

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2010 – 3:45-5:15 P.M.

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dev Motwani, Chair	P	7	0
Miya Burt-Stewart, Vice Chair	P	4	3
Sean de Vosjoli	A	5	2
Christopher Denison	P	7	0
Sheryl Dickey (4:07)	P	5	2
Kenny Herskowitz	A	3	2
George Mihaiu	P	1	0
Cort Neimark	P	5	2
Ralph Riehl	P	7	0
Adam Sanders	P	4	3

At this time, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director
Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
Patricia L. Smith, Economic Development, Secretary III
J. Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to City Commission

None at this time.

I. Call to Order & Introductions & Chair Report

Chair Motwani called the meeting to order at 3:49 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present. The Board and Staff members introduced themselves.

Chair Motwani provided a brief background on the Board's recent activities, including recommendations on how the City's sign Code could be made more business-friendly. They have also been asked to determine which applicants will be awarded Recovery Zone Facility Bonds, and have made recommendations that a parking study be conducted on private and public areas of the beach. An RFP has recently been awarded to begin this study.

II. Approval of June 9, 2010 Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Riehl, seconded by Vice Chair Stewart, to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2010 minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Introduction of New Board Member

New member George Mihaiu introduced himself to the Board. He is President of the 17th Street Causeway Alliance, an organization comprised of all businesses on 17th Street.

IV. Proposition 4

Chair Motwani introduced Dan Lindblade, President of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Lindblade provided the Board with an overview of the effects of Proposition 4 on economic development, as well as the Chamber's stance on this issue.

Mr. Lindblade explained that Proposition 4 has been described as "hometown democracy" and will be voted upon statewide in November. Current polling information shows it would pass if it was voted upon today.

He advised that passage of Proposition 4 would mean every Land Use Amendment throughout the state must be decided by the electorate. In Broward County, he estimated there are 20,000 Land Use Amendments in a given year. Broward County's structure would also mean these Amendments would be voted upon twice: once at the municipal level and once at the County-wide level. This would mean individuals in other Broward County municipalities would be voting on Land Use Amendments for Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Lindblade noted that at face value, Proposition 4 "sounds pretty good," particularly as there is dissatisfaction with elected officials that makes individuals want to "control what happens in [their] community." He felt this attitude, however, has fostered some confusion over what the end result would be if Proposition 4 is approved in November.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce is on record in opposition to the Amendment's passage, he continued, as are most Chambers, business groups, and cities. Some state legislators have been "quietly in opposition" to the proposal; in addition, a master plan has been established to reach out to homeowners' groups. Mr. Lindblade asserted that "the bottom line is it's going to cost us jobs" as well as increase property taxes and "shut down development." He added that this refers not only to private development, but to schools, fire

stations, and other issues that may involve Land Use Amendments. The argument against the Proposition states that individuals are elected in order to “have an unfettered, transparent process” through public hearings. To move in the opposite direction from a representative democracy would “dramatically” change the manner in which business is done.

He added that there is no contingency plan in case the Amendment passes: instead, the Chamber and other groups are focused on defeating the Proposition in November. The campaign against Proposition 4 is expected to begin in October for the six weeks coming up to the election.

Mr. Niemark asked who is financing support for Proposition 4. Mr. Lindblade replied that some “adult entertainment owners” are involved with the initiative, as well as “traditional land use” groups which are “opposed to growth.” There are also individuals who are opposed to corruption in government and see the Proposition as a way to “take our control back.” He noted that opponents of the Proposition are not as far along as they should be in terms of raising funds.

Mr. Scott added that there are supporters of the initiative who have an interest in keeping things the same and don’t want “any change at any time.” Mr. Lindblade added other proponents do not wish to have “urban sprawl” and feel the City has grown too quickly and inappropriately, and does not have adequate services to keep up with this growth.

Ms. Dickey joined the meeting at this time (4:07 p.m.).

Mr. Mihaiu asked if there will be a public debate on the topic. Mr. Lindblade advised “there have been several already,” but proponents of the Amendment have declined offers made in Broward County. He added that no editorial boards of newspapers are in favor of the plan.

Chair Motwani stated that the Broward Housing Partnership, which is an organization committed to affordable housing, takes the same position as the Chamber against the Proposition, as it could crowd out affordable housing in many communities. If a Land Use Amendment goes to a County-wide vote, many individuals are not inclined to vote in favor of the change, and an issue at a City level may be voted upon by the entire County. While proponents have positioned the issue as “against big development,” he pointed out that there are many other issues that will be created which will “stop economic development in a number of ways.”

Vice Chair Stewart asked how the Proposition would affect jobs. Mr. Lindblade replied that if there are 20,000 Land Use Amendments in Broward County in a given year, the process of moving plans through the municipal level to the County level and the “full electorate level” would take a “minimum two years.”

Mr. Riehl stated he could understand the origin of the Amendment, as there is a public perception at times of favoritism and corruption. He asserted there is a loss of faith on the part of the public that is not involved in business, and noted that the business community may be “losing the public.”

Mr. Scott advised that for the City to address the issue, the City Commission would have to “take a very strong stand,” after which, within limitations, “there are things that can be done.” He was unsure of what action the Commission may have taken at this time.

Vice Chair Stewart asked if Mr. Lindblade has addressed all municipalities in the League of Cities. Mr. Lindblade responded that “almost all the cities” have been contacted.

Vice Chair Stewart asked what the verbiage that will be included on the November ballot will look like. Mr. Scott advised it was “skillfully worded” and he would send a copy to the members.

Motion made by Mr. Denison, seconded by Mr. Riehl, to oppose Proposition 4 that is coming up on the ballot, as it would negatively impact economic development. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Stewart asked if there is anything the Board can do to oppose the Proposition. Chair Motwani asked Mr. Scott if he could provide clarification on “where the City stands” on the issue and whether they have made their position public. If the City Commission has not made its position public, Chair Motwani suggested the Board could make a recommendation to the City Commission on the issue.

Mr. Denison proposed when the opposing groups ran ads in the fall campaign, they could list the organizations that oppose the Proposition.

V. Sustainability Committee Report

Chair Motwani introduced Anthony Abbate, Chair of the Citizens Sustainability Green Committee. He asked Mr. Abbate to provide some background on the Committee itself.

Mr. Abbate explained the Committee was formed with 11 appointed members who were to serve for one year. They were given six purposes and duties, including recommendation of affordable strategies for energy conservation; creation of an environmental strategic plan; recommendation of incentives to residents, businesses, and organizations to practice conservation; recommendation of actions and policies to the City Commission with regard to

education and outreach; research of funding sources for cost-saving initiatives, such as grants; and presentation of a report at the end of September, one year after the Committee's official formation.

Since their first meeting in September 2009, the Committee has divided into focus groups, from which all members report back through the Staff Liaison. These focus groups hold their own meetings each month on various topics, including waste, advocacy, public education, and energy generation. This is part of a City-wide effort to get citizens involved. The goal as stated in the Committee's founding Resolution is to establish the City as a leader in sustainability.

Mr. Riehl commented that none of the proposals seemed helpful to businesses. Mr. Abbate pointed out that one purpose of the Committee is to provide incentives for business to practice conservation. He allowed that some changes, such as LEED certification, are less efficient in Florida's tropical climate; however, there are alternatives to LEED, and Mr. Abbate stated that the idea is to make these changes "as flexible as possible" rather than applying more restrictions. Mr. Scott added that another issue that has arisen in the context of economic development is incentives for businesses in relation to sustainable power, such as solar energy.

Mr. Denison noted that like cars, boats produce greenhouse gases, and hoped there would be no recommendations made to "penalize" the industry, such as requiring retrofitting. Mr. Abbate stated the Committee is seeking the participation and advice of the Marine Industries Association of South Florida, and hopes to work with that organization.

He continued that the Committee can only make recommendations, but noted that by 2030, the government will require that all Federal buildings, owned or leased, must be "net zero." This means the energy they consume must be offset by energy they produce.

Chair Motwani asked if business is represented in the composition of the Committee. Mr. Abbate replied the Committee includes representatives from the real estate sector, a neighborhood association president, an engineer, and an individual who works with solar technology, among others. He explained that the members "tend to have an interest" in sustainable issues, and added he would like to see the marine industry represented as well. Chair Motwani felt the Committee would benefit from representation of the City's major industries, including the marine and tourism industries, in order to prevent "unintended consequences" that could affect economic development.

Mr. Mihaiu commented that there is a case to be made that the sustainability movement creates jobs as opposed to having a negative impact.

Mr. Abbate concluded that the Committee is to be dissolved in December 2010, although they may request an extension. A report is due to the City Commission in September.

Ms. Dickey reported that Broward County was awarded a \$3 million grant toward training for green jobs; the Broward Minority Builders' Coalition, Broward College, and Workforce One will be training 700-1000 people for these jobs in four categories. She offered to send information on this grant to the Committee.

VI. Business Capital Improvement Program

Mr. Barnes explained he typically addresses the Board twice a year, once to discuss the BCIP program at the beginning of its grant cycle and again when the cycle has closed and applicants are brought before the Board for review.

BCIP is a matching grant program that authorizes \$90,000 to be used toward capital improvements, such as sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, signage, or other efforts. This grant is geared toward business associations operating inside the City. Previously, the match has been for cash; however, based upon the Board's recommendation, the 2011 cycle is authorizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and Citizens' Volunteer Corps (CVC) points. Mr. Barnes advised this will hopefully increase the applications the City receives. Based upon the \$90,000, each applicant for the program can receive a maximum of \$22,500; this means if every applicant requests the maximum amount, grants can be given to four applicants.

The grant cycle opened in June, and two application workshops and one technical workshop are planned. These workshops are designed so individuals interested in the program can speak to members of the City's design team, including the City architect and landscape architect, and representatives from the traffic and civil engineering divisions. The BCIP program runs parallel with the Neighborhood Capital Improvement Program (NCIP), and the workshops are aimed at applicants to both programs.

Mr. Barnes provided the members with a copy of the application and application booklet. He encouraged the Board members to speak to members of merchants' associations throughout the community, adding if they are unable to attend a workshop, Staff can meet with them one-on-one throughout the application cycle.

He noted that the City has a "very limited" mailing list for business associations in the City: letters are mailed to every association that has applied or shown interest in the past. He asked that the names and addresses of other associations be sent to him so he can enlarge the distribution list. Applications are due September 24, 2010.

Mr. Barnes recalled that past projects have included a wayfinding signage project, which is in development; a 2009 Las Olas median island project; and installation of decorative sculptures along 13th Street, among others. Photos of some previous years' projects were circulated.

VII. Director's Report

Mr. Scott advised that Recovery Zone Facility Bond applications would be discussed at the next meeting. As the Board is acting as a selection committee, he strongly recommended that the members not discuss any information with one another regarding the applications. He stated he would be available to answer members' questions about the process, and full instructions will be given at the next meeting. The application packages will be available for review prior to the August meeting.

He continued that the Board's recommendations on the Sign Ordinance were read by the Mayor; there was a good deal of discussion about the projection signage on the side of a building, and the individual who had presented this proposal to the Board also addressed the City Commission. Mr. Scott reported that the Commission seemed supportive of each of the recommendations. There was discussion with the City Attorney regarding the possibility that changes would allow "open season for billboards." The City Commission asked that the City Attorney look into the recommendations and seek creative ways to implement them without allowing billboards.

Mr. Scott concluded that the City Commission had very positive comments about the Board's work on the Ordinance, and thanked them for their efforts. He will provide an update from the City Attorney's Office at the next meeting.

VIII. Old / New Business

- **Communications to the City Commission**

None at this time.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

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