

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2007, 4:00 p.m.
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>2007 Cumulative Absent</u>
Mark Budwig, Chair	P	4	0
Gwen Watson Vice Chair	P	4	0
Patricia DuMont	P	4	0
Kristina Hebert	P	3	1
Gerri Washington	A	3	1
Ralph Riehl	P	4	0
Cort Neimark	P	4	0
Tim Schiavone	P	3	1
Adam Sanders	A	1	2
Ina Lee, BRAB	P		
Eileen Helfer, BRAB	P		
Miranda Lopez, BRAB	P		
Shirley Smith, BRAB			

Gwen Watson arrived at 4:17 p.m.
 Kristina Hebert arrived at 4:32 p.m.
 Cort Neimark arrived at 4:40 p.m.

Staff

Ronald Hicks, Economic Development Director
 Jeff Modarelli, Business Enterprises Director
 Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
 Laura Voet, Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex Manager
 Patricia L. Smith, Secretary III
 Travis Woods, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc

Guests

Barbara Dylan, Swimming Hall of Fame
 Doug Buchan, Swimming Hall of Fame
 John Webb, Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau
 Ramola Motwani, Hotel Owner – Beach Council Chairman
 J. J. McConnell, Owner of Gilman Yachts
 Fred Carlson, South Florida Tourism Council
 Bruce Wigo, CEO – International Swimming Hall of Fame
 Roger Handevit, Hotel Owner, Resident
 Art Seitz, Resident

I. Call to order/introductions

Chairman Budwig called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Following the roll call, it was determined that a quorum was not present. Approval of the minutes could not be performed so it was suggested that the meeting continue to the Director's Report.

II. Approval of minutes

With the arrival of Ms. Watson, Ms. Hebert, and Mr. Neimark, a quorum was now present.

Motion made by Mr. Riehl and seconded by Ms. DuMont to accept the minutes of the March 14, 2007 meeting as submitted. In a voice vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

III. Director's Report

Mr. Hicks noted that the CEO Summit was drawn from Palm Beach and will now take place in Ft. Lauderdale, November 14th – 16th, at the St. Regis Hotel. Mr. Hicks described an email that was distributed discussing the tour of hotels on the beach. The proposed tour on April 26th, beginning at 11 a.m., will start at the Broward Convention Center on the Sun Trolley and the tour will then continue to the Marina Marriott, Pier 66, Lago Mar, Marriott Harbor Beach Hotel, The Clipper, Bahia Mar (where redevelopment of this complex will be discussed), Trump Las Olas, the refurbished DoubleTree, Bubba Gump's, Las Olas Beach Club, stopping at the St. Regis, and finally the Hilton. Additionally, beach concession stands will be visited. The tour will continue by visiting the Wavewall, The Trump, The W, Orion (which was recently shut down), The Holiday Inn, Ft. Lauderdale Aquatics Complex, smaller hotels, Las Olas Marina Oceanside Lot, and will conclude at the Broward Convention Center. It is hoped that the tour will be kept less than two and a half hours.

Mr. Hicks presented two flyers that will be going up about graffiti. The flyers are designed to encourage residents to report eyesores. Chairman Budwig mentioned that vandalism has been seen at vacant properties and in the form of broken signs. He also stated that he distributed code compliance information to the board and to make a complaint, the complainant must have seen the graffiti himself. Mr. Hicks pointed out that the complainant's name and information must accompany the reporting of incidents only if the fraction is not visible, i.e. the business being operated out of a home. Chairman Budwig explained that the flyers are a continued attempt to beautify the City.

IV. Aquatic Complex Redevelopment Update

Mr. Hicks gave a Powerpoint presentation on the Aquatics Complex. He mentioned that the pools lose \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 annually and that they have been in a state of disrepair for some time.

He stated that the City is wasting money by repairing them and that they want to find a way to fix the pools and maintain the Aquatics Complex and the Museum to a competitive degree. In order to do so, Mr. Hicks felt that something else needed to be incorporated into the redevelopment of the Aquatics Complex to make it a wider-reaching attraction and help pay for itself. Mr. Hicks enumerated additional parking, more private dockage and shifting the entire complex up to take advantage of the park as recommendations he had received. He attested to consultants having been asked to do feasibility studies on these ideas. He further mentioned that they have met with the City Commission and that they are talking with the community to come up with new ideas for the complex. Mr. Hicks felt that with the aggressive timeline of beginning in December 2008 that locals need to speak up with ideas that they have for the complex. He wanted residents to consider the entire area in their vision, all the way up to A1A. Mr. Hicks stated that 28 to 30 million dollars of CRA funds have been allotted for making the facility more competitive. He said that consultants will look at the recommendations, hold public meetings, present concepts to the City Commission and finally create renderings. Mr. Schiavone asked whether or not three or four proposals had been drawn for this lot three or four years ago. He described a few sophisticated renderings that he had heard of Whitmore creating and he felt that a lot of money was likely spent on these. Mr. Hicks corroborated that he has seen two of them.

Mr. Schiavone mentioned that residents have been concerned about the noise, lights, and the height of the buildings. He felt that they could not get a developer to work on this project unless they felt they could get a return on their investment by adding restaurants. He stated that one plan had pools designed to be at the top level in terms of quality so as to maximize the potential for drawing international events to the site. He mentioned that the plan also called for a tunnel going under the pools for traffic, which, he felt would potentially add a lot of inconvenience to the traffic in the area.

Ms. Lee stated that originally they wanted to include the park in the design plans. She said that she invited Mr. Webb, who is the head of Sports Development for the Convention and Visitors Bureau, to the meeting. Ms. Lee said that Mr. Webb has generated thousands of sports room nights for the destination. She stated that she wanted to rely on Mr. Webb to gain an understanding of the economic impact of the Swimming Hall of Fame. Ms. Lee described that hoteliers who rely on the Swimming Hall of Fame for business were also in attendance. She asked if the Swimming Hall of Fame audience was still willing to pay for nearby hotel rooms despite room rates having increased in recent years. Ms. Lee wanted to know if this group was going elsewhere for hotel stays.

Mr. Webb began discussing his perception of the Complex's state of affairs by saying that the budget issues started in 2000. He felt that the complex has a good staff. He stated that his organization has helped put together bids for events there, along with assisting in paying the bid fees, adding that it has been great for the hospitality industry and that up to sixty events take place per year. He also stated that the pool is very old and that it is in an illegal situation. He mentioned that the Cities of Plantation and Coral Springs have aquatic complexes, but that people prefer to be on Ft. Lauderdale beach.

He felt that the rising prices of hotels in the area have affected the decision to come to the pools. He stated that pool age can also restrict events. It was his belief that the staff work very hard and that they want the facility to do well, but in order to create as many events as possible there need to be upgrades.

Mr. Hicks discussed the need for real ideas that can be incorporated into the consultant's plans. He mentioned that although he does not control the issue, he has not heard anyone else discuss it, and felt that there will be no hike in density in the area. He stated that the complex needs to remain a draw for aquatic events and would like to hear everyone's vision concerning the new facility.

Ms. Lee reiterated the need for the pools to be upgraded to the best in the country. She felt that, however, the park in front has the opportunity to become iconic. She stated that marketing planning and research reveals that a growing number of travelers are wealthy individuals and their families. She suggested that a water-themed, interactive playground be added to the park. She felt that with an extraordinary water park, even people that may not be interested in the swimming pools will be drawn to the area. Ms. Lee continued by suggesting improvements to the surrounding area which included the addition of a pavilion-type area on the beach for major events. She also suggested movies on the beach. She stated that she wants to create something that could be advertised around the world.

Mr. Schiavone and Mr. Hicks discussed the property's ownership and whether or not it is a separate entity from the museum, with the conclusion being that Mr. Hicks will get the answers to those questions later, but the focus for the time being should remain on new ideas for the complex.

Mr. Schiavone felt that there should be something creates excitement when they look at every major intersection along the beach. Ms. DuMont spoke about how it is hard to incorporate ideas until the space needed for the renovations to the Hall of Fame is determined. She was also concerned over the loss of green space. Once green space was lost, she said, it is unlikely that it would ever be recovered. Mr. Bucan, who has been involved with the Hall of Fame for many years, said that the biggest problem of the complex is age. He stated that he becomes embarrassed when guest teams show up and use the locker rooms. He felt that there is not much that can be done about the facility short of gutting the place and redoing it. He then talked about how the pools do not meet specifications from a competitive standpoint; specifying that it is a matter of pool depth, although, he said, that despite the age issue they are still setting world records in the pool.

Mr. Bucan reiterated that parking is a major problem, describing times when he could not find parking at 4 p.m. on a day when no events were taking place. He felt that despite most big meets occurring during summer, which is the off-season for hotels that cheaper hotels are still found out in the western area of the county. He would like to work with hoteliers to obtain attractive rates for swim teams to try to keep them in the

City. It was suggested that Duffy Dylan also be part of the group, as he is well-grounded in the world of competitive swimming.

Mr. Hicks then reiterated that he would like real ideas from the community; ones that would incorporate new concepts into the area. Ms. Matwani said that they should consider what the private sector cannot provide. She stated that they can do with the land what they see fit with a few restrictions. She went on to talk about how these ideas will incorporate green space regardless of what becomes implemented. She suggested that there should be outdoor as well as indoor activities available in the event of adverse weather. Ms. Matwani also expressed concern about parking.

Mr. Hicks asked about ways to generate money in this area. He questioned what type of architecture people thought might be fitting for the complex. Mr. Carlson agreed wholeheartedly with Ms. Matwani about the parking issue. Mr. Carlson said that parking is extremely tight and that additional parking would facilitate more locals coming out to the beach. He said that there is also a need for places where community events can be held. With a greater capital investment, he said retractable floors over the pools could be installed and used for sporting events, musical comedies and theatre events. He also felt that the evening weather is so nice that even during the summer roofing would not be necessary. The crowd agreed that the complex cannot be covered and that it is very important that events be held so that they are exposed to the sky. Mr. Bucan then said that he felt that the grandstands must be covered or shaded, since the climatic conditions would become unbearable during the summer.

Ms. Dillon mentioned that the Santa Clara complex in California which has great architecture. Ms. Dillon recommended that Duffy Dylan, who is a board member for the United States Swimming Association, be consulted for his knowledge of pools and the available research he has on-hand.

Mr. Bucan spoke about how he felt that doing more than aquatics with the facility may lead to space issues. He also felt that the iconic status was already there with the Swimming Hall of Fame, describing it as the most well-known aquatic facility in the world. Mr. Hicks noted that \$30 million does not go a long way in this arena and asked again for ideas that can be used to expand the budget and generate income. It was mentioned that if a restaurant was added to the facility that it should not be "upscale" and would have to be usable by most that would go to the aquatics complex.

Ms. Lee clarified her previous statement about icons by stating that she felt that the park could become an icon. She mentioned that before John McDonald died, he had proposed a Vegas-style fountain at the parcel on the south end of the parking lot on A1A and Las Olas. She said that there should be a visual to draw attention to the Hall of Fame since it cannot be seen from A1A. The attraction would have to be interactive and could still be on green-space. She also said that on the piece that fronts the intra-coastal, there is the opportunity to do high-end events by renting the facility for weddings, etc. She stated that that piece of land is currently not being utilized, pointing out that the view is "spectacular." Mr. Riehl said that he is often asked by tourists where

the nearest water park is located. He suggested the introduction of one since they are good revenue generators and there are no others nearby.

Ms. DuMont said that the museum works well for community events, but for the lack of parking. It was noted that retractable coverings would be good, but may be too expensive. Ms. Watson stated that she is frequently around youth and that parents would be willing to pay for children aged 10 and younger to play in a water-themed park. Mr. Hicks felt that A1A is the bulk of where activity is located and asked for ideas on how to draw people from the beach to the complex.

Ms. Hebert suggested that the area must be remembered as a great facility for events, especially family events. She noted that it is a great place to come to see the boats, view the beach, and admire the water.

Ms. Lopez then suggested that the garage be put on top of the buildings in the complex and that the water-theme be emphasized throughout the complex by having water flowing from the second-floor of the parking garage, down. Ms. Halper then reiterated the need for double-decker parking and the emphasis to place on the pervasive water-theme. Ms. Lopez suggested raising the swimming pool and putting parking underneath. Ms. Smith felt that the pools need to be the best in the world, the water park should be instituted for kids to play in, double-decker parking be made available and that the meeting room should be so special that all social events are attempted to be booked there. Mr. Webb wanted everyone to realize that Ft. Lauderdale is limited on large meeting and banquet space and that Signature Grand is making millions of dollars off of this shortcoming.

Mr. Bucan pointed out that Croissant Park Elementary School has an example of a great water park. He said that it is not extravagant there, but still effective. Chair Budwig then went on to say that Millennium Park in Chicago has an incredible water attraction where kids watch and enjoy themselves. He described it as videos that are projected onto walls that kids wait and watch.

Mr. Wigel announced the arrival of Olympic divers on May 10th-13th and invited everyone to come out and watch. Mr. Hicks mentioned that he was impressed with the tapes and videos of swimmers at the museum. He suggested using holograms to display archival footage and asked anyone if they had information on this technology.

Mr. Handevit said that shading is very important. He described taking YMCA groups there but mentioned that they would often come back sunburned, which became a major problem. He suggested that the trolley could also run from Las Olas intra-coastal lot to the Hall of Fame and vice-versa.

Mr. McConnell, who owns Gilman Yachts, said that parking is paramount. He also said that water-oriented ideas should wait until the reality of the footprint of the property is dealt with. Mr. Seitz asked everyone to pay attention to the A1A greenway that was unanimously approved seven years ago by the county and city that will cost \$27 million. He said that the greenway will inter-connect places throughout the city and people will

be able to reach them by bike, on foot or on skates. He hoped that the greenway will mitigate the repelling effects that hotel prices have had on people residing in that area. Mr. Hicks agreed that the greenway is important to the development of the beach area.

It was mentioned that ideas can be e-mailed to Jeff Modarelli or Laura Vogue. Ms. Matwani suggested that the consultants consider how to maximize usage of the facility if it closes at 5 or 6 p.m. Lastly, Ms. Watson mentioned selling sunscreen and adding the museum to the tour.

V. Old/New Business

Chair Budwig said that he will add the police beach summary that Mr. Riehl is putting together to next meeting's agenda. Chair Budwig also said that the prototype for the banner program based on Iowa City's program has been handed out to the Board. Mr. Hicks declared that organizations are looking forward to taking advantage of the banners. Chair Budwig said that he distributed a memo concerning t-shirts and caps.

Information was also provided concerning a list of top ten underrated cities composed by MSNBC, which named Ft. Lauderdale the second most underrated city in the USA. Mr. Hicks distributed streetscape standards for downtown that contain examples of how a better pedestrian experience is being created. Chair Budwig mentioned that a memo has been mailed reminding of a Utility Advisory Committee Energy Workshop at the Broward County Main Library on April 26, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

Motion made by Mr. Riehl, seconded by Ms. DuMont, to adjourn. There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Attachment: Aerial of Hall of Fame Aquatic Center