

**APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2009 – 4:00 P.M.**

1/09 – 12/09

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Gwen Watson, Chair	P	1	0
Ralph Riehl, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Mark Budwig	P	1	0
Cort Neimark	P	1	0
Patricia DuMont	P	1	0
Kristina Hebert	P	1	0
Adam Sanders	A	0	1
Dev Motwani	P	1	0
Mark Krom	P	1	0
Roslind Osgood (arr. 4:12)	P	1	0
Sean de Vosjoli	P	1	0

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Patricia Smith, Economic Development Secretary III
Dan Lindblade, President and CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Watson called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

The Board welcomed new member Sean de Vosjoli, of the advertising firm Hothouse & Design, and all Board members and Staff introduced themselves.

II. Approval of December 10, 2008 Minutes

Chair Watson requested a **motion** to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2008 meeting. The **motion**, made by Ms. DuMont and seconded by Mr. Budwig, carried unanimously in a voice vote.

III. Introduction of New Board Members

Chair Watson noted that Mr. de Vosjoli had introduced himself to the Board.

At the request of Chair Watson, the following item was taken out of order on the agenda.

V. Election of New Officers

Chair Watson opened the floor to the recommendation of Board members to succeed her as Chair in 2009. Ms. DuMont suggested that any members interested in assuming this responsibility should indicate their interest by a show of hands. Vice Chair Riehl indicated his interest in this manner.

Chair Watson requested a vote to elect Vice Chair Riehl to Chair in 2009. In a voice vote, Vice Chair Riehl was unanimously elected.

Mr. Motwani indicated his interest in becoming Vice Chair by a show of hands.

Chair Watson requested a vote to elect Mr. Motwani to Vice Chair in 2009. In a voice vote, Mr. Motwani was unanimously elected.

At this time, Chair Watson stepped down as Chair of the Board and Chair Riehl assumed this responsibility.

Chair Riehl presented former Chair Watson with a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the City, in honor of her service as Chair.

Ms. Osgood joined the meeting at this time (4:12 p.m.).

IV. Approval of 2009 Meeting Schedule

Chair Riehl asked if all Board members had had an opportunity to review the proposed schedule, which had been prepared for them by Ms. Smith.

Mr. Scott identified a potential conflict on the date of November 11, 2009, which is Veterans' Day. City Offices will be closed on this date. He suggested that the Board consider an alternate date for this meeting.

It was determined that the Board would examine an alternate date at the February 2009 meeting, after the members had an opportunity to check their personal calendars. Ms. Watson recommended canceling the date due to its proximity to the holidays; however, it was decided that at this time, selecting an alternate date was the best course of action.

Motion to approve the 2009 meeting schedule, subject to the possible change of the November 2009 meeting, made by Vice Chair Motwani and seconded by Ms. DuMont. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

VI. Director's Report

Mr. Scott introduced himself to the Board. He recently assumed the position of Economic Development Director; prior to this, he was Assistant City Manager. He stated that he has had personal interest in the area of economic development for several years, and looks forward to this new responsibility.

He added that he was Assistant City Attorney for the cities of Hialeah, Miami, and Fort Lauderdale before moving on to City Management. He served as Director of the Office of Professional Standards before becoming Assistant City Manager.

Mr. Scott stated that he hoped to work closely with the Board in 2009.

Although he did not have a full Director's Report for the Board at this time, Mr. Scott moved on to the film permit update, for which figures were complete for the 1st Quarter of fiscal 2008-09.

During the 1st Quarter of fiscal 2007-08, he noted, there were 20 film permits issued; in the same period for 2008-09, 35 were issued. He distributed copies of the list of film permits issued in the month of December 2008. Mr. Scott also assured the Board that he would keep them apprised of film permitting activity at each month's meeting.

Ms. Watson explained that the Board had requested this regular update was to ensure that companies in the City would be aware of potential business generated by film activity. She pointed out that crews often brought in their own personnel rather than hiring local residents, which contributed less to the City's economy.

Mr. Scott agreed that if the Board knew in advance that filming would be done in the area, there was greater potential for local businesses to benefit from this activity. He stated that he would give the Board as much advance notice and information regarding film permitting as possible.

Ms. DuMont added that it could be helpful for the Board to know what priorities and responsibilities of the EDAB had been described to Mr. Scott by the City Manager and/or the City Commission. Mr. Scott advised that this would be part of his report.

Chair Riehl noted that there were some "hanging" questions remaining that the Board had asked Mr. Modarelli during previous meetings.

Vice Chair Motwani pointed out that the City sometimes had very little lead time on permitting; if the Board was updated on a monthly basis only, they might miss

valuable information. He asked if Board members might want email updates on film permitting during the period between regular meetings.

Ms. DuMont felt it might not be appropriate to disseminate information about all permits issued, as some were for very small projects and had little community impact. She recommended that Mr. Scott advise the Chair and Vice Chair first, who could then determine if a Board member might be particularly interested in the information at hand.

Ms. Watson cautioned, however, that the Sunshine Law set guidelines for communication of this nature. Mr. Scott clarified that while he could communicate with Chair Riehl or Vice Chair Motwani individually, the Sunshine Law prohibits communication between those two recipients, or any other Board members discussing Board business, without benefit of a full Board meeting.

He added that as he learned of film permits issued, he would attempt to keep the Board updated in a timely manner as best he could.

Mr. Krom informed Mr. Scott of the list of goals and objectives for the Board in 2009, and felt it might be helpful for the new Liaison to look over the document and advise the Board of how the Department of Economic Development might be able to help in achieving these goals.

Ms. Watson clarified that Board members may communicate with Mr. Scott if he sends them an email, but may not, for example, use the "reply all" email feature. She also suggested that if the email notifications regarding film permits became troublesome for any member, they could request to be removed from the notification list.

Mr. Scott agreed, adding that he planned to use discretion when sending these notifications, most likely limiting them to more significant events.

Chair Riehl stated that he looked forward to working with Mr. Scott, whose experiences he felt would contribute to the Board.

He continued that he felt it was a great honor and privilege to chair the Board, and felt the talent and quality of Board members would be equal to the task of working in difficult economic times. He felt their accomplishments this year would be even more significant in light of the current state of the economy.

Chair Riehl added that the Board's mission is to act as ambassadors for the City, reaching outside the immediate area to invite and attract more businesses as well as retaining those businesses already in the City. He also felt they should offer specific motions or ideas to the City Commission, and encouraged all

members to bring their ideas or recommendations for increasing the City's economic viability to the next meeting.

He added that it would be vitally important to remember and work toward the list of goals stated for the year. As an example of what they could achieve, he cited Vice Chair Motwani's work in erecting a sign on I-95, which is responsible for bringing roughly 227 more cars to the Fort Lauderdale beach area every day.

Ms. Watson noted that the goals accomplished were due to the collaborative efforts of the Board.

Chair Riehl stated that if any Board members would like a particular item added to the next meeting's agenda, they should propose this during a meeting. He felt it was important that Board members have the opportunity to add to their agenda. Regarding guests of the Board, he suggested that they should appear at the beginning of the agenda, ahead of the Board's regular business.

Mr. Budwig added that in the past the Board has taken "field trips" to see development in the beach area, for example. He recommended that members bring possible sites for these field trips to the next meeting along with their suggestions for the Board's goals.

VII. Workforce Housing

Mr. Krom identified this area as "a real problem," not only in the City but throughout Broward County and South Florida in general. Because the City is a popular vacation destination and located on the beach, the property is commonly developed with very expensive homes and residential communities, leaving a dearth of affordable housing for the City's workforce.

Mr. Krom noted that he had developed a friendship with Dan Lindblade, President and CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, and the two of them had discussed the City's affordable housing situation. He added that Mr. Lindblade, a guest at tonight's meeting, might be able to contribute to the presentation, as he is widely knowledgeable about the situation.

He continued that he had attended a conference called "Setting Southeast Florida's Workforce Housing Agenda" in November 2008, and distributed information from this meeting to the Board. He described it as a regional event, attended by community leaders, development professionals, politicians, architects, development firms, City Staff, and anyone interested in improving the workforce housing situation in South Florida. The attendees compared notes and discussed some of their common concerns on which they could work together to improve the situation. For example, he stated, government funding can drive affordable housing, and the conference had discussed ways to take advantage of

this. The event was sponsored by the South Florida Regional Business Alliance (SFRBA).

One topic discussed was the use of “remote control decision-making technology,” which allows individuals to input information while on-site. Another news item of interest was the money being made available by the Federal government to forestall the current foreclosure crisis, which also impacts all housing in general and affordable housing in particular.

He added that the Federal government makes substantial funds available to the community. In order to be eligible for these funds, plans must have been submitted by December 2008. He cited that approximately \$60 million was made available to Broward County, and may be used toward the foreclosure crisis, but may also be used toward a “broader range of applications” as well. Mr. Krom referred to the plans submitted by the City, which were part of the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). There are four strategies within this program to which funds may be applied. Fort Lauderdale is estimated to get between \$3-4 million in these funds.

One strategy is the establishment of “land banks” for homes that have been foreclosed upon, Mr. Krom reported; this would provide property acquisition, maintenance, and disposition of foreclosed properties for a limited time. Another strategy is acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale of foreclosed single-family properties. The third strategy involves direct home ownership systems and counseling, and the fourth is program planning and administration, which allows for up to 10% of the NSP grant to be used for administrative and planning activities to create affordable housing.

Funds from this grant must be spent within the next 18 months, he noted. He pointed out that while the current economic crisis is the intended beneficiary of the program, communities and workforce housing will benefit as well.

Ms. DuMont asked who determines how the funds are spent. Mr. Scott replied that a plan had been drawn up by the City’s Community Development Department, and was submitted to the City Commission for approval. It has now gone to the Federal government for further review. He added that a plan can be amended at any time.

Mr. Scott offered to bring more specific information to the next Board meeting regarding how the NSP grant funds allotted to the City will be spent. He noted that the approach taken by Community Development was intended to get the money into the community as quickly as possible.

Ms. DuMont pointed out that Mr. Lindblade had been involved in a recent housing initiative, and asked if this was related to the subject at hand.

Mr. Lindblade identified this initiative as the Broward Housing Partnership, which works with private funding, primarily through banks. It is not related to the recent conference, or to the NSP grant, he clarified; however, he informed the Board that Broward County is bidding out the land trust to be managed by a real estate business rather than by the government.

Ms. Osgood asked if this RFP would be administered by the Housing Finance Authority. She advised that various community development organizations feel they could work together to greater effect to meet the immediate needs of citizens than the Housing Finance Authority would likely be able to achieve. Because the community development organizations operate within communities in need, she reported that the general feeling is that they should at least partner with the Housing Finance Authority to administer the program.

Mr. de Vosjoli asked for a clarification of the term “workforce housing,” as well as whether any labor unions in the City are present to assist in the effort of encouraging more of this kind of housing.

Mr. Krom deferred the question to Mr. Lindblade, who defined workforce housing as housing that costs up to 60% of the area’s median income to occupy, although he pointed out that the definition has some variance from one community to another.

Regarding the presence of unions, he acknowledged that they have a presence in the City, but was not aware whether they had addressed the issue of workforce housing in any capacity.

Ms. Watson reported that she had witnessed a trend toward foreclosure on affordable housing.

Ms. DuMont suggested that Chair Riehl, Mr. Scott, Mr. Krom, Ms. Osgood, and Mr. Lindblade discuss the issue of affordable housing to find out if there is a role the Board can play with regard to appropriation of the NSP grant funds.

Ms. Watson recalled a recent presentation to the Board by Ms. Margarete Hayes of the City’s Department of Community Development. As Ms. Hayes had suggested during her presentation, Ms. Watson felt this was a time when the Board could assist the City in reaching out to its various communities and letting them know funding was available to help homeowners in crisis. Ms. Osgood added that this could be a more difficult task than expected, as the housing crisis was more far-reaching in the City’s communities than many volunteers believed.

Ms. Hebert recommended that outreach should include businesses as well, as they could be affected if their employees could not afford to live within a reasonable distance of work.

Mr. Krom concluded that there are two actual crises: foreclosure in the near term, and identifying areas where affordable housing can be built in the longer term. The latter, he clarified, would have to be driven by the City, which would have to purchase the lands and/or properties and work toward public/private partnerships to achieve this goal.

VIII. Old/New Business

Ms. DuMont informed the Board that a Centennial Celebration Committee has been created to organize events for the City's Centennial in 2011. She felt the Board should consider the kind of involvement it wished to have in this celebration, as well as in the Chamber of Commerce's Centennial in 2010, which could possibly be combined with the City's Centennial into one larger celebration. She asked that this be added to the EDAB Goals list.

Ms. Watson asked if Ms. DuMont, who, along with Ms. Hebert, is a member of the Centennial Celebration Committee, might give a presentation on this topic to the Board at some time. Ms. DuMont agreed that she could do this at the Board's March 2009 meeting.

Ms. Hebert mentioned the 44th annual Fort Lauderdale Billfish Tournament, scheduled for February 5-8, 2009. She provided brochures on this event for the Board. The event will be put on by the City's marine industry on a volunteer basis. She stated that the industry has worked closely with the City, and facilities such as the Las Olas Marina are being made available for the event.

She informed the Board that the industry needs help in putting on the event in the following ways: 40 additional parking spaces are needed for the event; the Board is offered a table at the event; and she asked if the event, as it is a named City event, could be advertised on the Board's website.

Chair Riehl offered 38 spaces less than a block away from the Las Olas Marina, on behalf of the South Florida Tourism Council. Mr. Scott offered to check into whether or not the event could be featured on the EDAB website.

Ms. Hebert encouraged all Board members to attend the Tournament, which the industry hopes will grow into an even larger family event over time.

Motion by Ms. DuMont, seconded by Chair Riehl, to assist with the Tournament in the three ways listed above by Ms. Hebert: donation of parking spaces,

manning a table at the event, and featuring the event on the EDAB website. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Mr. Budwig noted that the Chamber of Commerce's 99th annual meeting will be held on February 19, 2009. He invited the Board to attend and stated that sponsors for the event are being sought.

Vice Chair Motwani stated that the Florida House and Senate recently voted on a new budget, which decreased funding for the Visit Florida program. There will be a meeting of the Florida Economic Stimulus Committee on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, from 5-8 p.m. in Boynton Beach, where not only tourism but other aspects of economic development will be discussed. He encouraged Board members to attend this meeting.

Ms. Watson noted that Lockhart Stadium should be referred to in the future as Lockhart Stadium/Baltimore Orioles. She hoped the Board could visit the stadium in 2009, or bring a representative of the stadium to speak at a Board meeting, as the current state of their lease is forcing them to turn down business. She felt the Board might be able to advocate on behalf of the stadium that their lease be extended or renegotiated so they could bring business into the City.

Chair Riehl asked Mr. Scott to look into scheduling Norm Taylor, who works in Economic Development for Broward County, to speak to the Board at a future meeting.

At this time he asked if all members had had an opportunity to look over the EDAB Goals for 2009, and if anyone wished to comment on or add to the list. It was noted that the Centennial Celebration would be added to these goals.

Chair Riehl asked if any members had items they wished to add to the February 2009 meeting agenda. Mr. de Vosjoli stated that there had been an effort some years ago to bring some video gaming development firms into the city of Orlando, which had been "very beneficial," and noted that the industry is virtually recession-proof. He felt the Board could investigate the possibility of attracting this industry to Fort Lauderdale. He offered to give a brief presentation on the topic at the February 2009 meeting.

Ms. DuMont recommended the development of a calendar of activities for the Board, and felt this should be accomplished by the next meeting if possible. She and Mr. Scott agreed to discuss the topic further before that time.

Ms. Watson offered to email Mr. Scott regarding the planning and implementation of "making a better community for children" by one of her clients, the Magic Children's Hour. She noted that Broward County in particular was being targeted

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for the use of \$2.8 million or more to the end of creating a better community for children.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]