

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

January 6, 2022

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The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in regular session at Oscar M. Corbin, Jr. City Hall, 2200 Second Street, its regular meeting place in the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. Present were: Vice Chair Jerome Miller, presiding, and Regular Board Members Ori Lee Ford, Sharon Schulman (Exited the meeting at 3:29 p.m.), and Alternate Board Members Nannette Maxson (Arrived at 2:20 p.m.) and Duane Dyar. Also present were: Grant Alley, City Attorney, Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator (Arrived at 2:20 p.m.), Steven Belden, Community Development Director, and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Chair Dennis Landfried, Board Members John Kakatsch, Roy Kennix, and Ken Pariser and City Clerk Gwen Carlisle.

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Acting Chair Miller led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS – None

ELECTION

1. Election of Chair and Acting Chair

Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist, reported that Chair Landfried contacted the Clerk's Office and requested that the Board consider postponing the elections until the February 3, 2022 meeting as he will be absent due to an illness.

MOTION: Board Member Ford moved to postpone the Election of the Chair and Vice Chair until the February 3, 2022 meeting; seconded by Board Member Schulman; motion carried unanimously.

2. Review the City's Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas

Acting Chair Miller thanked Councilperson Bochette for attending the meeting and reviewed the City's Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas for Fiscal Year 2021-2022. Discussion ensued regarding the Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas of: Identify development, redevelopment and public improvement opportunities in the Caloosahatchee River waterfront area; and collaborate with Florida Gulf Coast University on Downtown / Midtown Campus.

Board Member Maxson arrived at 2:20 p.m.

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, arrived at 2:20 p.m.

Acting Chair Miller suggested that the Board make a recommendation to Council that the City partner with universities and colleges to develop a program for interns to enhance their studies by working on projects in different departments and downtown campuses.

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MOTION: Board Member Ford moved to request that the Human Resource Director be invited to a meeting to discuss the possibility of instituting an Internship Program with universities or colleges; seconded by Board Member Dyar; motion carried unanimously.

Discussion ensued regarding Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas: Develop a revitalization strategy for the Palm Beach Boulevard, Highway 41, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard major commercial corridors; and Collaborate with Naples Botanical Gardens to improve landscaping of City property. Councilperson Bochette asked Naples Botanical Gardens to attend a Board meeting to discuss how their work will help the economic growth of the City.

Discussion ensued regarding Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas: Develop streetscape improvements for pedestrians, bikers and parking; and Refine and implement the City's investment commitments as project co-applicant of Southward Village Development. Board Member Ford suggested that Mr. Belden invite Marcia Davis, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Myers, and at the same time invite someone from Franklin Park Elementary School to discuss both of their redevelopment plans for the Southward Village Development.

Discussion ensued regarding Strategic Priorities and Major Focus Areas: Complete the annexation of enclaves; Complete design and permitting of the John Yarborough Linear Trail; and Initiative renovations of the Eastwood Golf Course. Acting Chair Miller asked for an update on the timetable of the John Yarborough Linear Trail and Mr. Belden replied that he will find out that information.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND MOTION REPORT

3. Approve Minutes from the December 2, 2021 Meeting

MOTION: Board Member Schulman moved to approve the Minutes of the December 2, 2021 Regular Meeting; seconded by Board Member Maxson; motion carried unanimously.

Board Member Schulman exited the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS

4. Business and Economic Development Administrator's Report

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, reported that she contacted a mural painter that has experience working with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for him to possibly work on Board Member Dyar's recommendation for aesthetic improvements in the area at the end of the southbound US 41 bridge coming into the downtown community. She will keep the Board apprised of the progress.

Ms. Carr stated that she will be monitoring Vision Zero Funding that will be available mid-year that could support the City's vision for a bicycles and pedestrian complete streets program. Acting Chair Miller mentioned that the Vision Zero Funding focuses on transportation safety and questioned whether the funds could be used for traffic calming

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efforts such as public information, signage, and streetscaping. Ms. Carr stated there are Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant funds that the City will monitor that can be used for sidewalks as well.

Ms. Carr conveyed that she reached out to Florida Power and Light (FPL) and asked for an assessment of the City's infrastructure as well as information on data mining and crypto mining infrastructure for marketing purposes. She noted that she already has a dark fiber map. Acting Chair Miller inquired if the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) offers high tech companies incentive funds to hire a certain number of employees and Ms. Carr replied that they do offer incentives and FPL does as well. City Attorney Alley noted that the City has access to the Florida LambdaRail. Acting Chair Miller requested that on the next Agenda there be a discussion item to identify a high-tech corridor marketing plan. Board Member Ford suggested that Ms. Carr have a meeting with existing tech industry businesses about the city partnering with them for workforce development wherein that can be marketed to potential tech businesses. Mr. Carr replied that she will work on putting that meeting together to work on tech workforce development.

Councilperson Bochette felt that to direct development to Midtown it may be beneficial to create a historical zone along McGregor Boulevard which would also prevent that area from becoming oversaturated.

AGENDA REORDERED

14. Discuss next presentation to Council

Acting Chair Miller suggested making the Board's next presentation to Council at one of their meetings in March. Board Member Dyar felt that if the Board can finalize the selection of items to present to Council at the February meeting, March could be possible. Acting Chair Miller noted that the next presentation to Council can be discussed at the February meeting.

5. Community Development Department Director's Report

Board Member Dyar noted that from his Focus Area Report Recommendations at a previous meeting, he requested that Mr. Belden check with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) about their Maintenance Program for the US 41 bridge area. Mr. Belden stated that he will work on getting that information for the next meeting.

- Update on the MLK Overlay District expansion of the boundary to the City limits

Steven Belden, Community Development Director, gave a brief overview of the existing overlay boundaries and the regulations pertaining to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Veronica S. Shoemaker Boulevard overlay district. He suggested that the Board review the regulations for improvements that could be recommended to Staff. Acting Chair Miller requested that this item be added to the next agenda for discussion.

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- Monthly Development Activity Report

Mr. Belden reported that the permit activity in September 2021 was \$31 million, October 2021 was \$65 million due to the Soltura at the Forum development, and November 2021 was \$17 million. He noted that going forward the reports will be provided in the back up agenda material.

Mr. Belden noted that he met with Florida International University (FIU) regarding implementation of the FIU Community Economic Development Plan. He has started working on scheduling a meeting with different stakeholders so they can work together to advance the plan strategies. Mr. Belden stated that he will keep the Board apprised as it progresses.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS - None

BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

6. Report on MLK Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Maxson) – None
7. Report on Palm Beach Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Kakatsch) - None
8. Report on US 41 Corridor (Board Member Dyar) - None
9. Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (Board Member Ford) - None
10. Report on business development/education assistance with FGCU, Enterprise Center & technical training (Board Member Pariser) - None
11. Report on water quality (Board Member Schulman) - None
12. Report on parks and beautification (Acting Chair Miller) - None
13. Report on Affordable Housing (Board Member Kennix) - None

PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

14. Discuss next presentation to Council

Agenda Item was reordered and discussed after Agenda Item 4.

OTHER BUSINESS

NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – February 3, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: *Board Member Dyar moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:26 p.m.; seconded by Board Member Maxson; motion carried unanimously.*