

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2006 at 4:00 P.M.
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room

| <u>Board Members</u> | <u>Attendance</u> | <u>2006 Cumulative</u> | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | | <u>Present</u> | <u>Absent</u> |
| Mark Budwig, Vice Chair | A | 8 | 1 |
| Will Burrington, Chair | A | 6 | 3 |
| Patricia DuMont | P | 4 | 5 |
| Kristina Hebert | A | 6 | 3 |
| Cort Neimark | A | 6 | 3 |
| Adam Sanders | A | 6 | 3 |
| Tim Schiavone | P | 6 | 3 |
| Gerri Washington | P | 7 | 2 |
| Gwen Watson | P | 8 | 1 |
| Lisa Zelch | P | 6 | 3 |
| Robert Boyd | A | 6 | 3 |

Staff

Ronald Hicks, Economic Development Director
Patricia Smith, Secretary III
Mona Laventure, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Ms. DuMont called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. The Board Members introduced themselves in turn.

II. Approval of September 2006 Minutes

As no quorum was present, Ms. DuMont dispensed with the approval of minutes.

III. EDAB Discussion of Goals

Mr. Hicks stated that he was out of state during the last meeting attending the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) conference in New York. The conference was very beneficial; it allowed Mr. Hicks to attend the Business on Recruiting Sisters seminar.

Mr. Hicks noted several projects in progress being worked on by the City as follows:

There were discussions on resurrecting a women-owned minority business incentive program; however, due to the State having a similar program, this may create some unforeseen issues for the City. Other opportunities were looked at, which resulted in Mr. Hicks working on a project of pro-rating WaterWorks 2011 connection charges for small businesses. This program will allow small businesses to pro-rate their charges five to six percent interest over time, allowing them to save approximately \$1,000 to \$100,000 dollars depending on the size of the business. Mr. Hicks advised he met with the parties involved to discuss the project. Although the process

seems to be a bit complicated, Mr. Hicks stated that he will continue to work on it to bring to the Commission as part of the incentive.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board of the budget being cut by \$4 or \$5 million dollars, but stated that he felt the budget is still manageable although the cut does affect some projects in the works.

Mr. Hicks is working on a project with the County to add lights and art effects to Huizenga Plaza, Riverwalk, and Las Olas.

Mr. Hicks commented on the Banyon and Almond Streets previous public parking closures and removal of the parking meters, stating that they would be asking the City Commission for permission to reinstall those parking meters.

On the economic side, Mr. Hicks met with Royal Caribbean in Miami. Royal Caribbean is looking at consolidating their operations and they are looking at six sites, one of them being in Fort Lauderdale at Broward Boulevard and I-95. Royal Caribbean indicated that they need approximately 700,000 square feet of space, with the project resulting in the creation of approximately 1,000 jobs. The hope is that Royal Caribbean will select Fort Lauderdale as their operations base. Mr. Hicks felt that the City offered the only site that would accommodate the square footage needed and the location is in an enterprise zone.

Ms. DuMont asked for clarification regarding Royal Caribbean's decision time frame.

Mr. Hicks stated that they expect to hear something by the end of the year.

Mr. Hicks Informed the Board that Cruise Line Industry of America has selected Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale to relocate their headquarters from New York. That location is on 17th Street Causeway. The move will create 36 jobs. He explained that Cruise Line Industry of America is an association advocate for the cruise line industry.

Mr. Hicks stated that staff is working on Holiday Inn and Bahia Mar beach projects, which they will approach the City Commission with for approval. Holiday Inn is planning huge renovations to the hotel to resemble a "boutique style hotel."

Mr. Schiavone pointed out that the Holiday Inn will face big challenges; one of which will be updating the site due to newer code requirements.

Mr. Schiavone also stated that he sees the possibility of a joint venture between the City and Blackstone regarding building a parking garage for public and private use, and is hoping that the Board will approach the City with this project.

The other project being worked on is the Bahia Mar with the City looking at redeveloping the parcel to keep the Boat Show at that location, and providing additional parking.

Ms. Washington asked if the City is going to demolish what is currently at that site. Mr Hicks stated that no plans have been submitted yet.

Mr. Hicks stated that the St. Regis and the Hilton are scheduled to be open in December.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board that the City has hired Gene Schlanger as the Real Estate Manager, of a real estate liaison. Mr. Schlanger's responsibility will be to keep the department informed of available real estate properties, their value, their location, and lease status.

Mr. Schiavone asked the question of whether this position is to be pro active to any potential real estate acquisition. Mr. Hicks answered that the City plans to be much more pro active in that regard. Mr. Schlanger will also be looking at what properties the City currently owns and making sure those are properties are profitable.

Mr. Hicks mentioned that a contractor is to appear before the City Commission on October 17, 2006 in order to have the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex contract awarded. The goal is to create a world class swimming facility that will also be an attraction to the public.

Mr. Hicks mentioned the possibility of having Board Members volunteer to attend certain events representing the City as "ambassadors." This is a good way for the Board to be recognized.

Ms. DuMont added that a list of meetings and events should be added to the minutes as a way to keep track and see what the Board is working on.

Ms. Washington asked if it were possible to have Ms. Smith send out a calendar of events to the group to see who can volunteer to attend.

Mr. Hicks stated that the Board should adopt one or two projects they feel strongly about and work towards accomplishing that goal. These goals need to be brought to the City Manager's attention in order for the Board to get some recognition.

Mr. Schiavone added that it would be a good idea to pick a project, no matter how big or small, to work on in order to accomplish something.

Ms. DuMont felt that at the next meeting the Board should focus solely on finalizing their discussions regarding goals.

Ms. DuMont also pointed out that regarding the light project at Huizenga Plaza, the maintenance money should be in the budget to maintain the park. Mr. Hicks stated that it is DDA maintained and it is in the budget.

IV. Other Business

Ms. DuMont introduced Guy Paul Lopez a local hotelier to the Board. Mr. Lopez is looking to improve the appearance of the beaches.

Mr. Lopez provided a presentation of the Fort Lauderdale Central Beach Area Zoning Districts for review. It is Mr. Lopez's concern that the zoning was created as a way to destroy further development, along with contributing to the degradation of the beach. Mr. Lopez feels that people are not investing in beach properties because there is no money to be made.

Mr. Hicks explained that the development of the zoning on the beach was to make sure there is a height limitation which will keep developers from creating a "wall" blocking the beach.

After reviewing Mr. Lopez's presentation, Ms. DuMont stated she would recommend that Mr. Lopez meet with Chair Will Burrington to further discuss his ideas and his vision for economic development on the beach.

Mr. Schiavone stated that it would be helpful if the Board met again with Mr. Burrington present to review Mr. Lopez's vision. Mr. Schiavone also stated that he is unclear as to what Mr. Lopez's goals are and what he is looking for the Board to accomplish. He asked that at the next meeting, Mr. Lopez present his goals to the Board.

Ms. DuMont asked Mr. Lopez if it is possible to write a one page letter to the Board outlining his specific concerns.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.