

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

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dev Motwani, Chair	P	9	0
Miya Burt-Stewart, Vice Chair	P	6	3
Sean de Vosjoli	A	5	4
Christopher Denison (4:01)	P	9	0
Sheryl Dickey (4:07)	P	7	2
Kenny Herskowitz	P	4	3
George Mihaiu	A	2	1
Cort Neimark	A	6	3
Ralph Riehl	A	7	2
Adam Sanders	P	6	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
 Patricia Smith, Economic Development Secretary III
 Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative
 Wayne Jessup, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning Department
 Jenni Morejon, Principal Planner, Planning and Zoning Department
 Diana Alarcon, Director, Parking and Fleet Services
 Liz Davila, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None at this time.

I. Call to Order & Introductions & Chair Report

Chair Motwani called the meeting to order at 3:56 p.m. It was noted a quorum was not present.

The members, Staff, and guests introduced themselves at this time.

Chair Motwani encouraged the Board members to bring any items they would like to see on future agendas to his or Mr. Scott's attention.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

III. Parking Study Update

Director Alarcon advised that the barrier island parking study began on August 19 and will last approximately 17 to 20 weeks. The consultant has scheduled meetings with stakeholders from the barrier island with regard to their current business practices and trends, future plans, and opportunities.

She explained they are seeking data from an extended period of time, including past data, in order to arrive at a formula to determine trends related to visitors or tourists. They will also look at how the current national economy affects the area. Information provided by stakeholders has been "very positive" so far, and another meeting with stakeholders is expected by the end of the month. Director Alarcon emphasized that the more input they can have on the study, the clearer and more viable their ideas will be regarding parking. The consultant has also been asked to look at the City's land use Code and Ordinances and come up with recommendations for shared use.

Chair Motwani suggested that a future visit from the consultant might coincide with a Board meeting. Director Alarcon agreed to look into this possibility, although she reiterated that at present the consultant's intent is only to collect data.

Chair Motwani requested that the consultant be provided with a copy of the minutes in which the Board first recommended a parking study be done, as this could give them a sense of the members' concerns.

IV. Riverwalk District Plan Update

Jenni Morejon, Planner, explained the Riverwalk District Plan had been presented to the Board roughly one year ago before going to the City Commission. The project was originally intended to use public dollars to change many of the City's public spaces; however, due to the current economy, the scope of the project has been revised to consider short-term or immediate changes that would activate spaces in the Downtown area and promote economic development. The final plan will be presented to the City Commission on October 5.

She provided a PowerPoint presentation on the Riverwalk District Plan, noting that several planning efforts have taken place in recent years, including the Downtown Master Plan and the New River Master Plan. The Riverwalk District Plan is intended to bring activity back to "the center of the Downtown," with a variety of experiences, activities, and events.

The consultants worked with planners, landscape architects, event planners, and stakeholders in the area. Ms. Morejon noted that members of the creative industries downtown are “ready and willing” to undertake more event planning, but have experienced difficulty using some of the outdoor facilities due to issues with infrastructure and permitting. There is also demand for indoor “smaller-space” performances, which could use some of the vacant and/or underused retail spaces in the Riverwalk District.

Ms. Morejon explained the plan could be broken into three major components:

- Events;
- Physical activity;
- Management.

There were also three geographical areas identified in the plan, including the River Ferry, which connects the north and south sides of the Riverwalk District; the River Crossroads, which is “the heart of Fort Lauderdale’s Riverwalk,” at Andrews Avenue; and the River Plaza on the western side. The final plan that will go before the City Commission contains a “menu of different... events” that could take place in these locations, how they could be rolled out, when they should take place, and who should be responsible for handling them.

She noted that under the Riverwalk District Plan, Smoker Park would be a family destination in the Downtown area, hosting events such as holiday festivals or neighborhood picnics. Physical improvements to this Park would be minor, such as removing smaller trees without affecting the overall canopy and defining pedestrian paths.

Events that could be held near the “bridge” area between the Riverwalk and Las Olas Boulevard could include fashion and culinary “nights out” on an unused development site or on public property “with small improvements” for interim use. Pedestrian connections in this area could be enhanced to encourage circulation from the eastern side of the City to Downtown.

The River Crossroads area provides several active uses, some of which Staff has already worked to implement with the help of partners such as the Riverwalk Trust. Ideas include events such as the Urban Food Market on a regular basis, celebrating the bridges in Downtown to help make Fort Lauderdale’s Riverwalk a destination in itself, and using Huizenga Plaza as a “festival park” for major concerts and interactive events. Vacant parcels would be activated through low-cost uses, as in the River Ferry area. More shaded areas could be provided at Huizenga Plaza as well, and spaces beneath the bridge could be activated into various uses to prevent less desirable activity and promote safety in the area.

The River Plaza area includes the “cultural arts anchor” of the Riverwalk District. Ms. Morejon said community-based events could be held in Himmarshee Park, which would need few improvements, and Esplanade Park would provide “the premier outdoor cultural event facility” in the county. Events such as water circuses or boat races could be held on the river itself, and boaters could attend outdoor musical events, for example, from their vessels.

She advised that enhancing physical connections could include upgrading, removing, or replacing existing connections as well as creating new ones. Better lighting structures or banners along the Riverwalk could be used to draw attention to the area.

With regard to management strategies, Ms. Morejon pointed out that it would be necessary for a “coordinated entity” to ensure plans are being carried out in a collaborative effort. It may be necessary to establish a separate entity to handle operations for the District. The consultant’s recommendation is for partners, such as the City and the Riverwalk Trust, to continue to perform their roles “under an umbrella” overseen by a Riverwalk coordinator, who would manage contracts to provide the necessary range of services for the District.

Vice Chair Stewart asked if there was not an individual “on the ground” who could oversee the District and was familiar with the area. Ms. Morejon replied while this could be the case, it may be necessary for a person who already has experience and success in taking a space like the Riverwalk District to “the next level” to assume this responsibility.

Mr. Denison asked if the City would be able to use the property “at the crossroads... on the south side of Andrews.” Deputy Director Jessup said this property is close to resolution. At present, “the current decision is in the City’s favor.” He added that the proposed project could activate the site “in a temporary way.”

Ms. Morejon noted that one capital improvement budget item to be submitted to the City Commission for approval would be a line item for “small dockage facilities and a small ferry service” in the Riverwalk District. Chair Motwani suggested a paddleboat concession could also encourage families to come to the area, as it is a no wake zone. He noted that public bicycle programs are also becoming common in many cities, which could tie in with proposed bike rentals beneath the bridge.

Motion made by Ms. Dickey, seconded by Mr. Denison, that we are just extremely excited and support the plan that was brought to us regarding the Riverwalk. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Ms. Morejon advised that the consultant team will present the Riverwalk District Plan on October 5 at the City Commission's Conference Agenda meeting. She encouraged any interested members to attend or watch the meeting online.

II. Approval of August 11, 2010 Minutes

Motion made by Ms. Dickey, seconded by Mr. Sanders, to approve the minutes of the August 11, 2010 meeting.

Vice Chair Stewart recalled that the Board had approved the application of MJDCAOA, LLC "contingent upon specific language." Mr. Scott said this was reflected in the use of the phrase "subject to review and approval by the City Attorney and/or Bond Counsel." He explained that the project has since been approved by the City Commission, and must now be vetted by Bond Counsel before going before the City Commission for final approval.

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

Ms. Dickey recalled she had asked Sean Jones of MJDCAOA, LLC for a copy of an economic impact analysis related to the company's proposal. Mr. Scott agreed a copy of this could be provided to the Board.

V. Director's Report

Mr. Scott stated that the City Commission had approved the projects presented at the August 11 Board meeting, although he noted there is "still a lot of work to go" with regard to issuing bonds and other concerns.

He continued that Business F1rst is meeting on a weekly basis with its "core group." Chair Motwani will be asked to chair one of the organization's committees. A draft Ordinance is being composed which would include an "expedited permitter," or a central contact person who would deal with certain companies. Mr. Scott explained this would require City Commission approval "at least conceptually," as it would mean creating a new position despite the elimination of other positions due to the present economic climate.

He advised that there is a new director of the Boat Show, Carlos Vidueira, who is working with the City on a Marine Master Plan. His concept is to attach an addendum that would address boating to other Master Plans within the City. This will be presented to the City Commission in October.

Mr. Scott concluded that Broward County is preparing to release its targeted industries study, which ranks targeted industries in the County. He estimated this report will be released within the next four weeks.

The next Board meeting will be held at the Lauderdale Marine Center on October 13 at 3:00 p.m. Carts will be available to take members through the center. It was also noted that the November or December meeting will feature a speaker who will discuss available stimulus funds. Chair Motwani suggested that Boat Show Director Carlos Vidueira could address a future meeting as well.

VI. Old / New Business

- **Communications to City Commission**

None at this time.

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

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