

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2009 – 4:00 P.M.

1/09 – 12/09

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Ralph Riehl, Chair	P	2	0
Dev Motwani, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Gwen Watson	P	2	0
Mark Budwig	A	1	1
Patricia DuMont	P	2	0
Kristina Hebert	A	1	1
Adam Sanders (arr. 4:28)	P	1	1
Mark Krom	P	2	0
Roslind Osgood	A	1	1
Sean de Vosjoli	P	2	0
Susanne T. McCoy	P	1	0

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
Patricia Smith, Economic Development Secretary III
Hilda Testa, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Riehl called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Ms. DuMont, seconded by Mr. de Vosjoli, to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2009 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

III. Introduction of New Member

Chair Riehl invited new Board member Susanne McCoy to introduce herself to the Board. Ms. McCoy resides in Fort Lauderdale after spending several years in Washington, D.C., and is retired from IBM. She and her husband own properties in the City, as well as in Washington, D.C.

IV. Members' Economic Development Priorities

Chair Riehl stated again that any Board member wishing to place an item on the following month's agenda is encouraged to let the Board know during the present meeting, so it may be added.

He moved on to the Members' Economic Development Priorities, which include ideas that members were asked to bring to this meeting and potentially add to the Board's list of goals. He distributed copies of his suggestions to the Board as an example, proposing that they could bring written copies to future meetings and attach them to the meeting's minutes.

Mr. Krom suggested that what was needed for the community at large was its own economic stimulus, which he felt should be discussed by the Board. This could come in the form of tax breaks, grants, formal programs to make businesses feel welcome, or other ideas that would promote the growth of business and give them an incentive to come into the community.

Mr. de Vosjoli noted that while gathering information for his presentation on today's agenda, he had "hit a brick wall" in trying to discover who actually represented the City's interests in terms of providing a stimulus to draw in businesses. While marketing campaigns can be effective in drawing the attention of industry to the City, these are limited by the monies that are appropriated from the State.

Ms. DuMont explained that in 2008, the Broward Alliance had begun a major initiative in working with community partners to create a fund toward bringing in businesses. She added that there had been previous discussion about having a member of the Broward Alliance address the Board regarding this issue. She agreed that economic stimuli are often larger than what a City alone can offer, and must be considered on a more wide-reaching basis.

Mr. Scott agreed to move the possibility of this presentation to the top of the Board's agenda, although he noted it would be "a challenge" to schedule someone from the Alliance. Ms. DuMont suggested contacting Kathy Koch, last year's Chair of the Broward Alliance and the individual who had implemented the program described above.

Mr. Krom asked how the Alliance is funded. Ms. DuMont replied that it is a public/private partnership, partially funded through the County.

The Board agreed that having a member of the Broward Alliance address them would be a top priority.

Chair Riehl turned the Board's attention to the list of economic goals he had provided, assenting that jobs were their first order of business. He continued, however, that another high priority at any level of government is the protection of peace and order, pointing out that jobs would be of little significance if community

members did not also feel protected or safe, and the tourist industry would suffer as well under such conditions.

Another priority should be to advise the City's government, he stated, along with the City Commission. In addition to Capital Improvement Program monies, the Board also receives matching funds. In his two years on the Board, Chair Riehl did not recall actually making a recommendation to the City Commission, although he clarified that perhaps one or two might have been made during that time. He suggested that they coordinate with Mr. Scott through the City Manager's Office before making any recommendations, to ensure they are on the same track as City administration.

Ms. DuMont advised that the Board should examine the budget process, so they will have the ear of those involved in setting budgets before they are finalized.

Vice Chair Motwani agreed, adding that he particularly liked the direction in which Chair Riehl seemed to be taking the Board: instead of devoting each individual meeting to a particular topic, they might take larger issues and spend more time discussing them over a series of meetings. He suggested this might be achieved by taking a single topic through each quarter.

Ms. Watson pointed out that the City's budgeting process begins in August of each year, although Ms. DuMont clarified that most City Departments begin working on their budgets in April or May.

It was discussed that at one time, the City had planned to eliminate the Economic Development Department, and the Board had lobbied strenuously to retain it. A lasting effect of this, however, is that in order for Mr. Scott to include new initiatives in his budget, the Board should make the Mayor, City Manager, and City Commission aware of the need to include them. Ms. DuMont stressed that the Board should be aware of any new projects ahead of time in order to act effectively in its advisory capacity.

Ms. McCoy asked for clarification of the Board's role in relation to the City Commission. Chair Riehl and Ms. DuMont explained that the Board's responsibilities include acting as ambassadors for the City in encouraging businesses to come there; helping retain the businesses already in the City; and advising the City Commission on matters they feel are important regarding economic development. They may also advise the administration via the City Manager's Office.

Ms. Watson felt, however, that the Board should focus on assisting the Economic Development Department and Mr. Scott in particular, as this office had once been in danger of elimination within the City structure. As part of Mr. Scott's responsibilities was working with the Board, she felt they should work closely with him to fulfill their own responsibilities.

Mr. de Vosjoli added that he, too, had needed clarification on the Board's intent and structure, recalling that in his discussions with City personnel, he had been informed that the EDAB was possibly "the weakest" Board in terms of its influence on City policy.

Ms. DuMont felt the Board should review the 2009 budget in order to gain a clearer understanding of the budgeting process, particularly for newer members. This would make them more aware of any issues on which the Board should weigh in when the 2010 budget was under construction.

Ms. Watson felt a perception of the Board as "weak" meant they should strive to do a better job in educating the public and the City about their mission and purpose. Ms. DuMont added that perhaps the Board should have a more visible presence, not only at City Commission meetings but at the twice-monthly City workshops as well. She felt their attendance and attention had been instrumental in saving the Economic Development Department at that earlier time. Ms. Watson also recommended using the Board's website as a tool to inform the public about their work.

Returning to the list of ideas he had brought to the meeting, Chair Riehl moved on to the next priority, which was consideration of how many new jobs the Board itself had helped bring to Fort Lauderdale in the last month. He noted that this will be a question to ask the Board at large on a regular basis going forward. For example, Chair Riehl stated that he was involved in bringing at least six jobs to the City by helping a new business through the approval process.

His next item was a reminder to the Board of their role as ambassadors to businesses in and interested in the City.

Another priority was a potential partnership with Comcast Cable/View-on-Demand. Chair Riehl explained that Comcast Cable hopes to partner with Fort Lauderdale by establishing a tourism feature channel. Comcast first plans to feature the City in the Detroit market; Chair Riehl offered to provide any other interested Board members with further information if they wished. He suggested that helping Comcast carry out this plan is an example of what is meant by ambassadorship. He will meet with Comcast on a biweekly basis to set up this feature.

He continued by noting that the Development Review Committee (DRC) had met the previous day, but had only a single item to review. It is the DRC's job to review any new business development coming into the City, Chair Riehl pointed out, as part of the Planning and Zoning Department. By comparison, in the same time period last year, the DRC had seen seven or more potential developments come before them for approval. Vice Chair Motwani agreed, noting that up until late 2008, it had been difficult for a development to make its way onto a DRC agenda on a timely basis.

Chair Riehl related this to an item Ms. DuMont had raised at an earlier meeting, which referred to the number of business licenses being applied or re-applied for

in the City. He felt this was also an important count, which could be the only measure of businesses coming into or staying in the City.

Ms. McCoy requested an explanation of what would require an incoming business to appear before the DRC. Chair Riehl stated that new construction projects were required to come before that Board. Vice Chair Motwani elaborated on this explanation, pointing out that this factor was also dependent upon what kind of construction was planned, the zoning requirements for that area, and other considerations. Were a new businessperson to lease existing space, he added, the DRC would not be a factor.

Mr. de Vosjoli asked if the DRC and Downtown Development Authority (DDA) worked closely together. It was explained that these are two separate divisions, as the DDA is a quasi-governmental agency operating within a specific geographic area, with members appointed by the City Commission.

Mr. de Vosjoli requested further explanation of the Board's role as ambassadors, as he was not yet clear on what he was or was not allowed to do due to the Sunshine Law. He stated that he was unsure whether stating that he was approaching someone in his capacity as a Board member would be within the restrictions of the Sunshine Law. Mr. Scott clarified that this practice was allowed, noting that Mr. de Vosjoli would only be stating facts about his Board membership; furthermore, his discussion would be with a non-Board member, and therefore in the clear.

Ms. Watson recommended that any notes Mr. de Vosjoli might take under those circumstances should be shared with the Board at large at their next meeting.

Chair Riehl continued from his list, announcing that two kiosks within Beach Place Mall are currently for rent; he felt these could be a good opportunity for a business. Similarly, more sidewalk cafés could be established along Beach Boulevard and other areas.

Ms. DuMont recalled a discussion at an earlier meeting, which had centered on a possible "street vendor pilot program," which would allow vendors the opportunity to serve and set up tables outside. She felt this could be combined with Chair Riehl's suggestion.

Chair Riehl continued, referring to an email to Major Anthony Williams of District Two, with whom the Board had previously discussed better enforcement of laws along the Riverwalk and Las Olas Boulevard. A follow-up meeting on this issue is scheduled for February 19, 2009, and Chair Riehl stated that he planned to ask how many patrols are planned in the areas, among other considerations. He added that he has met with Police Chief Frank Adderley several times since August 2008, and he has been very supportive with respect to the Board's concerns. Chair Riehl concluded that there has been "a tremendous reduction" in small crime in the Beach area, ranging from public intoxication to unlicensed street vendors misrepresenting themselves to beachgoers. He distributed copies of the email to the Board.

Mr. de Vosjoli noted that in his neighborhood of Sailboat Bend, there has been an increase in crime, including homes and cars being broken into and robbed. He stated he has had requested a police patrol for the neighborhood, but had not received a response from the Police Department at this time. Chair Riehl requested that he email the details to Major Williams. Mr. Scott asked that Mr. de Vosjoli let him know as well, as issues of this nature are pertinent to economic impact.

Chair Riehl referred to an earlier objective from his list, which stated that protection and peacekeeping are essential to good government of any area. Ms. Watson added that perhaps a representative of the Police Department could speak at a Board meeting; Chair Riehl felt the Chief or Assistant Chief would agree to appear, although he noted that he would prefer their time was spent on actual police concerns.

Ms. Watson shared a description of what is done to prevent crime in City District 3: twice-monthly meetings are held, primarily comprised of the presidents of local neighborhood associations, although any residents are encouraged to attend. Information regarding crime in the area would be given to that District's Commissioner, who would pass it along to the police; at times when crime was more severe, officers would attend the meetings, and would at times give residents tips on simple forms of crime prevention. She stated that this had been a very effective means of lowering the crime rate in that District.

At this time Chair Riehl introduced Lenny Kalvinson, guest, who stated that he had attended a meeting with a local businessman. It was noted that most of the country had known for some time that South Florida could be an expensive place to live; however, due to the current economy, housing prices are now reasonable for the first time in many years. Mr. Kalvinson felt this could be a selling point for both potential residents and potential businesses.

Vice Chair Motwani felt this was dependent upon the types of jobs that might come to the City: for example, the gaming industry might bring in new residents who are able to support themselves in the City, where the cost of living can be high. He felt, however, that the City would be able to do little to provide financial incentives for job creation without the larger cooperation of the County, which can provide more substantial incentives such as tax breaks. He suggested that the City's most effective strategy would be marketing itself, and Mr. Kalvinson's recommendation of describing Fort Lauderdale as a more affordable location could be a marketing tool.

V. Video Gaming

Mr. de Vosjoli stated that he more time was needed to finalize his presentation to the Board.

VI. Old/New Business

Ms. DuMont felt there were items from Chair Riehl's presentation that should be revisited. She referred to an email she had given Mr. Scott, regarding issues that

a local developer has reported in his experience working with the Planning and Zoning Department. She felt it could be useful to ask a local businessman to discuss issues of this nature with the Board, as she felt there are “unresolved” issues with Planning and Zoning in the City.

She continued that the Board should be aware of previous means of marketing the City, such as through the Chamber of Commerce, which had provided relocation information for the City as a contract item. Both this function and contract have since been deleted from the City’s budget, she stated; she felt the Board could address this issue. Ms. DuMont felt it was troubling that this function was no longer being done.

She recalled that at the January 2009 meeting, the Board had agreed that they would like to hear about the economic opportunities in which Mr. Scott was himself interested. She suggested making this an agenda item for the Board’s March 2009 meeting, in addition to other priority items, such as the Broward Alliance and Mr. de Vosjoli’s discussion of the gaming industry. Mr. Scott stated that he would be happy to discuss this issue.

Motion made by Ms. DuMont, seconded by Ms. Watson, to place a speaker from the Broward Alliance, Mr. de Vosjoli’s report, and a presentation from Mr. Scott on the March 2009 agenda.

Mr. de Vosjoli recommended, however, that the Board might instead consider holding a second meeting in any given month, rather than including so many items on a single agenda. He expressed concern that other important items might be left out, were this to happen.

Ms. DuMont agreed, pointing out that the Board often attempts to limit their meetings to one hour; under current conditions, she suggested this time constraint might be too limiting for appropriate discussion of the issues at hand. She proposed meeting for two hours instead of one.

Ms. DuMont amended her **motion**, suggesting that the three topics previously stated appear on the next month’s agenda for presentation and discussion, and that the Board plan to hold a two-hour meeting so adequate time is allotted to these topics.

She recommended, however, first ensuring whether the meeting room could be reserved for the proposed amount of time. Mr. Scott agreed to check on this availability, although he did not expect this would be an issue.

In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Ms. DuMont suggested that the Board decide, at a later date, whether they would prefer to limit their time at meetings. She and Chair Riehl agreed that new Board members brought a more active dynamic to the meeting.

Ms. McCoy asked if it was possible to obtain procedural training with respect to the Sunshine Law, and perhaps Board procedure in general. Mr. Scott invited her

to meet with him and discuss the Sunshine Law. Mr. de Vosjoli expressed interest in meeting with Mr. Scott on this issue as well.

As an overview, Chair Riehl explained that the Sunshine Law was intended to keep Board business in the light of day, so to speak. Mr. Scott offered to consult the City Attorney on whether he could speak to both Mr. de Vosjoli and Ms. McCoy at the same time without violation of the Sunshine Law, as they would be discussing procedure rather than Board business.

Ms. McCoy explained that she was interested in educating herself about past Board issues as well as learning about the Sunshine Law. Mr. Scott recommended the Better Meetings Academy, which is held twice a year and provides information regarding the procedures, parliamentary and otherwise, used by City Advisory Boards. Chair Riehl suggested reading minutes of past meetings to gain a clearer understanding of Board issues.

Mr. Scott requested that Ms. Smith schedule meetings for him with Ms. McCoy and Mr. de Vosjoli respectively.

Ms. Watson asked why the Director's Report had not appeared on the current agenda, as it is a standard item for the Board. Chair Riehl explained that Mr. Scott had not fully prepared a presentation yet; however, both Ms. DuMont and Ms. Watson expressed concern that the item might be removed from the agenda on a regular basis.

Motion made by Ms. DuMont, seconded by Ms. Watson, to include a Director's Report as a regular part of the Board's agenda. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Ms. DuMont stated that she wished to include an item on the Board's list of goals: she had noted, and been informed, that jobs for local students were becoming more difficult to find. She felt the Board might be able to support these potential workers through the various programs in the City.

She requested that Mr. Scott make sure to include the "EDAB Calendar of Activities" suggested at an earlier meeting as part of his Director's Report. She advised that these would be activities relative to the Department of Economic Development as well as the Board.

Motion made by Ms. DuMont, seconded by Ms. Watson, that Mr. Scott include this Calendar in his report as a regular feature. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Ms. McCoy asked if Chair Riehl intended Board members to come up with a list of ideas, similar to the ones he had presented for discussion. Chair Riehl encouraged that she and other members create these lists as well.

It was suggested that, as another advisory body meets at 5:30 in the same room as the Board, another day or location might be necessary for the upcoming two-hour meeting. Ms. Watson recalled that the Board had previously met one hour earlier than usual in order to adhere to their time limit for the room. Mr. Scott

agreed that he would look into a 4:00-6:00 or 3:00-5:00 p.m. time frame if the Board wished him to do so.

Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative, noted that Board members had asked to know ahead of time if a project requiring a film permit was coming to the City. She pointed out that she sometimes is informed ahead of time if the project is a major film production, but more often her advance notice is limited to one or two days.

She stated that she had received a call from the Food Network, who wished to schedule a show about a "soon-to-be-open" private restaurant in the City. It is expected to open in September 2009. She asked that any Board members with knowledge of such a prospective opening let her know, and she would compile a list to send to Food Network representatives. No further details had been available at the time she was contacted, she added.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m.

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