

Approved
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2009 – 3:45-5:15 P.M.

1/09 – 12/09

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ralph Riehl, Chair (dep. 4:31)	P	8	0
Mark Budwig	P	7	1
Patricia DuMont (arr. 3:51)	P	7	1
Mark Krom, Vice Chair	A	7	1
Sean de Vosjoli	P	6	2
Susanne T. McCoy	A	4	3
Christopher Denison	P	3	1
Miya Burt-Stewart	P	4	0
Sheryl Dickey	P	3	1
Dev Motwani	P	3	0

As of this date, there were 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager
Sheri Roberts, Administrative Assistant II, Engineering/Neighborhood Services
Wayne Jessup, Deputy Director, Planning & Zoning
Ella Parker, Planner III
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
Patricia L. Smith, Secretary III
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None at this time.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Riehl called the meeting to order at 3:47 p.m. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

It was noted that Stephen Scott, EDAB Liaison, was on vacation at this time, and Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative, will assume his role during today's meeting.

II. Approval of July 8, 2009 Minutes

Motion made by Ms. Burt-Stewart, seconded by Mr. Budwig, to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2009 minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager, requested that the Board take a moment of silence in recognition of Peter Feldman, who had recently passed away. Mr. Feldman was a contributor to the City and had been a member of several Boards.

Ms. DuMont requested that the Board also recognize the loss of Buddy Lochrie, who was a longtime volunteer and businessman in the City, and Dr. Roland Molinet, former Chief of Staff at Broward General Medical Center.

The Board observed a moment of silence in honor of these three individuals.

III. Business Capital Improvement Program

Mr. Barnes recalled that he had informed the Board, at their July 2009 meeting, that the grant cycle for the 2010 Business Capital Improvement Program (BCIP) has begun. He was before the Board again in response to some concerns expressed during that meeting, with regard to how the program can be made more focused on the business community. He introduced Sheri Roberts, the City's Grants Program Coordinator, who receives the applications for both the business and neighborhood (NCIP) grants.

Mr. Barnes presented the Board with a handout describing the program, advising that all material may not be covered during his discussion. The handout includes "talking points" about the program, as well as his recommendations for ways that businesses can participate. There is also a history of previous applicants and recipients of the grants, as well as an analysis of the program done in 2003, when it was also studied with the intent of making it more effective.

Mr. Barnes explained that the program's intent is to perform capital improvements in public rights-of-way through a partnership between the City and its various business associations. The City Commission allocates \$90,000, with individual grants capped at \$22,500. If all applicants request the maximum amount of funding, the City can fund four projects annually; if the maximum amount is not requested, more may be funded.

He continued that the target audience for the program consists of the business community, specifically its nonprofit organizations and merchants' associations. Mr. Barnes reminded the Board he may not make grants to individual businesses, as the program is not intended to improve a single business but to

improve a business district or association. The request for incorporation is because the maintenance responsibilities for grants fall to the associations. The project is intended to improve the City, or an area of the City, as a whole. Mr. Barnes added that if there are no maintenance responsibilities, an association does not have to be incorporated. The intent is that through the improvements to public rights-of-way, the district, association, or community will thrive.

He continued that memberships in these organizations should be primarily commercial businesses, as the NCIP program is geared toward residential organizations.

The matching funds are intended to keep the program from functioning as a gift, Mr. Barnes explained. A dollar-for-dollar cash match is required; an association may bring in more matching funds if they wish. Currently 90% of the associations bring in cash as their match, although they may also provide consulting or design services, material donations, in-kind services, or similar contributions. This has historically been the greatest “stumbling block” to organizations wishing to participate in the program.

He referred the members to the program’s guidebook for a description of the application process, which he described as “standard.” The City now holds technical and application workshops, to which they invite the business community. The application workshop teaches organizations how to fill out the application, as well as who qualifies to apply; the technical workshop allows the City’s design team to work with both neighborhood and business associations to help them through the design process, from construction to completion.

There is also a GP option available for those organizations who feel they may design and construct their projects more efficiently and successfully than the City, in which case the City monitors projects rather than participates in them. Participants handle their own design, permitting, and construction management, and the City reimburses them by 50% of the cost of construction, up to the maximum of the grant.

Regarding the maintenance policy, all projects may be done in conjunction with the City, but participating organizations are responsible for maintaining the projects after their completion.

Mr. Barnes turned to some ideas regarding alternative means for grant recipients to match funds. He pointed out that the Citizens’ Volunteer Corps (CVC) has programs in which communities come together to make improvements at City locations, such as neighborhoods, beaches, and parks, or perform other services, such as graffiti cleanup or crime prevention walks. At present, participating neighborhood associations earn points, which may be “cashed in” during the NCIP application cycle: for example, 1000 points by a neighborhood

association would serve as their match for a \$1000 project. While this has not previously been available to the business community, the CVC has agreed to allow business organizations to use points toward their match as well.

He referred the Board to a list of CVC activities that would qualify for points, adding that as this opportunity has not previously been open to business associations, they will be allowed to accumulate points right away that may be used in 2011.

Mr. Barnes continued that neighborhoods in low-income areas may apply for federal funds to be used as their match, which means for a project in these designated areas, the City can ask the Housing and Community Development (HCD) Office to contribute their matching funds. This has also not been previously available to the business community; he noted that the Housing Office is not yet sure if it is possible to allocate funds to the business community in this way, but they are looking into the possibility, which would assist merchants' organizations in these areas.

He cautioned that federal funding is given only when Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) are available. For example, the CDBG monies allocated for neighborhoods in 2009 have only recently received approval.

Ms. Dickey asked if, for example, a business association and a neighborhood group could partner in an application. Mr. Barnes observed that two neighborhood associations have partnered in the past, although there has not yet been a project featuring a partnership between neighborhoods and business. He suggested that there was no reason a neighborhood association could not apply through the NCIP program, using points, and a business association could apply through the BCIP program with a cash match, both participating in a large project. He noted that the City would not be able to guarantee the approval of both projects, as they are reviewed independently of one another, but if both are approved, the partnership would work.

Ms. Dickey asked if both organizations could participate in CVC programs separately and earn points. Mr. Barnes agreed this could be done, and added that neighborhoods may donate their points to each other if they wish. The Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations has also donated their points toward neighborhoods with projects in the past.

He concluded that these ideas might make it easier for business organizations to become involved in the 2011 program, and offered to update the Board on the CDBG findings regarding use of their funds for the BCIP.

He recalled that in 2003, an analysis of the program was performed, with Board members and others from the business community as contributors. At the time, it

was noted that the program was “too stringent” and it was difficult to meet all the criteria to apply. Based upon these comments, the BCIP was made to mirror the NCIP more closely, with the result that the two programs were now nearly identical. He pointed out that the strongest outreach comes through the EDAB, as well as through the associations that have been involved in the program in the past.

Mr. Barnes reminded the Board that the application deadline is September 25, 2009.

Mr. Denison asked what could be done if a group of merchants without an association was interested in participating. Mr. Barnes replied that he would encourage this group to form an association; the application guidelines prefer that this incorporation have existed for at least a year, so the group has built up a history.

Chair Riehl and the Board thanked Mr. Barnes for his presentation.

IV. Sasaki Report Update

Wayne Jessup, Deputy Director of Planning and Zoning, recalled that Sasaki’s draft plan for the Beach was presented earlier this year; since that time, they have received several comments, and wished to provide the Board with an update. He noted that a presentation will be made to the City Commission this fall regarding the plan.

He noted that there have been some changes to the plan stemming from the comments received; in addition, several stakeholders in the community had pointed out areas of concern, which will be presented to the City Commission as an “aside” to the plan, as not all of these concerns could be accommodated without an impact on other stakeholders.

Deputy Director Jessup drew the Board’s attention to a slide of the Las Olas Gateway, which Sasaki’s consultants had suggested could be opened up into a more “village-like” active space. In response to some of the comments received, the property was identified as “one continuous development,” with the suggestion that a more active space be a consideration for future development.

He moved on to the next change, which is a modification of the maximum square footage of a hotel floor plate. The plan had originally recommended a 12,000 sq. ft. limit for the two districts along A1A, with the intent of limiting the tower size and allowing more light onto the street; however, several stakeholders had pointed out that A1A is already “built out” with large buildings, many of which have floor plates of approximately 16,000 sq. ft., and they did not wish to be limited to building smaller properties than those in existence.

Deputy Director Jessup continued with a list of comments based upon stakeholder input, explaining that these would be presented to the City Commission along with the draft plan. He advised that these were comments that had arisen more than once from different individuals, and the Department felt they should make the City Commission aware of their constituents' concerns.

The list also includes suggestions made by the Board, such as the recommendation that a parking study be conducted to evaluate the City's standards, including shared parking options.

Other items on the list include the following:

- Focusing efforts on enhancing the Gateway to the Beach at Sunrise Boulevard;
- Concerns about proposed A1A and Birch Road improvement options;
- Increase floor plate size for residential uses;
- Concerns regarding potential private development on City property;
- Beach renourishment;
- Creating a safe pedestrian/bicycle environment.

Deputy Director Jessup emphasized that there are conflicting opinions on some of the plan's recommendations, and the City Commission would need to provide final direction on these items.

Chair Riehl referred to the request for a parking study, noting that the Board had passed a motion recommending that the study be done as part of the plan. Ella Parker, Planner, pointed out that when this item is explained to the City Commission, they may give the Department direction to conduct this study; it was not, however, part of the scope of work for the consultants who had prepared the plan.

Deputy Director Jessup advised that the Board should ensure their motion is included in the packet that will go to the City Commission. Chair Riehl agreed, and Ms. Parker noted that she had received this motion from Ms. Reese.

Chair Riehl departed the meeting for a prior commitment at this time (4:31 p.m.), and asked that Mr. Motwani chair the remainder of the meeting.

Ms. DuMont suggested that a communication to the City Commission from today's meeting be that the Planning and Zoning Department has agreed to include the Board's motion.

Mr. de Vosjoli expressed concern with a portion of the Las Olas Boulevard/A1A corridor, noting that parking and access are limited in this area "right over the bridge." Deputy Director Jessup noted that the Department had prepared slides with an overview of this area, showing the plan's intent.

Deputy Director Jessup recalled a question about implementation of the plan, and explained that the Department is considering a series of incentives that would make it more desirable for someone to build in a particular way, rather than changing the zoning Code. These incentives are still under discussion.

Mr. Denison observed that he had looked into the possibility of creating a small marina near Alhambra, where the plan had shown "one dock." He felt there was a need for such a facility, and that it would have a positive impact on the area. Deputy Director Jessup agreed to consider this idea further.

With regard to the floor plate size, Mr. Motwani pointed out that the average floor plate for the area in question is 16,000 sq. ft. He urged Deputy Director Jessup to include this calculation within their recommendation, suggesting that allowing for some variance here would encourage "more unique design" along A1A.

Deputy Director Jessup showed the Board the remainder of the slides, including renderings of the Las Olas Gateway. One in particular showed the tree line adjusted as cars arrive over the bridge, which gives a better view of the ocean. Other changes would make the Oceanside parking lot more of a "public plaza," including an amphitheater. A three-story parking garage was also proposed for this location, with public space at the ground level. He noted that the potential existed for a public/private partnership in this area. There could be a promenade experience as well, which would help create "layers of experience" along the Beach.

The Board thanked Deputy Director Jessup and Ms. Parker for their presentation.

V. Business First Fort Lauderdale

Ms. Reese reminded the Board that the Office of Economic Development is partnering with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce to survey the top 50 businesses in Fort Lauderdale. There will be a kickoff for the group in September, and the Chamber of Commerce is sending out an RFP for the development of a survey and its eventual assessment.

The survey, she explained, will find out how business is faring in the City, and hopes to learn how the City might attract new businesses, as well as what the Chamber and the Department can do to this end. The 50 businesses chosen will be selected by revenue and/or recommended by the City Commission. The study will be independently conducted.

She informed the Board that the Advisory Board for Business First will need a representative from the Economic Development Advisory Board.

Mr. Budwig asked what this representative's responsibilities would entail – for instance, a meeting once a month. Ms. Reese felt a monthly meeting with “their Board” would be in order; she felt it would be similar to a member's responsibility in serving on the EDAB by helping to direct the overall initiative.

The kickoff event is targeted for the beginning of September, she noted.

Ms. DuMont nominated Mr. Motwani, and Mr. Denison seconded this nomination. There were no further nominations. In a voice vote, Mr. Motwani was elected to represent the Board.

Ms. DuMont asked if the Business First documents distributed at earlier meetings could be emailed to the Board at large, to ensure newer members received these documents and could familiarize themselves with the group's purpose.

Ms. Reese handed out the Economic Development budget, stating that it included a comparison between fiscal 2008-09 and 2009-10. She noted that all City Departments were asked to reduce their budget, which has caused the Department's services to drop significantly. All expenses previously approved by the City Commission remain the same, including incentive awards, QTIs, and direct cash. She concluded that while this presents a challenge, the Department is “looking forward to it.”

Ms. Dickey asked if any business services or incentives are affected. Ms. Reese advised that if a business approaches the Department and meets the requirements for an incentive, they would go before the City Commission and request funding for that business, which would come from the General Fund.

She reminded the Board that the previous minimum requirement of new jobs to qualify for incentives was 100, which has recently been changed to 10.

Mr. Denison did not recall that this recent change in the City Ordinance had identified target industries. Ms. Reese replied that target industries are often businesses that the City does not have and is trying to attract. She offered to provide a list of these at the next Board meeting.

Ms. DuMont asked when the budget would appear before the City Commission, and requested that Ms. Reese email members with the date. She also asked if Mr. Scott could discuss the budget in greater detail at the next Board meeting, pointing out that the Board should have a presence at the upcoming City Commission budget meeting. She felt the Board should also have greater input on the Department's advertising and marketing budgets.

Ms. DuMont requested that the advertising and marketing budget be a “priority Agenda [topic]” at the Board's September meeting. Mr. Motwani agreed, and also

asked which items were cut from these categories in order to meet the budget requirements set by the City.

VI. Chair Report

There was no report at this time.

VII. Old / New Business

None at this time.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

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