

**APPROVED  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)  
MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011 – 3:45-5:15 P.M.**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Dev Motwani, Chair	P	5	2
Sheryl Dickey, Vice Chair	A	6	1
Miya Burt-Stewart (arr. 3:58)	P	7	0
Al Calloway (arr. 4:21)	P	7	0
Christopher Denison	P	7	0
Cary Goldberg	P	5	1
Jason Hughes	P	7	0
George Mihaiu	A	4	3
Cort Neimark	P	6	1
Ralph Riehl	P	5	2
Adam Sanders	P	4	3

At this time, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

**Staff**

Stephen Scott, Economic Development Director  
Karen Reese, Economic Development Representative  
Patricia Smith, Economic Development Secretary III  
Lee Feldman, City Manager  
Hal Barnes, Engineering Design Manager  
Amanda Lebofsky, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Chair Motwani called the meeting to order at 3:48 p.m. The members, Staff, and guests introduced themselves. Mr. Scott advised that City Manager Lee Feldman was expected to briefly visit today's meeting.

## **II. Approval of June 8, 2011 Minutes**

**Motion** made by Mr. Sanders, seconded by Mr. Hughes, to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2011 meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

## **III. Business Capital Improvement Program**

Chair Motwani explained that the City annually allocates a specific amount of funds to the Business Capital Improvement Program (BCIP), which distributes these funds to different business districts and organizations throughout the City. These monies are used to promote improvements within the public realm, such as sidewalk improvements, signage, or landscaping, for example. The Board makes annual recommendations on the businesses that will receive these funds, and works with Mr. Barnes to improve the program. They will review the applications for funds later on in the year.

Mr. Barnes described the BCIP as a matching grant program geared toward the business community. The City Commission authorizes \$90,000 a year toward the program; the maximum allocation for any grant is \$22,500, which means there could theoretically be four grants awarded each year. He advised that the Board has helped make improvements to the program over the past few years, allowing eligible communities to use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds as matching funds; they may also use Citizen Volunteer Corps (CVC) points to match.

There are no changes to the program in 2011. Capital improvements must be located in a public right-of-way. The grant cycle has been opened and will run through September 30, 2011. Mr. Barnes encouraged the Board members to let business associations know that the program is available. Additional information on the program may be accessed through the City's website, and the application itself is available online. Some basic questions for applicants to consider include what the improvement would be, where it would be located, how much it would cost, and why it is important to the community, the business association, and the City. These are also considerations the Board must take into account when the applications come before them for rating and review.

Mr. Barnes added that he and his staff are available to assist any association in developing their project, including determination of costs and qualifying matching funds. The application cycle closes on September 30. Traditionally the City has received three to four business applications each year.

At this time Mr. Scott introduced City Manager Lee Feldman. Mr. Feldman described his background as City Manager of Palm Bay and North Miami, and advised that he has worked closely with Mr. Scott in discussing the different economic development strategies available to the City, including business

attraction and business retention. He stated that his philosophy is one of “economic gardening,” or devoting resources toward encouraging businesses to grow.

Mr. Feldman said the City is organizing around five core services: infrastructure, public safety, public places, neighborhood enhancement, and business development. These core services are the responsibility of all the City’s Departments. A strategic business development plan will lay out what the City needs to do over the next three to five years. Mr. Feldman stated he hoped the Board would review this plan and provide feedback; it will then be presented to the City Commission for approval. The next step will be development of annual action plans, which will spell out the steps that will be taken over the next 12 months. The strategic plans will be reviewed every three to five years to ensure they are consistent with the City’s vision.

He continued that each of the five core services will be led by one Department head and an interdepartmental team, with at least one representative from each of the various City Departments. These teams will meet monthly to review the progress of developing and implementing the strategic plan and annual action plan. This system will also be overlaid with a performance measurement and process improvement program, which will measure the progress of the action plan.

Mr. Feldman noted that the first process improvement the City will undertake is the Building Development Process, which evaluates the process by which an individual or business approaches the City with a building idea to the time they have brought that idea to fruition. He noted that the existing system can be a multi-year process, which he felt was unacceptable and, in many cases, should take no longer than approximately a week. He stated that the City’s processes, such as the DRC process, should be more efficient, and the interdepartmental review would determine what parts of this process are essential.

Mr. Denison asked if the annual action plans would be integrated with the City’s budget. Mr. Feldman advised that these plans would actually drive the budget process.

Mr. Riehl stated that he agreed with Mr. Feldman’s focus on the need to streamline the Building Development Process. He noted that there will soon be a business liaison to work with developers and facilitate the process. Mr. Feldman advised that making this process more efficient would take some time, and pointed out that while it can be “very easy to say no,” the challenge is in finding an alternate solution.

Chair Motwani explained that business owners have addressed the Board and expressed frustration with some of the issues to which Mr. Feldman referred. He

offered any assistance the Board might be able to provide in facilitating these changes. Mr. Feldman suggested that a Board member could work with Staff as part of the process simplification team, which would be an intensive working session. Chair Motwani added that he chairs the Process and Ordinance Review Committee of Business F1rst, which works with key Staff members and may also be able to offer some recommendations.

Mr. Feldman said his intent was to list every step involved in a process: for example, if multiple signatures are required for an approval, each signature is noted, so the flow of events can be seen. The process simplification team then determines which steps are duplicates of one another, which steps are unnecessary, and where other steps may be needed, for example. This condenses the process into a predictable flow of events. People from both inside and outside the process are involved in this team, as some members of Staff have expressed frustration with aspects of the process as well.

He noted that a surcharge on the City's building fees is used toward training building inspectors and keeping up their certifications. Mr. Feldman stated that these standards can be kept up at a much lesser expense than has been accumulated over the years in training funds. He explained that he would like to invest in an online permitting process, so an architect or engineer may file a set of plans electronically without ever leaving his or her office. This would require an initial expense of several hundred thousand dollars, but there is sufficient money in the training fund to pay for this. He concluded that he would also recommend doing away with the surcharge, and would reinvest the remaining funds into making process improvements.

Chair Motwani advised that one comment made during Business F1rst's survey was that while Staff is well-intentioned, the system has been "more about saying no and not enough about saying yes" for a long time. He noted that Mr. Feldman's goals are directly in line with the intent of Business F1rst, and said the Board looked forward to helping achieve them.

Mr. Feldman left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Barnes resumed discussion of the BCIP, recalling that last year, six grants were awarded to signage, landscaping, streetscape, and other public projects. He noted that not all these grants provided sufficient funds for the associations to complete their entire projects, and may return to seek additional grant funds during this year's cycle.

He explained that once the cycle has closed, he and his Staff review all the applications and bring them before the Board in December. He provides administrative ranking for each applicant, which considers whether or not the applicant has a qualified match, has received grants in the past, and other

specifications. The program encourages new associations to participate, and these associations receive more points in that specific category. The administrative rankings average 110-140 points.

When the applicants make their presentations to the Board, there are 70 additional points available for the projects. The Board considers whether or not the application meets the program's goals; if it will benefit the community, the association, and the City; and if it is a realistic and defined project. In 2010, the Board elected to divide the \$90,000 equally among the six applicants and recommended that the City Commission award them \$15,000 each. Some of these projects have already begun the design phase.

Mr. Barnes continued that there was some criticism in 2010 regarding how rankings were handled: some individuals felt the ranking process should have been strictly followed and the projects in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> place encouraged to apply again in 2011. He advised that this is done for the Neighborhood Capital Improvement Program (NCIP); however, the number of applicants for the NCIP grants is much greater. He noted that dividing the grant funds equally in 2010 did not have a major impact on any of the grants, as some of the projects were slightly scaled back. He could not determine at this time how many applications will come before the Board in December 2011, but advised that it will be up to the Board to look at these applicants and determine the direction they would like the program to take.

Mr. Scott agreed that there had been some controversy regarding the decision to divide the grant funds equally. He explained that at least one of the six projects has come before the Board "year after year" to apply for the grant funds, which will be combined for a single major project. This had caused some members to feel that extra consideration should be given to first-time applicants. He noted that while the Board apparently has no legal obligation to fund only four projects, the question of the program's direction remains. He felt this should be resolved before the 2011 applicants make their presentations to the Board in December, and could perhaps be a discussion topic at a future meeting. Chair Motwani agreed to work with Mr. Scott to place this discussion on an upcoming agenda.

Chair Motwani advised the new Board members that last year was the first time there have been more than four applicants for the BCIP grants, so the issue that arose was a new one. In previous years, the Board worked through community outreach to encourage new applicants. He emphasized that in order to keep the process competitive, he felt there is a benefit to considering both the most thorough plan for a project as well as giving extra consideration to newer applicants.

Ms. Burt-Stewart said while it may not be a requirement that additional consideration be given to new applicants, she felt it was potentially discouraging

to new applicants if they are ultimately given the same consideration as previous or longtime applicants. She felt there was no legal requirement to rank the projects; it was instead only a matter of established practice.

Mr. Barnes recalled that in previous years, there were at times only two or three applications, and grant money was left on the table because the City Commission has set a limit on the maximum amount that can be awarded to an applicant. Ms. Burt-Stewart explained that her issue referred to a new association that did not receive the maximum amount, although she noted that had the Board subjected the applications to the ranking process, that association might not have received funds at all.

Mr. Barnes recalled that the administrative scores had already been determined, and the newer association had received additional points; however, the Board's decision had ultimately been not to go through the ranking process.

Mr. Barnes said when the grant cycle is closed on September 30, he can provide the Board with a "heads up" on how many applications were received. He cautioned, however, that he could not tell them at that time whether or not all applications are qualified or have sufficient matching funds. Chair Motwani pointed out that if there are four applicants or less, the discussion regarding the scoring system would not be necessary, although he recommended that the Board revisit the issue in any case.

Mr. Riehl recalled that there was a concern that some applicants, including newer ones, might have received no funds at all if the ranking process was used.

Chair Motwani advised that part of the program's stated intent is to encourage new applicants; the decision to divide the funds equally had been due in part to the fact that the projects were "scaleable" and could proceed with a lesser amount of funds than the maximum. Mr. Scott added that the Board is asked to help market the program through their ties to the City's business community.

Mr. Barnes agreed to update the Board on the BCIP in September and bring the qualified applicants before them at the December meeting.

#### **IV. Fort Lauderdale Films Report**

Mr. Scott advised that during future meetings, some of the Economic Development Department's different functions will be presented to the Board. One of Ms. Reese's primary responsibilities is to act as Film Commissioner for Fort Lauderdale. Other Economic Development highlights include economic incentives, business retention and expansion, real estate, and Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs). Ms. Reese recognized Ms. Smith's contributions to the film permitting process as well.

Ms. Reese explained that while Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood each have their own Film Commissioners, the rest of this activity falls under the purview of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) for the other municipalities in Broward County. This is because Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood generate the most film permits. The CVB is very active in attracting the industry to the area.

Ms. Reese said the executive airport, beaches, Downtown area, and neighborhoods have all been recently filmed. Film crews appreciate the diversity available in the City. She showed the Board an outline of Fort Lauderdale that showed the areas that have been filmed for major motion pictures, television, photography, and "B-roll" films. Television shows include "The Glades," which recently filmed near the Riverfront; "Burn Notice;" and several reality shows. Commercials, documentaries, and music videos have also been recently filmed in the area.

She advised that a chart is created at the end of each year to show the areas in which the most filming was done so the City can keep track of current trends. Ms. Reese advised that the film industry is very clean, spends a great deal of money in the City, pays above-average wages, and rents local equipment. The City strongly encourages them to return.

In 2009, she reported there were 112 film permits; in 2010, there were 159 permits, and to date in 2011, there have been 131 thus far. The City receives strong support from all its Departments, as well as the City Commission, City Manager, and Mayor. Benefits to the industry include good weather, diversity within the City, and lack of a charge for film permits. Permits are approved within 24 to 48 hours, which is important to the film industry, as they often do not know where they will film until the last minute.

Mr. Scott commented that the Police Department is usually the #1 City Department involved, as filming often includes street closures and a heightened security environment. They also have a designated film liaison with a great deal of experience in working with the film industry.

Mr. Riehl asked if the Board could do anything to help retain the film industry in Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Reese asked that the members simply "pass the word" about the program throughout the community.

Mr. Hughes asked if there has been any discussion of using studio space within the City. Ms. Reese said while some companies want studio space, it is difficult to find within the City. Mr. Scott explained that the spaces available are often not sufficiently large. He added that some productions are intended to be kept secret, such as a movie recently filmed in Fort Lauderdale; the City tries to accommodate this as much as possible, although he pointed out that permits are a matter of public record. In some cases, he added, the City must reach out to

the local homeowners' associations and ensure that they know filming will occur.

Ms. Reese invited the Board members to let her know if they were aware of any space available on a short-term basis.

Mr. Hughes observed that the Art Institute is part of a "great feeder system" for the film industry, as students are trained in graphics and animation.

Ms. Reese concluded that part of the mission is to spread the word, and requested that any members who became aware of a need for studio space or a place to film should refer them to her. Chair Motwani advised that he had referred a Bollywood director who was filming in Miami to visit Ms. Reese's office, and the filming was done in Fort Lauderdale instead. He characterized this as a "seamless" process, and recalled that the director was very complimentary of the City and the process.

#### **V. Director's Report**

Mr. Scott reported that the State has signed off on the QTI incentive the City had approved for a cigar company operating within Fort Lauderdale. He will now take the direct cash component of the incentive before the City Commission for final approval. He noted that this had taken longer than anticipated.

#### **VI. Old / New Business**

Chair Motwani asked if any of the members had anything pressing they would like to see placed on an upcoming agenda.

Mr. Riehl informed the Board that a mugging had occurred in daylight in the beach area near Las Olas Boulevard. He recalled that the Board had featured police updates at an earlier time, and suggested that this could be done again. Chair Motwani said an overview would be requested, and then the members could ask more specific questions if they came to mind.

Mr. Riehl added that there had been pedestrian fatalities on Las Olas Boulevard, and speed limit signs were placed on the roadway; however, he pointed out that the signs are no longer working. Mr. Denison recalled that in District 2, on the opposite side of Andrews Avenue, there is a continuing issue with homeless persons congregating in the area, and there have been break-ins on boats in that area of the river. The result is that many captains no longer want to bring their boats to this area.

Mr. Scott said he would request a police update for an upcoming Board meeting. Chair Motwani requested that when the update has been confirmed, the



members could be emailed and asked for specific items they would like to hear discussed.

Mr. Hughes asked if anyone is spearheading the purchase of old hotel properties occurring in and around the North Beach Village area. Chair Motwani said the primary driver of these efforts is a local business owner, and advised he could ask an attorney working with that individual to present to the Board. Mr. Scott observed that the area is beginning to turn around and is becoming populated by local artists.

Chair Motwani said he had spoken to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) representative who is in charge of the effort to move passenger rail to the FEC tracks downtown. FDOT is currently working to address the concerns raised by the marine industry. He suggested that an FDOT representative, as well as someone from the marine industry, could speak to the Board on this topic in the future. He referred interested members to a website, [www.sfecstudy.com](http://www.sfecstudy.com), with additional information about the proposition, and clarified that while the project is moving forward, the suggestion of a fixed bridge is not; the discussion now focuses on a drawbridge at grade, with fewer trains than were originally proposed.

Mr. Denison said he is meeting with FDOT representatives regarding another bridge project located west of I-95, which would potentially involve property adjacent to the railroad tracks. The tracks are leased to CSX, which would like to move the tracks 35 ft. west of the existing tracks rather than make repairs to the existing New River Railroad Bridge. Chair Motwani suggested that he and Mr. Denison could coordinate on the possible discussion of both bridge issues in the future.

Mr. Scott noted that discussion of the potential expansion of the Las Olas Marina will be discussed at the Beach Redevelopment Board meeting the following week.

- **Communications to the City Commission**

None.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

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