

Approved
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2010 – 3:45-5:15 P.M.

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dev Motwani, Chair	P	6	0
Miya Burt-Stewart, Vice Chair	P	3	3
Sean de Vosjoli	P	5	1
Christopher Denison	P	6	0
Sheryl Dickey	A	4	2
Kenny Herskowitz (3:51)	P	3	1
Cort Neimark	A	4	2
Ralph Riehl	P	6	0
Adam Sanders	P	3	3

At this time, there are 9 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Patricia Smith, Economic Development Representative
Barbara Hartmann, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

1. A motion was made by Ms. Burt-Stewart, seconded by Mr. de Vosjoli, to recommend the following to the City Commission:

That the City Commission support the mission of Hold The Line to maintain funding for arts organizations in Broward County, 50 percent of which are located in Fort Lauderdale, at its current levels.

2. A motion was made by Mr. de Vosjoli, seconded by Ms. Burt-Stewart, to recommend the following to the City Commission:

That the EDAB adopt the Sign Ordinance recommendations to be sent to the City Commission. (See attached 2 page document.)

The Motions were approved unanimously.

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Motwani called the meeting to order at 3:45 p.m. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

The Board members, Staff, and guests introduced themselves.

II. Approval of May 12, 2010 Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Riehl, seconded by Mr. de Vosjoli, to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2010 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

III. Farmer's Market

Chair Motwani introduced Mark Leach, who began the Farmer's Market five years ago.

Mr. Leach explained he originally received a permit for the Farmer's Market once per month, which continued for roughly one year; the Market is now held each Sunday on a temporary permit. Mr. Leach said the Farmer's Market serves not only as a community-binding activity, but as an "economic driver."

The Farmer's Market It is open from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. each Sunday. Mr. Leach estimated that 100-150 regular customers attend "practically every Sunday."

He advised that merchants located near the Farmer's Market now say their best days are Sundays. They have seen an increase in regular customers from the area, as well as new customers.

Mr. Leach stated there are new markets beginning in Fort Lauderdale, including the Riverwalk Market; there is also the possibility of new markets on Sistrunk Boulevard and at Broward General. The City has done "a great job" in public relations with the Riverwalk Market, and Mr. Leach hopes that they will include all the other markets in this public relations effort as well.

He advised that he has visited other markets, including one at Winter Park, where there are 40 to 50 vendors and several hundred customers. He felt strongly that this could happen on Las Olas Boulevard as well. In the past six months, the Farmer's Market has grown from five to 25 vendors and continues to grow.

Mr. Riehl asked what the Board can do to assist the Market. Mr. Leach explained that "PR and marketing" are the most important concerns, as the budget is limited.

He noted that the City has heavily promoted the Riverwalk Market, which has existed for roughly one month. Mr. Leach felt the Farmer's Market, having been in business for five years, could benefit from being "on equal footing."

He added that www.lasolasboulevard.com devotes a page to the Farmer's Market, and promotes the Market on its front page as well.

Mr. Scott advised that the Public Information Office generally promotes only City-sponsored events, and offered to gather information for Mr. Leach on what constitutes a City-sponsored event. He felt this could mean the Riverwalk Market is sponsored by the City.

Mr. Leach said the Farmer's Market was originally permitted as a special event; if no complaints from the neighborhood or other merchants were brought forward, they planned to "work on creating an Ordinance" so other farmers' markets could operate on specific days as well. He advised that his experience with City Staff has been very positive in working toward this goal.

Mr. Scott explained the City sometimes faces a challenge in "relaxing" some of its regulations to promote businesses and events; both Planning and Zoning and Parks and Recreation have assisted in this effort. He concluded that "everybody involved wants to make it work." Mr. Leach agreed this is a "win/win" for the other merchants and the neighborhood in addition to the market itself.

Chair Motwani clarified that the Riverwalk Market is open on Saturdays, while the Farmer's Market is open Sundays.

Mr. Leach stated there is also a good deal to talk about with regard to "driving the economy" on Las Olas Boulevard. Chair Motwani suggested that the Las Olas Merchants' Association could come before the Board at a later time to discuss this further.

Vice Chair Stewart commented that she was interested in learning about the products for sale at the Farmer's Market in order to ensure that they are safe. Mr. Leach replied that there are several rules merchants are required to follow, most of which are established by the Department of Agriculture. The Department randomly tests products at the market to ensure that they meet the required standards.

Vice Chair Stewart asked how the Farmer's Market would address the issue of an individual becoming sick and relating their illness to a product. Mr. Leach pointed out that the Farmer's Market is permitted through the Las Olas Merchants' Association, which has insurance that would cover any such issues.

Chair Motwani suggested if three or four markets become active in the City, there could be a link to them on the City's website. Mr. Scott agreed this was a good idea.

Vice Chair Stewart asked how markets are governed. Mr. Scott answered that while they are not governed or limited by a market-specific Ordinance, markets are established through the City approval process.

IV. Hold the Line

Chair Motwani introduced Earl Bosworth and Terry Frank, President and Chair of ArtServe, to discuss Hold the Line. He explained it is a joint effort among Broward County's cultural organizations, many of which are based in Fort Lauderdale and affect the City's economic development.

Mr. Bosworth reported that the Hold the Line advocacy campaign came into being when members of the nonprofit sector realized that they needed to address their elected officials and solicit the support of the City and County business community in order to prevent further cuts to the arts and culture budget. The arts budget has been cut by a conservative estimate of 40% since 2008. By comparison, other quality-of-life programs, such as the County's parks and library systems, have been cut 24% and 25% respectively. County management is recommending another 30% cut this year, which would cause jobs to be lost and businesses to suffer. He noted that five of the seven major cultural institutions in Broward County are located in Fort Lauderdale.

He advised that when business leaders and representatives of nonprofits came together, they created the Arts Action Alliance of Broward, which was modeled on a similar organization in Miami-Dade. Their website will be updated with the dates of County Commission meetings. The site also features draft versions of letters in support for organizations to send to their County Commissioners and an e-link for a petition. Information will also be available at nonprofit arts events.

Mr. Bosworth pointed out that the Broward County Cultural Division is the "prime funding source" for nonprofits in the County. He noted that Broward County has been a national leader in funding for the arts, which is tied to seven sales tax categories in the State Department of Revenue. A penny collected in sales tax in Broward County in one of these categories will go to the Department of Revenue, but is often returned to the County's general fund for dedication to the arts.

He continued that Broward County provides grants to more than 100 organizations that benefit individual artists; some of these programs will be lost to budget cuts in 2010. A conservatively estimated 50% of these organizations are inside the City or affect Fort Lauderdale in some way.

Mr. Bosworth asserted that the arts have a great impact on industries in Broward County. A report from Americans for the Arts identifies 5635 creative or arts-related businesses in the County. Creative industries earn \$2.25 billion within the County; the second-largest employer in Broward County is the Industry of Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers. Nonprofit arts and cultural programs in Broward County bring in over \$154 billion and support 4250 full-time jobs. They spend almost \$67 million each year on events, for which the audiences generate almost another \$90 million in additional spending for the local economy, including parking fees, restaurants, and retail and other businesses.

County arts funding in 2008 came to \$5.9 million. If the expected 30% cut occurs in 2010, the County will have \$3.1 million with which to fund all arts organizations throughout the County. Hold the Line asks that there be no further budget cuts, which would hold funding steady at \$4.5 million. Mr. Frank pointed out that Miami-Dade's funding is \$13 million "and growing." Broward's funding would be 66% less than that of Miami-Dade for nonprofit arts and cultural funding even without the proposed 30% cut.

Vice Chair Stewart noted there must be "different variables" that address the disparity between the two counties. Mr. Frank explained that one such variable is the support of the arts through the business community, as there is a greater level of advocacy in Miami-Dade. This is beginning to change, he added, in the second year of Hold the Line.

Mr. Bosworth pointed out that State arts funding has decreased from \$14.5 million in 2008 to \$2.5 million in 2010. It is not guaranteed that even \$2.5 million will be available for 2011, as there has been discussion of "zeroing the budget."

He concluded that Hold the Line would like the County Commission to "hold firm" against further funding cuts to the arts, as the arts are good for the City's economic development. One of the major goals of arts programs is providing jobs for artists as well.

Vice Chair Stewart stated that she is sympathetic to Hold the Line's efforts, and would like to see the results of the group's efforts in encouraging support for the arts in Broward County.

Chair Motwani asked if the amount of money coming to nonprofit organizations from the County affects the amount of State and Federal funds coming as well. Mr. Bosworth replied that this depends upon the program or service that the nonprofit provides.

Mr. Scott asked if the openings of performing arts centers and artists' colonies in nearby towns have had an adverse affect on the arts community of Broward

County. He noted that the arts seem more “condensed” to a geographical area in nearby counties. Mr. Bosworth agreed that the “fragmented” nature of the arts community in Broward County is harmful, as it causes the arts parks and performing arts centers to “sit empty,” while events are held at the smaller venues in other communities, where there is a more concentrated audience to support them. Mr. Frank stated that he hopes one result of Hold the Line will be a greater collaborative effort within the arts community, such as allowing a ticket purchased for an event to be used for museum admission later on.

Vice Chair Stewart asked how performing arts centers are factored in, and if they are also competing for dollars to survive. Mr. Bosworth replied that they are supportive of smaller efforts, citing the donation of theater space at Broward Center for an art event in the fall. He noted that these centers have become leaders due to their fundraising and the development of their boards, and have used these contacts and resources to support Hold the Line’s efforts as well.

Chair Motwani felt in addition to the support in the local community, from an economic development standpoint it is important to remember that 50% of the organizations that would receive funding are located in Fort Lauderdale. He asked what Hold the Line would like the Board to advocate to the City Commission. Mr. Bosworth stated the goal is to “keep this message simple” and that they do not want the arts community to “take a disproportionate share of the [budget] cuts.”

Mr. Denison noted that the issue is a County rather than a City issue. Chair Motwani agreed, but said the Board may make the City Commission aware of what is happening and the impact that County cuts could have on the City.

Mr. Frank advised that Hold the Line is asking individuals to write letters in support of maintaining arts funding; in addition, the first County budget workshop is scheduled for June 22, 2010. They are asking individuals to attend this meeting in support of the arts if possible.

Vice Chair Stewart stated she would like to propose a memo to the City Commission letting them know that Hold the Line has asked for the Board’s support, and asking the Commission to show support at the County level. Mr. de Vosjoli agreed it would not be inappropriate to make this known to the City Commission, as the City should be able to “go to bat for” issues that will affect them.

Mr. Scott proposed that the Board make a communication to the City Commission in the form of a motion. Chair Motwani added the motion should mention the amount of funding that is tied to Fort Lauderdale’s economy.

Motion made by Vice Chair Stewart, seconded by Mr. de Vosjoli, to support Hold the Line to maintain funding for arts organizations in Broward County, 50% of which are located in Fort Lauderdale, at its current level. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

V. Director's Report

Mr. Scott provided the Board with copies of the recommendations they had made to the City Commission during their Sign Ordinance discussions. If they approved the handout, he suggested that they adopt it as a communication to the City Commission.

Vice Chair Stewart suggested that in the section referring to canopy signs, the sentence reading "...allowed everywhere but in the downtown and beach" should add the word "areas." There were no other corrections.

Motion made by Mr. de Vosjoli, seconded by Vice Chair Stewart, that the EDAB adopt the Sign Ordinance recommendations to be sent to the City Commission (see attached two-page document). In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

Mr. Scott clarified that the document will be made part of the record.

Mr. Scott stated that Proposition 4, which will be voted upon by the entire State, will require any land use amendments to be voted upon by the entire City. Because Fort Lauderdale is a Charter City, the entire County would then vote on a land use change for Fort Lauderdale. He characterized this as "an unintended consequence" of the passage of Proposition 4, and noted that the Proposition itself would be "bad for economic development as a whole."

Chair Motwani added that he is a member of other Boards related to the issue of affordable housing, and another unintended consequence could occur if a variance is not allowed in a particular area. This could go to referendum as well, with the result of making "a City issue become a County issue."

Mr. Scott offered the example of allowing "light" businesses to move into a residential area, although he advised there are already safeguards in place to prevent changes such as this. Currently elected officials have the final say over land use amendments such as this, rather than the County-wide electorate. He pointed out that "what the community might want" could become irrelevant, as even minor issues would go to referendum.

It was agreed that Dan Lindblade, CEO of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, would be added to a future Agenda to address the Board on this issue.

VI. Old / New Business

- **Communications to City Commission**

As stated above.

- **September 8, 2010 EDAB Meeting Conflicts with City Commission Rescheduled Meeting**
- **Mayor's Volunteer Challenge – Board Business and Board Meetings Eligible for Inclusion as Volunteer Hours**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

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

Communication to City Commission

Sandwich Board Signs

The EDAB passed a motion asking that the City Commission consider loosening restrictions on what are commonly referred to as “sandwich board signs”, so that more businesses can benefit from their marketing value. The EDAB believes that these signs should be allowed in private strip mall type properties (on private property only) where businesses are set further back from the road, and also on certain designated “pedestrian-dominated” corridors. Planning and Zoning staff should include size limitations, ADA requirements, and other necessary restrictions, and that a simple permitting process be established.

Under Canopy Signs

Under canopy signs are currently allowed everywhere but in the downtown and beach areas. The EDAB understands the logic of limiting these signs in the downtown, but passed a motion suggesting that they also be allowed as an economic development tool “north of A1A and Las Olas” (PRD) as well as “Sunrise Lane” (“SLA”).

Variance Requirements

Outside of certain parts of Fort Lauderdale Beach and the Downtown RAC, sign ordinance variances require a demonstration of hardship by the applicant before the Board of Adjustment. The EDAB believes that the threshold of proof for a “hardship” is virtually impossible to meet, basically eliminating any meaningful variance process. The Board passed a motion recommending that variance guidelines be established for the other parts of the City establishing reasonable criteria and a framework for an application that stops short of a hardship application. If necessary, general design guidelines that currently apply on the Beach and Downtown could be expanded City wide, or different guidelines can be established.

Sign Ordinance Primer

The EDAB voted to support the creation of a simple “how to” guide for applications for sign permits. Small businesses would be able to refer to this guide, which would establish a step by step primer from application to approval, making the process much more accessible to businesses and individuals. The EDAB would like to review the primer before enactment or presentation to the City Commission.

Cultural Projection Signs – Pilot Program

The EDAB previously provided a Communication to the City Commission asking that the City Commission consider allowing projection signs promoting Fort Lauderdale cultural events in certain locations near the port and airport. The Board renews this request, and suggests that the City Commission consider a pilot program allowing these signs for a limited duration and in limited areas.

2004 Sign Ordinance Proposed Revisions

In 2004, a consultant prepared a recommended revision to the entire “sign code”. While the members of the EDAB do not consider themselves to be subject matter experts for the purpose of reviewing those revisions, they passed a motion asking that Planning and Zoning staff be encouraged to review the entire proposed re-write of the ordinance and bring forward those revisions that they consider to be improvements to the current code, or simple modifications that would specifically enhance economic development throughout the City. The EDAB would like the opportunity to review these recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Department prior to their enactment or presentation to the City Commission.

Simplify Application Process

The EDAB voted to recommend that Planning and Zoning staff simplify the application process for sign permits, and streamline the entire process.