City Commission had held a special meeting on July 26. There were two QTI requests included on the agenda that were approved by the Commission. She clarified that QTI stood for Qualified Target industry. One of the QTIs was Iowa College Acquisition Corporation, dba Kaplan Higher Education, more commonly known as Kaplan College. The second was a medical insurance company. Ms. Outlaw noted that she was the person who had "shepherded" these through the process. Ms. Louis noted that this was a classic example of how economic development actually works.

Ms. Outlaw noted that staff shortages had limited their ability to coordinate with the companies and help put these projects together. Her office received, on average, two to three requests per week for a City staff person to take a new business owner and show them what was available. She noted that the Broward Alliance took the lead in establishing the initial meetings. Both of these current deals had been in jeopardy because they had been unable to make the July meeting, but the City commission had called a special meeting and they had been able to get the City Manager to allow them on the agenda. Without this kind of shepherding at the staff level, both of these deals would have been lost.

Ms. Watson wondered why they could not just refer a business to a list of realtors. Ms. Outlaw noted that most companies still wanted City staff to help them through all the processes.

Ms. Outlaw then thanked the Board for their dedication and diligence. She hoped the new City Manager would bring a sense of stability and they would get on the road to rebuilding and doing what needed to be done for economic development.

Ms. Louis thanked Ms. Outlaw and stated that without her, the Board would not have had the courage to stay on as long as they did. Her professionalism had exceeded anything Ms. Louis had seen for some time and the City would surely be at a loss for Ms. Outlaw's leaving.

Ms. Du Mont asked Ms. Outlaw to update them about division openings. Ms. Outlaw stated that the Personnel Director had been transitioned out, the OPS Director had been appointed Human Resource Director and a new Director had been appointed to the Office of Professional Standards. Frank Coulter, the Deputy Director of Public Services, and Kim Jackson, the CRA Director had stepped down. No replacements had been found for these vacancies yet. The new City Manager was considering reorganization; after he restructured the various departments, he would consider employees to fill those positions.

V. Old/New Business

None.

Motion was made by Mr. Neimark and seconded by Ms. Louis to adjourn the meeting.

Thereupon the meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Chair Du Mont noted that she and Ms. Louis would determine who the new resource person would be and then schedule the next meeting.