

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)  
MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 13, 2008 - 4:00 P.M.  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE,  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Cumulative Attendance 1/08 – 12/08</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Gwen Watson, Chair	P	2	0
Ralph Riehl, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Mark Budwig	P	2	0
Cort Neimark	P	2	0
Patricia DuMont	A	0	2
Tim Schiavone	A	1	1
Kristina Hebert	A	1	1
Adam Sanders (arrived 4:19 pm)	P	1	1
Dev Ramesh Motwani	P	2	0
Mark Krom	P	1	0
Rosalind Osgood	A	0	2

**Staff**

Jeff Modarelli, Economic Development Director  
 Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative  
 Patricia Smith, Economic Development Secretary  
 Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype Inc.

**Guests**

Fred Carlson, South Florida Tourism Council

**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. and the members in attendance introduced themselves for the record.

**II. Approval of January 9, 2008 Minutes**

No quorum was present; therefore, the minutes could not be approved.

### **III. Director's Report**

Mr. Modarelli reported Staff is requesting a task order to explore the possibility of obtaining way-finding signs on the beach and barrier island and that inter-departmental coordination would need to commence in order to move the project forward.

Mr. Motwani advised he had been in contact with Scott Strawbridge from the Bonnet House as he is familiar with the process for obtaining way-finding signage from Interstate-95 to a specific destination for approval through the Florida Department of Transportation. With Mr. Strawbridge and assistance from the office of Senator Ron Kline, Mr. Motwani was able to schedule a meeting with Mr. Jim Wolfe, the District Secretary for the Florida Department of Transportation, to discuss the necessary requirements.

Mr. Motwani clarified the Board had previously discussed having vehicular traffic exit Interstate-95 on to Sunrise Boulevard to access the Fort Lauderdale beach area as it is the most direct route to A1A.

Mr. Neimark asked if the signs are to be directional signs and progressive in nature. Mr. Motwani replied that he would discuss these issues at the meeting with Mr. Wolfe and report back to the Board.

Mr. Modarelli stated the signage on Interstate-95 would be the first step, and more progressive signs moving towards the beach would require contact and involvement from the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Vice Chair Riehl stated he had traveled Interstate-95 from Deerfield Beach to Sunrise Boulevard, then east to the ocean. At the present time, there are directional signs for the Swimming Hall of Fame from the Interstate to A1A and continuing to the facility. Vice Chair Riehl suggested adding "Fort Lauderdale Beach" signs to the already existing signs for the Swimming Hall of Fame.

In addition, Vice Chair Riehl reported that Lauderdale-By-The-Sea has a Chamber of Commerce that has been active in the tourism industry for a number of years. Lauderdale-By-The-Sea has directional signs from the Interstate to A1A by way of Commercial Boulevard with an elaborate system of signs to direct drivers to A1A and to the Chamber of Commerce Information Center, which is used as a visitor's center.

Mr. Motwani stated Fort Lauderdale Beach loses business to Lauderdale-By-The-Sea because the tourists are misled by the signs, and assuming they are in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Budwig inquired as to whether the Board thought it to be a good idea to direct tourists to the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce in addition to the beach area. Mr. Motwani clarified that Lauderdale-By-The-Sea has a visitor's center at their

Chamber building, which happens to be located on the Beach. Presently, Fort Lauderdale does not have a visitor's center at the beach. Vice Chair Riehl pointed out that at the Welcome Center, there is free parking for tourists coming to the beach seeking information.

Chair Watson asked if the Board would be amenable to taking a field trip to the Lauderdale-By-the-Sea Chamber of Commerce to get ideas of their set up and structure which Fort Lauderdale could also implement to assist in their efforts to bringing tourism dollars back to the City.

Vice Chair Riehl stated it is an economic burden to staff and maintain welcome centers. Lauderdale-By-The-Sea has a successful Chamber of Commerce that acts like a visitor's center because the building is located on the beach.

Mr. Modarelli recommended bringing up the idea of a field trip at the next meeting when a quorum is present. Mr. Budwig suggested one member visit the Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Chamber of Commerce and report back to the Board. Mr. Riehl volunteered. Mr. Motwani volunteered to travel the Interstate and note the signage for the next meeting. Mr. Motwani stated the location of Fort Lauderdale signage on Interstate-95 would be better placed north of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea's signs so tourists would not mistake Lauderdale-By-The-Sea for the Fort Lauderdale beaches.

Chair Watson directed the Board to return to the agenda for approval of the minutes as Mr. Sanders had arrived and a quorum was now present.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Riehl, seconded by Mr. Motwani, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2008 meeting with the following corrections:

1. The word "recuse" was misspelled on page 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, page 5, 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph and page 6, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph.
2. On page 5 in the first sentence of the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph "Ms." Schiavone and should be "Mr." Schiavone. On page 5, the first sentence of the last paragraph, "Mr. Schiavone" was typed twice.
3. On page 7, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, congratulations were to be extended to "Vice Chair Riehl."

Mr. Carlson asked if there could be clarification of the wording in the approved minutes for the presentation given on behalf of the Golden Square Group Beach Association. Mr. Carlson pointed out that with the way the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph reads, one could easily get the impression the vacating of the easements had occurred on the entire street instead of only the one block area. Chair Watson asked if the Recording Secretary would review the audio of the last month's meeting for clarification and report back to the Board.

Chair Watson explained that if the recording warrants a change in the minutes, the Recording Secretary can make those changes and present a revised set of minutes at the next meeting.

In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **IV. EDAB Discussion of Goals**

Chair Watson reviewed a list of goals to be discussed and prioritized. The first item to be discussed was the joint parking venture between the City of Fort Lauderdale and the new hotel at North Beach.

1. North Beach Parking - Mr. Budwig advised Mr. Schiavone had been working on this item, which was believed to be Holiday Inn at Sunrise Boulevard and A1A that was purchased by Blackstone, Inc., a company which also owns the parking garage behind the hotel. There was prior discussion regarding the renovation of the garage as a joint project with the City to augment the beach parking in that area.
2. Minority Owned Small Business Enterprise Outreach Seminar - Mr. Modarelli stated he had worked with Mr. Battle regarding this subject and would like to continue discussions.
3. Work Groups - Mr. Modarelli advised that as a Board, all Members must be involved in all aspects through the Board to adhere to the Sunshine Laws.
4. Business Capital Improvement Program - Chair Watson advised that once a year local businesses seeking to improve their businesses would come before the Board to provide a presentation in the hopes of being awarded a grant to improve their business. The Board would like to make sure local businesses are aware of this program.

Vice Chair Riehl suggested the Board discuss recommending to the City Commission adding a 5<sup>th</sup> business to receive improvement grants.. Mr. Modarelli advised the City website could be the foundation of the program with an outreach program to follow with the help of Mr. Barnes.

Vice Chair Riehl suggested business relocation incentives for businesses to relocate their headquarters to the Fort Lauderdale area. Mr. Modarelli advised the City just enacted such a program and discussion by the Board would therefore, not be necessary.

5. Chair Watson asked if an "Upcoming Events" item should be added to the agenda. Mr. Modarelli replied that upcoming events and results of discussions at City Commission meetings would be reported to the Board in the Director's Report. Vice Chair Riehl asked if the internet could be used by Mr. Modarelli to advise the Board of upcoming events and City Commission meetings, whether or not the Board meets each

month or not. Mr. Modarelli replied he would send out updates to the Board via the internet.

6. Marine Industry Preservation Working Waterfront - Kristina Hebert had been working on this item and the Board felt it was an important issue to discuss further.

7. Entry-Way Beautification - Mr. Budwig advised he is working on this item with regard to signage at the City's entry points and would like this item renamed to "Signage" as it includes entryway, way finding, and directional.

8. Interim Construction Aesthetics Beautification - Mr. Budwig stated as businesses close or relocate, they leave behind a negative impression with the graffiti, broken signs, and general disrepair. Mr. Budwig advised he had contacted the City and improvement had been realized in less than two weeks.

Mr. Modarelli suggested the Board invite Code Enforcement to an upcoming meeting to provide a refresher course with regard to codes involving vacant properties and other items or questions the Board may have.

9. City Website - Mr. Modarelli advised the Economic Development Advisory Board has a website, which is a living document and will continually change. At the present time, Staff is working on content and useful links for the website. Currently, the goal is to ensure its accuracy and portraying the City in a positive light.

Vice Chair Riehl suggested Staff review websites from other cities' Economic Development Boards, particularly the State of Florida as their website is outstanding. Mr. Modarelli advised the web page has certain standards and continuity that must be maintained and his goal was to construct a website that was the "shining star" of Fort Lauderdale but, such a goal would take time to evolve.

## **V. Old/New Business**

Chair Watson asked if Mr. Modarelli could instruct the Board as to the do's and don'ts regarding the Sunshine Laws. Mr. Modarelli stated he has limited knowledge as to all aspects of the law and handed out a pamphlet to the Board regarding the Sunshine Law. Mr. Modarelli had asked the Clerk to come to a future meeting and discuss some important items to remember with regard to the Sunshine Law and possibly set up a training class for the Board Members to attend.

The Board was reminded that when communicating with other Board members regarding the business of the Economic Development Advisory Board, it must be on the record. It was suggested the Board Members review the ordinance and resolution that created the Board, to better understand its scope and function.

Chair Watson asked if the Board Members are able to call the Chair to have items added to the agenda. Mr. Modarelli advised that members should call the Board Liaison in that regard.

Mr. Budwig asked if a Board Member is absent from a meeting, may that Board Member call another Board Member to ask about the content of the meeting. Mr. Modarelli advised that member should again be referred to the Board Liaison. Any communication directly between Board Members must be conducted during meetings and be on the record.

In response to Mr. Carlson's inquiry, Mr. Modarelli stated that when master plans are ultimately approved by the City Commission, they are a result of many open and public discussions by various Boards and the general public.

Vice Chair Riehl stated, as an Advisory Board to the City Commission, it is their function to make recommendations to the City Commission by way of vote or presentation for items being discussed before the City Commission.

Chair Watson asked if the Board could receive updates regarding the various master plans. Mr. Modarelli advised that the NW CRA Director would like to come in and give a presentation for that area's master plan and goals. Chair Watson suggested the Board participate on a City tour to areas with approved master plans.

Mr. Motwani discussed the function of the Economic Development Advisory Board and stated that if it is indeed the function of the Board to give recommendations regarding items being brought before the City Commission, then Mr. Modarelli could give updates as to the City Commission's schedule with regard to economic development items on the agenda; however, Mr. Motwani felt the Economic Development Advisory Board could also be proactive and bring new items and ideas to the City Commission.

Mr. Motwani stated the Board only meets for one hour each month, therefore, in an effort to be clear regarding the function of the Board, Mr. Motwani reiterated the need for them to review the mandate or resolution that created the Board and its duties.

Chair Watson stated the Board should continue to develop a list of priorities and focus on accomplishing the goals discussed earlier in the meeting. Chair Watson also felt if any individual Board Member required an update on the goals and agenda items of the City Commission, the website would be a ideal manner in which to obtain the updates.

Mr. Motwani suggested adding the proposed Convention Hotel to the agenda for future discussion with regard to the need for a convention hotel, the size of the hotel, and the use of bed tax dollars to fund construction. Mr. Motwani stated the Board could make recommendations to the City Commission as to whether support from the City should be given to the County regarding this proposal.

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Discussion ensued regarding guests at upcoming Board meetings, possibly representatives from the CRA, BCIP, or even Commissioner Morris. Vice Chair Riehl felt the insight and experience the Board had to offer would be of value to Commissioner Morris regarding the proposed retail commercial development in his District. Mr. Modarelli could not commit on behalf of the Commissioner but advised he would extend an invitation.

Chair Watson stated the vote for the BCIP was imminent and would like to get an update on the funding as the closing for the new applications are scheduled for May.

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by Hilda Testa, Prototype, Inc.]