

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

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Dev Motwani, Chair	P	11	0
Miya Burt-Stewart, Vice Chair	A	7	4
Christopher Denison (3:58)	P	11	0
Sheryl Dickey (4:07)	P	9	2
Kenny Herskowitz	A	5	4
Jason Hughes	P	2	0
George Mihaiu	P	4	1
Cort Neimark	P	8	3
Ralph Riehl	P	9	2
Adam Sanders	P	7	4

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
Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager
Sherri Roberts, BCIP/BCIGP Grant Coordinator
Barbara Hartmann, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to the City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order & Introductions & Chair Report

Chair Motwani called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present. The Board members, Staff, and guests introduced themselves.

II. Approval of November 10, 2010 Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Neimark, seconded by Mr. Sanders, to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2010 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Business Capital Improvement Program

Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager, explained that the applicants for the Business Capital Improvement Program (BCIP) will make their presentations to the Board at today's meeting. This is a business grant program that makes capital improvements to the City's public facilities. There are six applicants for this year's grants. The City Commission has established \$90,000 for grants, each of which may equal no more than \$22,500. This means four grants may be awarded at the maximum amount.

He noted that each Board member has received a preliminary package including a letter, applications, and a rating sheet. Each applicant will discuss his or her organization's application and why it is important. When the presentations have been completed, the members will rate the six applications, and the scoring totals will determine who receives the grants. The Board's decision will determine which of the projects will be recommended to the City Commission.

He introduced the first applicant, stating that the project would install solar lighting and trees along 13th Street. They are requesting \$22,500 of a budget of \$45,000, with matching funds from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) if available.

Katharine Barry, Board Chair of the 13th Street Alliance, stated the Alliance came into being three years ago and was formed by the civic associations and businesses in that neighborhood. She provided photos of the first project completed by the Alliance, which features donated sculptures in medians.

This year's application would place solar lighting in the medians, which would light the sculptures at night. Ms. Barry explained that the neighborhood wishes to be known for its public art. They have also been designated the first new CRA in Fort Lauderdale in several years, which means they will have the City tax increment financing (TIF) but not the County TIF. They are seeking low-cost ways to make an impact on the neighborhood through revitalization.

The other part of the grant would plant new trees along the edges of the public right-of-way along 13th Street. Ms. Barry said this would make the neighborhood more pedestrian-friendly. The lights would be solar, as the City does not want to accept any additional electric street lights; the 13th Street Alliance has also voted to make green improvements wherever possible. Solar lights would not add to the City's FPL expense. The three lights necessary to light the sculptures could be installed would cost roughly \$11,000. The cost of installing each light would be approximately \$800. Ms. Barry characterized the cost of the trees as "negligible."

She added that the Alliance itself would be willing to “match a second time” any monies given through the grant program.

Mr. Neimark asked if there has been any vandalism to the art installed in the right-of-way. Ms. Barry said there has not. He asked if the artwork is insured. Ms. Barry explained that the artwork has become City property, although the Alliance is responsible for their maintenance. There has been one vehicular accident in which a statue was destroyed and was replaced at the Alliance’s expense.

Mr. Denison joined the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Mr. Neimark asked if there are plans for future acquisition of public artwork. Ms. Barry said she did not believe the City was interested in acquiring additional artwork at this time. Mr. Scott agreed that expanding the program further could be seen as controversial, whereas lighting the sculptures would be a better alternative.

Mr. Riehl said he had visited the neighborhood and felt the sculptures were an improvement to the area. Ms. Barry said several business owners plan to add murals to the sides of their buildings.

Chair Motwani asked for more information regarding the Alliance’s match. Ms. Barry said this would be in the form of CDBG funds, and added that the Alliance has approximately \$40,000 they could use if CDBG funds were not available.

Mr. Barnes said the next applicant is the 17th Street Causeway Alliance, which would install wayfinding signs. Their budget is set at \$22,500 from BCIP, and matching funds would come from the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVC).

Genia Ellis, Board member of the 17th Street Causeway Alliance, said her organization includes businesses and associations along the 17th Street corridor. This route is commonly used by visitors “from the airport to the seaport to the beach.”

She provided the members with a map generated by the Alliance the previous year, and explained that today’s request is for funding of wayfinding signs. The City has already selected a group of signs to be used on the beach, and grants were awarded the previous year for signs in the Downtown area, the Riverwalk area, and the Broward corridor. The 17th Street area is seeking to expand signs into their area this year.

Each area of the City is identified by a color band: for example, the 17th Street corridor will be identified by yellow. This will help individuals move throughout the City based on color-coding.

Ms. Ellis said there is no branding or identification for the 17th Street area, although it is widely used in travel from the airport and to the seaport. This is the first attempt to brand this corridor. She noted that businesses need the assistance of signs to show visitors there are restaurants, stores, and other merchants in this area. A list of 17th Street Causeway Alliance members can be found on their web page.

She concluded that the 17th Street Causeway Alliance is “matching with the points” from members who have worked on City projects. This is the Alliance’s first application to the BCIP.

Mr. Hughes asked how many signs would be used. Ms. Ellis said the City’s Parking and Fleet Services has agreed to install signs “all over the City” at no cost, so the expense would only be for the acquisition of signs. Depending upon the kind of sign used, they could cost between \$600 and \$3000.

Mr. Neimark asked if the Department of Transportation has expressed any concern regarding what can be included on signs and where the signs may be placed. Ms. Ellis said the Alliance has already coordinated with the Department. In addition, she explained that in some cases signs will be replaced rather than added to avoid “sign clutter.”

Ms. Dickey joined the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Mr. Riehl asked if the 17th Street Causeway Alliance is incorporated. Ms. Ellis said it is, and the organization has a 501C3 tax designation.

Chair Motwani asked if there is a timeline through which the City plans to roll out its wayfinding signs. Ms. Ellis said the Downtown Civic Association and the Downtown Development Authority have partnered on the signs in the Downtown area. Mr. Scott said he could look into this and provide further information.

Mr. Barnes introduced the next applicant, the Fort Lauderdale Beach Village Merchants Association, which is applying to continue its sidewalk café and streetscape project. They are requesting assistance with streetlights. The budget is set at \$45,000, with \$22,500 from BCIP and \$22,500 in cash, plus additional contributions.

Tim Schiavone, representing the Beach Village Merchants Association, said the organization began working on “fixing up” the north end of the beach roughly 15 years ago. They have collectively put \$500,000 into the area, including sidewalk cafés, pavers, improved streetscapes and landscaping, and new asphalt. He estimated they are 90% of the way toward completion, and would now like to add decorative lighting and entranceways. All merchants in the Association contribute based upon the square footage of their improvement. He estimated there is

\$200,000 worth of work to be done on the lighting and entranceways, and a BCIP grant with matching funds would get the Association started.

Ms. Dickey asked if this would be a continuation of the last project proposed by the Association. Mr. Schiavone said it was. He explained that they have “stockpiled” grants, as this is a very large project and is still a work in progress. Because there is a renovated hotel and a four-storey garage in the area, they hope to make the north end of the beach “look as good as it can.” He characterized the project as pedestrian-friendly, and noted that Sunrise Boulevard is the only corridor in the City that leads to both I-95 and the Turnpike. For this reason, they “want to look our best.”

Mr. Riehl said the Association had “done a great job” in improving the area.

Mr. Neimark asked which hotel will go into the renovated property. Mr. Schiavone said this will be the B Hotel.

Mr. Barnes said the next applicant is the Fort Lauderdale Women’s Club, Inc., which proposes to create a botanical garden in Stranahan Park. The budget for this project is \$22,500, and they will bring \$5000 in professional services and \$17,500 in matching points.

Ms. Ellis, who is on the Board of Directors of the Women’s Club, said the Club was formed in 1911 and will turn 100 years old in the coming year. She noted that Stranahan Park is “[their] back yard.” In 2010, they won two small grants to plant gardens throughout the Park, including a bromeliad garden; the plan for the future is to replant all the Park’s gardens and make it into a more inviting botanical center.

The Women’s Club has partnered with a number of horticultural and gardening societies in the City, as well as the Citizens Volunteer Corps (CVC), which often assists the Club when they plant. The City has also been a partner and works directly with the Women’s Club in maintaining Stranahan Park.

The Club’s goal for 2011 is to continue planting. They are requesting \$22,500, and will continue to fundraise toward this goal. Ms. Ellis said they believe they can complete the project with grant and matching funds as well as what the Club feels they will be able to raise.

She noted that the library plans to use the public garden to teach about gardening and plant maintenance. In addition to the bromeliad garden, the Club hopes to plant a Florida wildflower garden, a butterfly garden, and a rose garden.

Mr. Neimark asked if the gardens will use xeriscaping, which does not require a great deal of maintenance, or if they must be tended. Ms. Ellis replied that every

garden requires some maintenance, but the Women's Club has partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that all needs are met. The gardens will not feature xeroscaping.

Mr. Riehl asked if homeless individuals "congregated" in the park and if this will affect the project. Ms. Ellis said there have been no negative effects on the existing gardens and this is not expected to be an issue.

Mr. Barnes introduced the next applicant, the Midtown Business Association, which is asking for a combination of wayfinding signage and streetscaping with trees along 4th Street. The budget is estimated at \$45,000, with \$22,500 from BCIP and \$22,500 from CDBG if available. The Association has also offered fundraising initiatives and plans to bring \$5000 in professional services.

Bernadette Norris-Weeks of the Midtown Business Association said the proposed project would be between 7th Avenue and 9th Avenue on 4th Street. This is a well-traveled street, often with more than 10,000 people traveling in the area. The CRA and the City are working hard to redevelop the Sistrunk community in this area, and the Association feels a part of this is bringing people into the surrounding area. One way to accomplish this is through wayfinding signs.

Ms. Norris-Weeks referred the Board members to a photograph of the proposed wayfinding sign, stating that the Association is working with a renowned local artist. They believe there are many different attractions in the area of which the public is not aware, such as the African-American Research Library, the Dillard Museum, and several local merchants.

Another part of the proposal is a treescape. The property owners have agreed to this, and the packet includes a letter of intent from two historically African-American churches, as well as a letter of intent from the Right Perspective Development Group.

Ms. Norris-Weeks advised that the Association has neither applied for nor received a BCIP grant in the past; they feel it ties in with interest about redevelopment opportunities on Sistrunk Boulevard.

Pamela Adams, President of the Midtown Business Association, said the intent of the streetscape enhancement is to "soften the area." They hope the wayfinding signs will open up this area to the entire Fort Lauderdale community, and the streetscapes will make the area look less "hard." She noted that the interior of this area features canopy trees that have grown to maturity, but similar infill is needed from 4th Street to 7th Avenue. Businesses in the area are likely to write checks toward the project as well as raise funds.

Mr. Neimark asked if the wayfinding signs are tied into the City wayfinding project. Ms. Adams said they are not linked at this point. Mr. Barnes explained that wayfinding signage is being coordinated by other Departments besides Engineering; the money for this grant would be dedicated toward the purchase of signs. He noted that there are a number of approved or pending grants for wayfinding signage "around the City," which would all fall under the same design concept.

Ms. Adams said the project would work well with the Sistrunk Boulevard reconstruction and street enhancement project, which will start in January 2011.

Mr. Barnes said the final applicant is the Riverwalk Trust, which would like to place recycling bins along the Riverwalk. The budget is set at \$22,500, with CVC points matching the BCIP funds.

Mark Budwig, Chairman of the Board of Riverwalk Trust, said the Trust has a close relationship with the City and often works with the Parks and Recreation Department. Their mission is to nurture the Riverwalk as a vibrant community connected by the New River, and the Board's goal for this year is "to activate the Riverwalk."

He said because the Trust sees more events and activity coming to the Riverwalk in the future, the City has requested that they ask for more recycling bins in the area. There are presently eight recycling bins on the Riverwalk, which cost \$1034 apiece.

Mr. Scott requested further clarification of the proposed financing for this project. Mr. Barnes said the purchasing budget would be \$22,500 in cash from the BCIP grant; because this is a "one-for-one match," the community is bringing 22,500 CVC points they have earned through community activities as a match.

Mr. Neimark asked how the bins would identify what recyclables are to be placed in them. Mr. Riehl said they were similar to the recycling bins on the beach, which specify the materials.

Chair Motwani said the invoice shows several of the bins. Mr. Budwig said the project would be "just a start."

Chair Motwani and Mr. Barnes thanked the applicants for their presentations.

Mr. Hughes said he is a member of the Riverwalk Trust. Mr. Barnes recommended that he note this at the top of his scoring sheet, and recuse himself from voting on that application, although this should not prevent him from taking part in the discussion.

Mr. Hughes asked if the Board can award only four grants, or if the budgets might be cut to accommodate all six grants. Mr. Barnes explained that this could be done, but advised when budgets are cut, this limits the number of items that can be purchased toward the project. In theory, four of the applications could be fully funded, or each of the six projects could be awarded \$15,000 “or something in between.” Mr. Barnes said this would also mean Staff has to cut the scope of the projects.

Ms. Dickey suggested that the members publicly divulge their membership in the various organizations as well as noting this on their scoring sheets. She stated she is a member of the Midtown Business Association and donates to the Riverwalk Trust. Mr. Mihaiu said he is a member of the 17th Street Causeway Alliance and publisher for the Riverwalk Trust. Mr. Scott noted that working for an organization in a professional capacity differs from the conflict presented by membership, unless the individual somehow stood to gain from the project.

Mr. Barnes advised he would like the Board to begin with “general open discussion” and move on to details from the specific plans.

Mr. Mihaiu stated that all the projects presented to the Board are worthy, and he hated to say no to any organization that is trying to improve the City. He made a **motion** that [the Board] evenly distribute the money “right off the bat” to all of [the organizations]. Mr. Riehl **seconded** the **motion**.

Ms. Dickey said she would prefer a full discussion of each project, including input from Mr. Barnes, before the Board arbitrarily decided to fund each project. She pointed out that not all the projects presented may be able to proceed with less funding.

Mr. Mihaiu withdrew his **motion**.

Mr. Barnes explained that he and Ms. Roberts had checked each project for completeness, number of grants received in the past, and overall clarity of the application, and scored each applicant accordingly in these general categories. He said the most important points for the Board’s consideration today include the following:

- Project’s immediate and positive impact on the City;
- Project improves quality of life and preserves revitalized positive image;
- Project concept will complement surrounding area / existing or pending projects.

Mr. Scott asked that the judging method ensure no candidate is affected if a member has to recuse him- or herself. Mr. Barnes assured the Board that scores are adjusted to avoid this. He also asked that the members rank the applications from 1 to 6 in case the City Commission reduces the budget further.

Chair Motwani recalled that the previous year there had been an application that was not considered by the Board to have met all the necessary criteria, and asked if Mr. Barnes could confirm that all the current applicants have done so. Mr. Barnes asserted that all the applications before the Board this year are “well qualified and...all very good projects.”

He noted two corrections on the letter summary sheet, which would affect the scoring of two applicants, and made further clarifications of the scoring process for the Board members. The Board members discussed the scoring process as well, as well as their options regarding the allocation of available funds.

Mr. Scott asked if the members can discuss and rank the projects and at the same time make a recommendation to the City Commission to allocate \$15,000 apiece, as Mr. Mihaiu had suggested earlier. Mr. Barnes said if the Board’s decision affected the budget and scope of the project, this information is taken back to the applicant to ensure they can work within the new constraints. He explained that a smaller budget might mean the applicant(s) had to bring more matching funds to the table.

The Board discussed the solar lighting and treescape request by the 13th Street Alliance. Ms. Dickey observed that it was possible the City could receive a grant at a later time to plant trees. Mr. Barnes said one issue with this project is the planting area for trees, as grates would need to be installed in the sidewalk and this would lead to construction costs.

Chair Motwani noted that because the 13th Street Alliance’s application included two separate portions, a recommendation to reduce funding would be likely to leave “one or the other.” Mr. Barnes agreed that the Board could recommend one portion of the application if they wished, and the Alliance could be encouraged to apply again the following year.

Regarding the 17th Street Causeway Alliance, Mr. Barnes clarified that “whatever you set the budget at is what they’ll be able to buy.” Chair Motwani commented that if the Board did not recommend this application, the signs would likely be installed by the City at a later date. Mr. Scott said this was possible but could not be guaranteed.

Mr. Barnes added that NCIP applications have also addressed wayfinding signage, but some programs have applied for both NCIP and BCIP, as there is no guarantee there will be City, County, or federal funding for the signs.

Mr. Mihaiu explained that the intent of the signs was to assist people coming from the City or the Miami area, as the 17th Street Causeway is “the first and last...impression that they had of Fort Lauderdale.”

The Board moved on to the Fort Lauderdale Beach Village Merchants Association, which plans to add decorative lighting to its streetscapes. Mr. Barnes noted that while the maximum funds would not cover the cost of all streetlights, the merchants have committed to major fundraising efforts, which have been successful for them in the past; a BCIP grant would supplement their budget for this project. They have matched every grant that has been awarded to them, “dollar-for-dollar,” and have brought additional money to the project as well. He advised that the conduits for streetlights are already in place beneath the sidewalk, and are “waiting for the lights to come in.”

Mr. Barnes characterized the Association as a flagship program for BCIP, as it could be shown that they are helping their community and the City. Their success is due in part to assembling a number of grants over the years. He advised, however, that it could be helpful to the integrity of the BCIP program to encourage first-time applicants, or perhaps applicants who have only received a single grant in the past. He noted that the City Commission’s intent in establishing the program was to “spread the money around the entire City” rather than concentrating in a single area.

The Board moved on to the Fort Lauderdale Women’s Club and the proposed botanical garden project. Mr. Barnes pointed out that the group plans to partner with the Rotary Club, the Bromeliad Society, the Garden Club, and EDSA. He observed that the Club is a first-time applicant.

Chair Motwani asked what the effect might be to this applicant if the Board did not grant them the entire \$22,500. Mr. Barnes said they “would have to work with whatever budget we give them,” and could make up the difference through cash contributions or perhaps phase in the project.

With regard to the Midtown Merchants Association, Mr. Barnes noted that this is a two-part project concentrating on 4th Street: the application is for wayfinding signs as well as streetscapes. They are presently seeking partnerships with contractors who would perform in-kind work such as planting trees along the street. The color coding mentioned by the applicants would apply to different districts of the City, such as a business district or a garden district. The design of the signs will be consistent with the overall wayfinding plan for the City.

Mr. Barnes added that both wayfinding applications would use the grant funds to buy the signs. The money would remain in trust until the design and layout phase is complete, and the signs would be coordinated through the City. If funds were decreased, the Midtown Merchants Association would either have to reduce the number of signs or the number of trees, or perhaps do more fundraising to bring cash to the table.

Regarding the Riverwalk Trust, Mr. Barnes noted their matching funds come from points, which mean they would be likely to cut the budget and purchase fewer bins.

Mr. Mihaiu said his earlier motion was “not made lightly,” as there are some cost differences between applications; however, he pointed out that the magnitude of these differences did not seem substantial. He felt some of the projects could be “shaved back” to allow for the funding of all applications at a lesser level.

Mr. Denison commented that he saw the potential for greater impact on City development in some projects than others. He felt “they all should get something,” but the difficulty would be in determining the amount.

Ms. Dickey suggested that streetscapes and projects around the City’s entryways on main thoroughfares, such as Sunrise Boulevard, are seen as “more regional” than the projects located in specific neighborhoods, which must be seen from “the point of view of redevelopment.” She noted that “regional scenarios” are often funded through City budgets, while grants such as BCIP are often used to help smaller entities, such as neighborhoods.

Chair Motwani stated that the Board’s consensus seemed to be a desire to allocate some funds for each of the applications; some may need more funding than others or have greater economic impact than others. He proposed that the Board could offer “a tiered structure,” which would “keep the scoring system” and give the first-place applicant \$20,000, the second-place applicant \$17,500, and so on in descending order, with the last-place project receiving \$12,500. He also recalled the earlier motion to divide the funds evenly among the projects.

Ms. Dickey said she felt dividing the funds evenly would be the better option, as neighborhood entities face “a whole different scenario” with respect to access to grants and funding than what is experienced by areas with regional impact.

Mr. Denison proposed an alternate system for scoring in which each member proposed allocations for the applications and Staff determined the average of these proposals.

Mr. Scott said the question was how to best leverage the available funds: with weighted funds or with the same amount for each application. It was suggested that Mr. Mihaiu might reintroduce his earlier motion in order to determine which method the majority preferred.

Motion made by Mr. Mihaiu, seconded by Ms. Dickey, to evenly distribute the available funds among all the applicants.

Mr. Neimark asked Mr. Barnes for his opinion on whether a weighted average or an even distribution would be better “for the health of the program.” Mr. Barnes said he did not believe the decision would affect the overall program.

The members discussed the possibilities of how to divide the available funds.

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

Mr. Barnes clarified that he would take the Board’s recommendation that all six grants be funded equally at \$15,000 apiece to the City Commission. Ranking the applications would not be necessary.

Mr. Scott recognized Mr. Barnes and Ms. Roberts for their hard work on the Business Capital Improvement Program, and the Board recognized their efforts with a round of applause. In turn, Mr. Barnes noted that this was the first year of the program in which there were more than four applicants, which he attributed in part to the Board’s work in “putting the word out” and making suggestions on how to improve the program.

IV. Director’s Report

Mr. Scott stated at the next meeting he would provide full reports on the concierge program, the new trolley program, and a proposal that has been received for the River House.

Mr. Denison asked if the Recovery Zone Bonds program has been extended. Mr. Scott said it may be extended, as it is still in committee in Congress.

Mr. Riehl requested that the issue of homeless persons on the beach be an agenda item for the January 2011 meeting.

V. Old / New Business

- **Communications to City Commission**

None.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.