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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 7, 2021, at 2:06 p.m. Present were: Orié Lee Ford, Chair, presiding, and Regular Board Members, Jerome Miller, John L. Kakatsch, Roy Kennix, Sharon Schulman, and Alternate Board Member Duane Dyar. Also present were: Steven Belden, Community Development Director; Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator; Grant Alley, City Attorney; Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk; and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Vice Chair Dennis Landfried, Regular Board Member Ken Pariser, and Alternate Board Member Nannette Maxson.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ford called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG AND ROLL CALL

Chair Ford led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and roll call was taken by Recording Specialist Myers.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

REGULAR ITEMS

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Board Member Kakatsch moved to re-nominate Chair Ford as Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Board. Chair Ford asked for clarity regarding Municode Division 4.5, Section 2-146 (a): The chair and Vice Chair may serve for two consecutive years, at which time a new chair and Vice Chair must be elected. He inquired if that means that the person who served in those positions for the previous two years cannot be re-elected to serve an additional two years.

City Attorney Alley stated that the years are consecutive and after completing a second term that person could not serve in that capacity and the floor is opened for nominations. Chair Ford questioned that if someone served two years they cannot serve a third year even if they are nominated and City Attorney replied that is right and that person could serve the fourth year as it is not consecutive. Board Member Dyar stated that it is two years on one year off.

City Clerk Carlisle stated that Chair Ford was elected Chair in 2017, however, she will obtain the exact dates he was elected and re-elected. City Attorney Alley stated that if Chair Ford has served two consecutive years the floor should be opened for chair and vice chair at this time, or if the Board prefers, he can research it and bring it back to the next meeting. Board Member Miller suggested research it and bringing it back to the next meeting as there are several board members absent at this meeting. Chair Ford mentioned that projects take time in economic development and if leadership changes in the middle, things can get put off, denied or delayed unnecessarily. Board Member Schulman noted that an option may be that the Chair serve as Vice Chair for a year and be considered as Chair, if nominated, the

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following year. City Attorney Alley stated that he needs to know when Chair Ford was first appointed and determine if it has been 24 months consecutively.

MOTION: Board Member Dyar moved to postpone the election of Chair and Vice Chair to the next meeting so that research can be brought back by the City Attorney and that this meeting should continue as normal; seconded by Board Member Miller; motion carried unanimously.

2. Approve Minutes of the December 3, 2020 Economic Development Advisory Board Meeting

MOTION: Board Member Kakatsch moved to approve the Minutes of the December 3, 2020 Economic Development Advisory Board Meeting; seconded by Board Member Dyar; motion carried unanimously.

3. Final determination of priority projects list to be presented to Council on January 19, 2021

City Clerk Carlisle stated that City Council approved an accelerated Agenda timeline and asked the Board if they are ready to bring this item forward on the January 19, 2021 Council Agenda as today is the deadline. She noted that the next Council meetings are on February 1st and February 16th. Chair Ford mentioned that this Board's next meeting is February 4th. City Clerk Carlisle stated that the Board would need to finalize the focus list today to have it on the February 1st Council meeting. Board Member Miller stated that it could be on the February 16th Council meeting so that the Board can meet prior to the Council Meeting.

Board Member Miller provided an updated list of the focus areas and Chair Ford opened the floor for discussion. Board Member Schulman felt that the updated list represents the Board's discussions. Board Member Miller noted that the first item on the focus list is the Disadvantaged Business Ordinance. He provided a copy of the City Manager's Item from the December 7, 2020 Council Meeting Agenda regarding the Minority Business Enterprises (MBE) Ordinance. Board Member Miller noted that the third item on the focus list is Corridor Planning and Beautification and asked if there will be another draft phase of Florida International University (FIU) Competitive Assessment.

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, stated that FIU was holding community stake holder meetings which will be followed by a release of another Competitive Assessment; meetings will follow to discuss how to proceed. Ms. Carr noted that she obtained and is reviewing former plans for her own information in order to compare them to the FIU Assessment, identify completed projects, and identify uncompleted projects. Board Member Miller mentioned that reviewing the previous plans such as the Dover Kohl Plan, East Fort Myers Plan, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) Plan, Gardner's Park Plan, and Cleveland Avenue Plan could nudge implementation of the plans. Ms. Carr noted that the FIU plan will decide what projects can be implemented now and a master plan will be created to ensure all needs of the City are met and the plan succeeds. Board Member Miller noted that there is a consultant looking at additional recreational and sports facilities that this Board should review as they tie into the FIU plan. Chair Ford asked if FIU reviewed the previous plans and Board Member Miller replied yes. Ms. Carr stated that she will follow-up to ensure the previous plans are included in the FIU report. Ms. Carr reported that she has been researching computer software that can quantify information to provide data for decision making although cost is a factor.

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Board Member Kennix arrived at the meeting at 2:26 p.m.

Board Member Miller asked whether focus area Item No. 1, Disadvantaged Business Ordinance, is crystalized. Chair Ford stated that the Minority-owned (MBE), Woman-owned (WBE), and Veteran-owned (VBE) Business Enterprises are state ordained programs and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program is a federal ordained program, therefore, the City must be mindful of the states and/or federal programs which cannot all be put into one program. Board Member Miller asked if Chair Ford is still working with the City Manager on this issue and Chair Ford replied yes and that he is waiting to be contacted by the City Manager. Board Member Kakatsch noted that the City Manager is going to change. Chair Ford stated that it will not prevent City Manager Kazemi from working on this item until his retirement in May, 2021. Board Member Miller stated that the work does not just entail the ordinances it also includes the implementation of the program and having staff available to run the program. Board Member Kennix noted that this is a very important program for economic development and the creation of jobs. He felt that there should be staff in place to make the program effective and the businesses need to be eligible to receive incentives. Board Member Miller stated that the program should involve education, the certification process, and local contractor coordination. Board Member Kennix noted that there should be some level of technical assistance provided to the businesses as well. Board Member Miller suggested that the recommendation to Council should emphasize these important points. Board Member Kennix suggested that when the projects using City funds are brought to Council for approval the contractor should reference the MBE/DBE commitment and compliance. Chair Ford conveyed that this issue is being discussed at this time because it is not currently being practiced or enforced in the City. Board Member Miller noted that the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has recently incorporated it into their grading system. Chair Ford noted that when there is an active program and a new ordinance is in place there will be a process when the bids are received that the contract is read publicly stating the DBE goal, listing the DBEs with the dollar value, and documents will be attached for verification. Board Member Miller noted that listed under Item No. 1 there is Local Business Incentives and asked if there is a way that can require non-city funded private developers to be required to hire within the City. Chair Ford mentioned that if a project is City funded, the City can give preference to City of Fort Myers businesses. Board Member Kennix conveyed that it would be the responsibility of the staff running the program together with the Business Enterprise Center to have proactive outreach and find businesses to get certified or help people start enterprise businesses.

Steven Belden, Community Development Director, arrived at the meeting at 2:37 p.m.

Board Member Dyar asked if the focus list is in priority order and Board Member Miller replied that it is not and the Board can discuss prioritization. Board Member Dyar noted that the listed items are all important and suggested considering a Return on Investment (ROI) for each item such as if someone is hired to run a program what would be that investment. He recommended even coming back afterwards to outline what was spent and what was generated from hard costs and soft costs to know whether the investment was successful. Board Member Miller noted that most of the items on the list are City projects underway and the Board is only making recommendations. Board Member Dyar stated that the prioritization of the projects could be what items have the potential to generate the most revenue for the City or by determining what result the Board is trying to achieve. Board Member Dyar felt that there should be more parks, recreation, and bike paths, however, at the end of the day, if money is spent there must be an ROI whether its hard dollars or happy people and that if

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the Board does not know what its tracking then how does it know or the Council know if its recommendations were successful. Board Member Miller mentioned that Midtown is aimed at being high-tech, however to target those type of companies there will be marketing costs involved. Board Member Kennix suggested (1) Disadvantaged Business Ordinance (2) COVID-19 Update Review for Economic Recovery (3) Affordable/Attainable Housing (4) Corridor Planning and Beautification (5) Fort Myers Economic Development Office (6) Parks and Recreation. Board Member Miller stated that the Fort Myers Economic Development Office could be removed from the list as it is the job of Ms. Carr and Mr. Belden. Chair Ford felt that the City needs a fully staffed City of Fort Myers Economic Development Office (EDO) to facilitate projects and the DBE program. Board Member Kennix felt that the DBE program would be its own separate department and would not be merged into the EDO. Chair Ford felt that the DBE Program is an economic development tool and could be within the EDO.

Mr. Belden felt that the Board would take the lead on the Disadvantaged Business Ordinance and the COVID-19 Update Review for Economic Recovery and the Board would take a supportive role on the Parks and Recreation and Affordable/Attainable Housing as there are other lead agencies or boards for those areas. Chair Ford stated that the Board wants to review all major development projects before they go out and at that time, if they notice something pertaining to those areas, they will make recommendations to those boards or lead agency. Board Member Miller noted that the focus areas can be presented to Council as the Board taking a lead or supportive role. Board Member Kennix mentioned that there will always be overlap. Chair Ford noted that everything falls under economic development and the Board should look at things at a broad level. He mentioned taking part in a five county state grant with Southwest Regional Planning Council through the Southwest Florida Impact Partners to find out the impacts of COVID-19 on black-owned businesses.

City Attorney Alley left the meeting at 2:56 p.m.

Board Member Miller recommended changing the Focus Area listed priority order of (1) Disadvantaged Business Ordinance (2) COVID-19 Update Review for Economic Recovery (3) Affordable/Attainable Housing (4) Corridor Planning and Beautification (5) Parks and Recreation (6) Fort Myers Economic Development Office and remove everything written underneath the Item No. 6. Chair Ford noted that Parks and Recreation and Corridor Planning and Beautification as a supportive role. Board Member Schulman felt that at this time Item No. 2 COVID-19 Update Review for Economic Recovery should be moved to Item No. 1 slot and the Board agreed.

MOTION: Board Member Miller moved to change the Focus Area listed priority order to (1) COVID-19 Update Review for Economic Recovery (2) Disadvantaged Business Ordinance (3) Affordable/Attainable Housing (4) Corridor Planning and Beautification (5) Parks and Recreation (6) Fort Myers Economic Development Office; and noted that (4) Corridor Planning and Beautification and (5) Parks and Recreation are priority support areas; seconded by Board Member Schulman; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ford asked what the City is doing concerning COVID-19. Mr. Belden stated that the City received CARES Act funds that are used for several programs such as business assistance, emergency assistance, and rental assistance. Chair Ford asked how much of the CARES Act funds have gone to small businesses and rental assistance. Mr. Belden replied that he will provide that information at the next meeting. Chair Ford asked if the City is proactively involved in providing vaccination sites in the City. Mr. Belden noted that effort is

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led by the Lee County Department of Health who indicate to the City the locations and the City assists them with coordination and the logistics at the sites.

Board Member Schulman asked what the City is doing to support businesses with education or other needs and making them aware of resources such as the Enterprise Center or SCORE services. She suggested that the Board focus on this effort by defining either a task force or another way to determine the education or resources needed by small or large businesses and provide a package that will help. Chair Ford stated that the Enterprise Center is the City facility that is to assist businesses and providing those services. Mr. Belden stated that the Small Business Administration (SBA) at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is a fantastic resource to help small businesses. He mentioned that originally the Enterprise Center was a business incubator and is now providing specialized job training to individuals for good paying jobs. Chair Ford felt that Enterprise Center should be responsible for DBE/MBE program as they were in the past. Board Member Miller recommended that the Board make those suggestions. Board Member Schulman recommended that the Board put together a package of resources for small business and ways to communicate that information.

REPORTS

4. Community Development Department Director's Report

Mr. Belden reported that the City has been coordinating with the Health Department to provide vaccination testing locations in the City and the logistics should be better now that there is a reservation system. Board Member Kennix stated that even with the reservation system, the supply is limited.

5. Business and Economic Development Administrator's Report

Ms. Carr felt that to get support behind an economic development plan it helps to have data to analyze and make decisions, therefore, software platforms that gather information could be a solution to identify City needs and provide support. Ms. Carr outlined three software platforms: (1) An application where the public would put in their need and an organization or agency that can help with that need would reach out to service that person. If the Board is interested, she can request this company give a presentation at one of the meetings; (2) A software program where the City creates surveys to put on the website to gather information; (3) A software platform that gathers data such as foot traffic, pedestrian traffic, and bicycle traffic, which could provide public support, draw in businesses, or identify needs. Ms. Carr stated that software platforms have costs and asked the Board for their input regarding their interest in pursuing these types of software. Ms. Carr reported that during her business visits she toured District Cooling Systems who provide HVAC services underground thus eliminating a large roof top HVAC systems. She noted that they are willing to give a presentation to the Board as to how they have worked with private partnerships, public partnerships, and community districts. Ms. Carr stated that when the City owns land it most likely will be able to move forward with a plan. She noted that the City owns the property in Midtown which is an opportunity to create business revenue in addition to other items in that area. She asked if there is anything the Board would like her to do.

Board Member Kennix stated that a problem facing micro, small, or expanding business is access to alternative forms of capital such as Community Development Finance Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund) fund as opposed to traditional banks. He suggested that the City

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collaborate with another entities to create a CDFI type fund to be used as a source of equity type capital available to small business and start-up businesses. He noted that he can provide information on other communities that have established these types of funds or old materials as he had a certified CDFI in the past. Ms. Carr stated that a CDFI fund was created for the area and agreed that the banks need to be encouraged to get behind the redevelopment in areas as well. She noted that she will extend her research to the financial part. Mr. Belden stated that the City is partnering with Goodwill on a Micro Business Program where individuals that go through that program successfully will receive a grant from the City to start-up a business. Board Member Kennix stated that new legislation in the House has put its finger on the need to create alternative sources of funding that offer venture type capital as a priority and that the CDFI is coming back. He felt that Ms. Carr is in a key position to look at the new funds for business expansions or start-ups and he can become a vanguard for the community.

(Continued) 4. Community Development Department Director's Report

Mr. Belden stated that FIU has requested a 90 day extension for the Economic Development Strategy Final Report. He highlighted having a kick off meeting, possibly at the Collaboratory, with all of the interested entities to discuss the implementation of the study so that everyone will be headed towards the same direction.

BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS - None

CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

6. Chair's Report - None

7. Next Meeting – February 4, 2021

ADJOURNMENT: *There being no further business, it was moved by Board Member Kakatsch; seconded by Board Member Miller; and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:32 p.m.*