

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2007 at 4:00 p.m.
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>2007 Cumulative</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Robert Boyd	P	2	1
Mark Budwig, Chair	P	3	0
Gwen Watson Vice Chair	P	3	0
Patricia DuMont	P	2	1
Kristina Hebert	A	1	2
Gerri Washington	A	2	1
Ralph Riehl	P	3	0
Cort Neimark	P	3	0
Tim Schiavone	P	2	1
Adam Sanders	P	2	1
VACANT			

Others Present

Ron Hicks, Director Economic Development
 Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
 Patricia L. Smith, Secretary III
 Travis Woods, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Fred Carlson, Tourism Council

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Budwig called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Following the Roll Call, it was determined that a quorum was not present. Chair Budwig noted that the Board could not take any action until a quorum was present; and suggested a general discussion relevant to the Board be held until more members arrived.

Ms. DuMont questioned if anyone attended the New River Master Plan (NRMP) meeting Tuesday March 13, 2007 at the Broward Center and if the EDAB should have a liaison attend the NRMP meetings. Mr. Hicks stated he was not able to attend the meeting because of a conflict with another meeting, but had led one of the tours. The NRMP was affecting a significant portion of the City, that is the downtown, and he felt that EDAB members should attend the meetings and have a voice in the direction of the Master Plan. Mr. Hicks stated that a consultant would be reaching out to the community

for input. Mr. Hicks suggested the consultant attend an EDAB meeting with a presentation about the plans of the NRMP.

Ms. DuMont reminded everyone that Riverwalk Trust had a celebration in honor of Mayor Naugle scheduled on April 11, 2007 at the 7th Annual Riverwalk Festival. The celebration would be held at the Riverhouse from 5:30–7:30 p.m. Ms. DuMont hoped the April EDAB meeting could be finished by 5:30 p.m. allowing the members time to drive to Riverwalk. Chair Budwig assured everyone that the April meeting would end at 5:15 p.m. allowing sufficient time for the drive.

Ron Hicks introduced Karen Reese, the new Economic Development Representative, explaining retention outreach would be a major focus of her work as well as assisting the Director. Ms. Reese will also handle film permits and help expand the film industry in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Hicks feels the film industry will add to the “creative draw” of the City.

Ms. Reese informed the Board that she had relocated to Fort Lauderdale from upstate New York where she had been employed by IBM. She was with Housing and Community Development for three and one half years before coming into Economic Development and felt Fort Lauderdale was the perfect City to be a part of Economic Development.

Chair Budwig inquired if Ms. Reese would be traveling as a representative of Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Reese stated her job description had not been finalized at present. Mr. Hicks added that plans included outreach, but it would be localized with corporate and small businesses in cooperation with Broward County Alliance and the Chamber of Commerce. He stated that help is needed in coordinating these groups and Ms. Reese will assist in that area. Mr. Hicks felt the city should focus on businesses already established in Fort Lauderdale. Broward Alliance does more work with attracting new business to the area.

Chair Budwig discussed an article regarding the importance of attracting “creative people” to the Fort Lauderdale area and trend to draw big business and asked how/what is the City doing in that area. Mr. Hicks explained that downtowns with a good public transportation system and great pedestrian experiences draw creative people. He felt that creative people do not want to live and work in a concrete jungle. Mr. Hicks stated the more talent the City draws the more assets it has and Fort Lauderdale has a lot of talent.

Suggestion has been made to the hotel/office/condo/retail project at Riverfront to include a Black Box Theatre which would provide exposure to the Arts at a local level. A Black Box Theatre would provide public exposure for upcoming playwrights, poets, singers, and musicians providing a creative outlet at reasonable prices.

Ms. Watson stated the importance of looking beyond the downtown for those people that would provide the "creative draw." Ms. Watson inquired about the streetscape standards for the downtown area. Mr. Hicks replied the documents would be available at the next EDAB meeting and stated the Downtown requirements are 15 foot sidewalks, trees, and amenities like lights, and benches; different areas out towards Las Olas or the Broward College have different requirements. Mr. Hicks mentioned that Las Olas has areas where the sidewalks are too small and future focus will be on wider sidewalks, on street parking, and landscape/beautification. Plans are being formed for a new median east of the Himmarshee Canal. Mr. Hicks reported that plans are underway for downtown holiday lights, but more funding is needed and hopefully holiday lights will be developed for Las Olas, Sistrunk, and the Beach.

The Board discussed the impact to the City with the creative draw of the film industry. Ms. Watson reported there are good filming areas in Sistrunk. Mr. Hicks stated that most filming takes place in Rio Vista, but hopefully with the assistance of Ms. Reese, this will change and more filming will take place in all over the Fort Lauderdale area.

Ms. DuMont asked if anyone had seen the new traffic light at the Beach, citing a critical letter to the editor in the newspaper. Chair Budwig responded the new light is hurricane proof, and not much different from the old light, just slightly bigger. Ms. DuMont stated the new light was a monstrosity, much larger, and destroyed the vista. Mr. Hicks stated that the old light became less noticeable from years of sand blasting which removed the paint and that the new light is a FDOT fixture.

I. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2007 MINUTES

The quorum was met with the arrival of Mr. Neimark.

Motion made by Ms. DuMont and seconded by Ms. Watson to accept the minutes of the February 15, 2007 Meeting as submitted. In a voice vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

II. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hicks suggested expanding Board tours to other economic engine areas of the City such as beach hotels, Cypress Creek and the Airport area and Port Everglades. The Board agreed that a tour of the Beach would be a good start and that the tour should take two to three hours. The tour will include visitation to hotels; those open and under repair or construction. Mr. Hicks' office will coordinate to schedule a tour that all Board members can attend.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board of plans to utilize the assistance of Ms. Reese in starting a new business forum. Assistance has been requested from SBA to send two or three people to assist with the project. Ms. Reese will work with assistants from SBA, Board members, and other business members that would serve on the forum. Mr. Hicks

reminded the Board to submit location suggestions for business recovery centers in preparation for the upcoming hurricane season.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board the Beach Council is spearheading the planning for Super Bowl 2010 and pledged to keep the EDAB informed; all EDAB members were urged to participate in the planning sessions.

Mr. Hicks stated he has been working to bring the "CEO Summit" to Fort Lauderdale. Currently the Summit is held in Palm Beach and has been for many years. Mr. Hicks has been working with the organizer of the event as well as the head of "CEO Magazine" in an effort get them to the St. Regis this November. The event draws seventy to one hundred CEO's, a few international CEO's as well as many from all over the country. It is not a large group but it is a very influential group. These are the type of people that tell everyone of their great experience and spend money, and everyone that reads the magazine, whether they attended or not, would know that Fort Lauderdale hosted the meeting.

Ms. Watson stated that notable people such as MSNBC, Bloomberg, Warren Buffet, other famous names attend the summit. Mr. Hicks requested the Board's assistance with the event. Help would be needed on two of the event days, to be available to answer questions or assist in giving guidance. In advance of the meeting, help is needed to seek sponsorship from local corporations for the golf tournament and some of the receptions. Ms. DuMont asked if the event was scheduled for November, or when was the decision would be made. Mr. Hicks replied any day and definitely this month.

Ms. Watson asked about seeking the help of the Chamber to facilitate for the golf tournament. Mr. Hicks replied the Chamber asks its members and businesses to sponsor their events. Ms. DuMont stated the Chamber was doing the "Salute to Business" in early November this year. Chair Budwig stated that two different audiences were involved. Notification should be sent to Chamber members because this will be an opportunity to get in front of companies outside of Fort Lauderdale. Chamber events are usually on the local level.

Mr. Hicks reported that he had ridden the trolley again with five guests visiting from out of town. On this ride, the driver requested the fee to be given to him rather than put in the coin collector. The driver also informed Mr. Hicks and his guests that tips were allowed. Mr. Hicks stated the incident had been reported to Les Hollingsworth because ridership is very important to the continuation of this program and if ridership is not accounted for the seven people that were on that trolley were "non-existent."

Mr. Riehl reported he had met Mr. Hollingsworth and had an informative meeting with him about the trolley and the methods of marketing and promotion that were to be implemented. Printed materials available show where the trolley goes and Mr. Hollingsworth is working on a ticketing program that will have the destination printed on the back of the ticket. Mr. Hollingsworth is employed by the director of the

Transportation/Management Association of Fort Lauderdale, which is part of the Downtown Development Authority, funded by the Metropolitan Planning Organization, City Funds, and donations from the Federal Government. The trolley has been funded for three years. The object now is to generate ridership. Mr. Hicks added if the ridership is not properly shown, funding will not be available in the future, that is why it was so important to report the incident of riders not being accounted for. Ms. Watson asked regarding the trolley schedule. Chair Budwig stated the information was available online at www.suntrolley.com.

Ms. DuMont requested that Mr. Hollingsworth be invited to an EDAB meeting for a presentation about the trolley. Mr. Hicks stated he often rides the trolley from downtown to the Beach Thursday through Sunday and suggested if one sees the trolley to take a ride.

III. OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Riehl distributed a report on police coverage within the Beach area explaining the report is a three month study that generated from a meeting with George Gretsas, City Manager, and Mr. Hicks last August. Mr. Gretsas stated issues sent to him would be taken care of within 24 hours through the City Manager's Office. Mr. Riehl continued that the program has worked well and that items either get fixed, or information is given when it would be fixed. Issues such as public works, park, meters, general maintenance, trees, signs, lights out, and law enforcement have been addressed. Mr. Riehl stated this report deals with law enforcement on the Beach Island, Barry Island, and Police Chief Roberts and members of his staff reviewed and agreed with the report findings. Mr. Riehl requested that the report be included in the minutes and inquired of Chair Budwig how that should be handled. Ms. DuMont questioned the goal of the report and Ms. Watson questioned why it should be included in the minutes.

Mr. Riehl stated he would like the City Commission to view the details of the report. Ms. DuMont recommended including a one page recap of the meeting with Chief Roberts in the report. It would give the report more credence and weight with the Commission.

Mr. Hicks reminded the Board that if they forward the report to the City Commission it would be perceived as a recommendation of the Board and he suggested they read the report, study it, and then make a recommendation to the City Commission. Mr. Riehl stated he did not want the report to be sent to the City as a recommendation of the Board, but wanted it to be available for their information. Mr. Hicks reiterated the City would perceive it as a recommendation of the Board. Chair Budwig stated that it is the Board's job to advise and recommend.

Chair Budwig requested a brief overview of the purpose and outcome of the report. Mr. Riehl informed the Board that previously when the City was low on funding, a freeze was put on the Police Force, and all staff had a furlough for six days. With retirements, some leaving the force and a hiring freeze the department was down to about 165

officers short of the recommended 510 officers. Subsequently, Mr. Gretsas was hired and assisted with the financial problems of the City with the force being brought up to proper numbers, but the City had lost community policing and lost a lot of services.

Mr. Riehl continued that the goal is to put the officers back on the street, out of the squad cars, each in their own assigned neighborhood, and responsible for each area assigned to them. The report is proposing that officers return to the beat in the Beach area saving the City money and preventing crime. Officers with pro-active skills and public relations talents would be hired enabling them to work with tourists as well as getting assistance for panhandlers or sending them to the proper facility.

Chair Budwig recommended the report be sent to absent Board members for their review. The report will then be discussed and voted on at the next meeting. Ms. DuMont questioned if Chief Roberts endorsed the report. Mr. Riehl stated the Chief had no problem with the report.

Ms. DuMont wondered if this should be considered in the police budget request, if new officers and a new unit are suggested the item would need to be budgeted for funding. Mr. Riehl stated the funding for the program exists in the budget. On top of that, if this is enforced, this style of "cops on the beat" through out the City it would produce a \$6,000,000 savings to the City.

Ms. DuMont suggested Major Handstein come to the meeting to provide some perspective and answer questions as to implementation: what they are doing now and what could be done differently.

Mr. Hicks reminded the members what their purpose is and the directive they have as there is a board that oversees the Police, and a board that oversees other community activities, and this issue might be more appropriate for them to consider.

Mr. Riehl contended that crime was leading to a loss of tourism and the report was to retain business on the Beach; businesses were leaving the Beach because of these problems, and tourists are going to Sanibel Island because they do not have problems with vagrants, trucks parking on the sidewalk, and loud motorcycles. Chair Budwig agreed that the business impact makes the report relevant to EDAB and the report will be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Hicks informed the Board there are certain businesses on the Beach that foster this undesirable activity, such as drunkenness, cat calling, parking on the street, etc., and it may be more appropriate for the Board to deal with the businesses rather than the Police Department.

Chair Budwig stated he took a drive from the airport to the Beach noting what was seen, as if a tourist was traveling the route. Starting at the airport he noted signage was absent welcoming tourists and, in addition, exterior banners between the terminals were damaged during Hurricane Wilma and needed replacement. Ms. DuMont stated these items were county issues and should be passed on to relevant departments.

Chair Budwig recommended an exterior flag pole banner program along the entrance roadways into the City and a signage program along A1A.

Chair Budwig also noted the exterior walls of the tunnel were painted different colors and needed work. There are numerous abandoned properties, graffiti, broken signs, and blighted businesses damaged from the hurricane that still need to be removed or repaired. These buildings are the first thing seen when entering the City and they look terrible. Mr. Hicks reminded the Board that blighted areas are within City control, and he recommended members e-mail him with the addresses of blighted properties so that Code Enforcement could take further action. Mr. Hicks noted that proper addresses must be supplied, as Code needs to have an address to be able to handle the situation.

Mr. Hicks informed the Board that many businesses and organizations are interested in the banner programs, but the program requires sponsors because of the enormous cost and suggested implementing a banner program which could be recommended to the City Commissioners. Mr. Riehl asked if Chair Budwig wanted to make a motion to recommend a banner program to the City for the airport. Mr. Hicks stated a program outline was needed first, before the recommendation was made. Chair Budwig advised he could put something together.

Ms. DuMont felt that the blighted area would be the most important for the Board to address, and recommended using the City Public Information Office to get word out to the public on ways to report code violations and blighted properties. Ms. DuMont asked if a caller reporting a violation had to leave their name. Mr. Hicks believed that a formal complaint required a name but a simple code violation did not require a name be given. Research will be done on making phone complaints and correct procedures will be discussed at the next meeting

IV. ADJOURNMENT

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