

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY MAY 10, 2006 – 4:00 P.M.  
CITY HALL – 8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
CITY COMMISSION CONFERENCE ROOM  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL**

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>2006 Cumulative</u>	
		<u>P</u>	<u>A</u>
Robert Boyd	P	3	2
Mark Budwig, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Will Burrington, Chair	A	3	2
Pat DuMont	A	2	3
Kristina Hebert	P	4	1
Cort Neimark	A	3	2
Adam Sanders	A	3	2
Tim Schiavone	P	3	2
Gerri Washington	P	3	2
Gwen Watson	P	5	0
Lisa Zelch	P	2	3

**Staff**

Ron Hicks, Director of Economic Development  
Patricia Smith, Secretary III  
Lavya Vassor, Recording Secretary

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

Vice Chair Budwig called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Board members, City staff and guests introduced themselves in turn.

**II. Approval of March and April 2006 Minutes**

**Motion** made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Ms. Hebert, to approve the minutes of the March and April 2006 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**III. Director's Report**

Ron Hicks

Mr. Hicks stated that he attended CoreNet's Conference in Philadelphia. CoreNet is a global corporate real estate network. Mr. Hicks has also been working with Houston's to relocate a new restaurant in the City.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board that the expedited plan review program was in place, and the City had also contracted two companies to perform private inspection services. Mr. Hicks explained that the expedited plan review would cost a bit more, but had a turnover time of only 5 – 10

days. The private inspectors would be used when the City had a high workload and needed to outsource the work; individuals would not pay an additional fee when the private inspectors performed the inspections.

Mr. Hicks announced they were working with a company in Cypress Creek to serve as a business recovery center after a disaster.

#### **IV. EDAB Plan of Action - Brainstorm**

EDAB Members

Ms. Watson asked Mr. Hicks how the EDAB could help stimulate business development on Sistrunk Boulevard. Mr. Hicks said he wanted to hold EDAB meetings at different locations in the City, including Betty's Restaurant on Sistrunk. Mr. Hicks said the gospel Hall of Fame was recently scouting locations in Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Watson agreed to keep Board members apprised of the situation on Sistrunk and let them know where and when they could help.

Mr. Hicks explained to Ms. Hebert that the Economic Development Plan must "finish working its way through the administration... and then it goes to the Commission for consideration." Ms. Hebert wanted clarification from Mr. Hicks about the EDAB's role and mission. She remembered Mr. Hicks saying they could volunteer to be a member of the "rapid response team." Mr. Hicks said he needed a "commitment from Board members and he will contact them by phone or email and provide details on the necessary response. Ms. Hebert felt that everyone on the Board was committed and were "here to serve," but felt that they were often "searching for our purpose." Mr. Hicks stated the Board could make recommendations to the City Commission and help support the City's Economic Development Department.

Mr. Schiavone felt their job was to examine projects, consider the pros and cons, and make recommendations. Ms. Hebert felt this was different from some other ideas they had discussed. Ms. Hebert said she had received the Board information packet and understood their basic charge, but wondered what, as a group, they could accomplish. Ms. Watson reminded Mr. Hicks of their works a few years ago to get the City to keep the Economic Development Department. Ms. Watson felt that the EDAB should take a stand on the Sistrunk corridor issue and make a recommendation for or against it. Ms. Watson was also concerned about City beautification issues.

Ms. Watson reminded the Board that they were supposed to "put the action to what the community had given us feedback on" from the Strategic Plan developed at the three-day workshop a few years ago, but they had needed to switch gears and work to save the Economic Development Department. Mr. Hicks noted that the Strategic Plan was ideas; it had no action plan.

Mr. Budwig felt they should continue brainstorming ideas for actions they could take. Mr. Schiavone felt they should select perhaps three issues to advocate.

Mr. Budwig listed issues the Board mentioned:

- ❖ Affordable housing
- ❖ City Beautification
- ❖ Sistrunk Boulevard
- ❖ Marketing Materials
- ❖ Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

❖ Intelligence

Mr. Schiavone was concerned with the way some ordinances hindered economic development. Mr. Hicks said this was under the Planning and Zoning Department. He said they could identify the obstacles and meet with the proper departments to determine how these things could be dealt with and/or changed.

Mr. Boyd said he understood that the Board's role was to help the Economic Development Department get things done. Mr. Budwig felt they should go out into the community and ask what people felt were the biggest problems in Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Hebert asked Mr. Hicks if they could hold a community forum and he advised her that he must check with the City Attorney on this. He reiterated his offer to arrange a meeting between the Board and any City Department they felt they needed to consult.

**Motion** made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Mr. Schiavone, that the Board include Disaster Preparedness and Recovery in their projects to work on in the next six months. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Budwig asked the Board to make some notes prior to their next meeting on the issues they had identified.

**V. Other Business**

The Board's next scheduled meeting date: June 14, 2006 at 4:00 p.m.

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