

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
November 8, 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>
1.	Robert Boyd	A	6	4
2.	Mark Budwig, Vice Chair	P	9	1
3.	Will Burrington, Chair	A	6	4
4.	Pat DuMont	A	4	6
5.	Kristina Hebert	P	7	3
6.	Cort Neimark	P	7	3
7.	Adam Sanders	P	7	3
8.	Tim Schiavone	A	6	4
9.	Gerri Washington	P	8	2
10.	Gwen Watson	P	9	1
11.	Lisa Zelch	A	6	4

Staff

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

I. Call to Order and Introductions

Vice Chair Budwig called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Board members introduced themselves in turn.

II. Approval of September and October 2006 Minutes

[Approval of the September 13, 2006 minutes was deferred on October 11, 2006 due to lack of a quorum.]

Motion made by Gwen Watson, seconded by Gerri Washington, to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2006 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The Board noted that Royal Caribbean was referred to as World Caribbean in the October minutes.

Motion made by Ms. Watson, seconded by Ms. Hebert, to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2006 meeting as corrected. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Director's Report

Mr. Hicks stated he had met with Commissioner Moore and 18 representatives from several of the beach hotels to discuss recruiting the 300-600 new employees they would need in the next 60 days, and the additional employees they would require in the next year. The City wanted the hotel to focus on hiring the City's unemployed and underemployed. A conference call to discuss outreach strategy was scheduled for the following day. Mr. Hicks invited Board members' input regarding strategy.

Mr. Hicks announced that the consultant for the Aquatic Complex redevelopment project had been hired; they hoped to have a feasibility study by early 2007.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board that he had attended the International Economic Development Council [IEDC] conference in September in New York.

IV. EDAB Discussion of Goals

Joint parking venture between the City and the new Holiday Inn in the north beach area

Mr. Hicks stated that it had been Tim Schiavone's idea to redevelop the parking areas to allow nearby businesses to change their uses. Mr. Hicks stated that he felt this would be a good idea, but stated he must speak with the City Manager because the Hotel was asking for concessions. Mr. Hicks said the Board could support redevelopment of the parking and businesses in that area. Mr. Hicks added that Mr. Schiavone's business, a bar/restaurant, would be helped by redevelopment in that area, but other businesses could be hurt by it due to the change in clientele.

Chairman Mark Budwig felt they should wait for Mr. Schiavone to provide the Board with additional information before they create a resolution.

Mr. Hicks stated they were considering putting in parking meters and lifeguard stands at the north end of the beach where parking was currently free, believing that this would draw more people to the area. Mr. Hicks informed the Board that 75% of people parking at the free beach spots were "out of the area," but parking would still be free for residents.

SME – Small/Minority-owned business enterprise outreach seminar

Mr. Hicks said that where he came from, they had a women and minority-owned business program, but he was "finding it very difficult to win people over such a program here." He suggested they select particular businesses to invite to a seminar or meeting to make them aware of available resources. If this were successful, the Board could decide to hold seminars on a regular basis.

Ms. Watson said the Chamber of Commerce was discussing holding a lecture series pursuant to this every two months and she suggested that the City could partner with the Chamber on this. Ms. Watson said Fort Lauderdale used to have a Minority Business Department, and this was how she had begun her business. She described the programs offered to small business owners through this department. Mr. Hicks said there was currently no money budgeted for this, but the City could provide space for events.

Workgroups to address specific issues

Kristina Hebert felt they should create workgroups to address specific issues.

Business Capital Improvement Program [BCIP] - type program

Mr. Hicks said the BCIP representatives would attend the EDAB's December meeting with a group of applicants. Mr. Hicks agreed to work with the Engineering Department to perform outreach in specific areas of the City for the next round of grants.

Marine industry preservation – working waterfront

Ms. Hebert noted that boats visited Fort Lauderdale because of the weather and the City's proximity to the Caribbean and Bahamas, and also because there were certain services and a level of craftsmanship that they could only get here. Ms. Hebert described the loss of marine yards – a decline of 33% in 5 years - and noted that if the yards and services went away, so would the "yachting capital of the world."

Mr. Hicks stated that the City was very conscious of this issue. He felt that the Bahia Mar complex required remodeling. Ms. Hebert noted that the docks themselves were "perfect." She explained that the Bahia Mar was being "wonderfully redeveloped" but the owners of mega yachts were not staying at the Bahia Mar. She reminded the Board that the Bahia Mar was not a working waterfront facility; it was a marina. The marine yards were the facilities that brought in the jobs.

Ms. Hebert acknowledged that every commissioner, the Mayor, City Manager and Mr. Hicks all understood and supported the industry. The problem was turning working facilities over to residential facilities with dock space alone, which would no longer provide jobs. Ms. Hebert volunteered to take the Board on a tour of boatyards.

Since the Bahia Mar property was controlled by the City, Mr. Hicks felt they must ensure that the property would maintain its reputation and continue to meet boaters' needs in the future. He also wanted the Board's support for a capital improvement project at the beach that he felt would help keep mega yacht owners at the beach.

Ms. Hebert said the marine industry supported the Blackstone project at Bahia Mar. She agreed to bring some suggestions for how the City could help preserve the boatyards to the Board's next meeting.

Entryway beautification

Mr. Hicks advised Board members to notify him when they noticed businesses with code violations.

Ms. Watson said she had complained about overgrown hedges on Sunrise and 13th Avenue, and within two days the City had trimmed the hedges.

Chairman Budwig felt they should have "Welcome to Fort Lauderdale" signs at strategic locations.

Interim construction aesthetics/beautification

Ms. Watson said construction site fences should be improved and not present such eyesores.

Chair Budwig remarked on the problem of construction dirt and mud around the City.

Mr. Hicks said the problem was the huge number of projects, coupled with the fact that the construction crews were often uncooperative. He stated that the City is actively working on getting offenders to keep their projects aesthetically clean but stated that the City simply does not have enough staff to keep up with the volume of problems.

Encourage events

Mr. Hicks reported that Ford Fest was interested in expanding and moving from Las Olas to the beach next year. He had also met recently with a group interested in creating other beach-based events for the community. One idea was to move part of the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival [FLIFF] to the beach in October.

Mr. Hicks felt they must support mass transit as well.

V. Event Calendar

[This item was taken out of order]

Board members announced the following events:

- Downtown Council breakfast on November 16 at 7:30 a.m.
- After-hours event at Gallery 1 at the Doubletree Hotel in Sunrise on November 16
- Riverwalk Trust "Get Downtown" party on November 17 on Las Olas from 5 - 8:30 p.m.
- Hurricane/Disaster event on December 8 at the Chamber of Commerce

VI. Old/New Business

[This item taken out of order]

Mr. Hicks explained that Mr. Burrington must step down as Chair, so the Board must appoint a Chair and Vice Chair.

Motion made by Ms. Hebert, seconded by Ms. Washington, to have Mr. Budwig serve as Chair. Board unanimously approved.

Motion made by Ms. Washington, seconded by Mr. Budwig, to nominate Ms. Watson as temporary Vice Chair. Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Watson asked the Board for a resolution supporting the Gospel Hall of Fame. She explained that Dr. Bobby Jones was considering locating the Gospel Hall of Fame on Sistrunk Boulevard. Several celebrities and corporations were already involved, and Ms. Washington wanted to keep the project moving.

Mr. Hicks said the City had selected a number of possible sites in the northwest district.

Ms. Watson felt this would be a good project for the EDAB to advocate. She felt that the Board should invite Albert Tucker, Vice President of Multicultural Business Development for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, who is actively involved in securing this project to a meeting to inform the Board about this project.

Mr. Hicks advised the Board to support the project and advocate for it individually.

Motion was made by Ms. Watson and seconded by Ms. Hebert to support the Dr. Bobby Jones Gospel Hall of Fame. Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Watson stated she would also speak with Mr. Tucker about coming to the Board's next meeting to better acquaint this Board with the project.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.