

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

1 | Page

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, February 3, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. Present were: Chair Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair Jerome Miller, and Regular Board Members Ori Lee Ford (Arrived at 3:31 p.m.), John Kakatsch, Sharon Schulman, and Ken Pariser and Alternate Board Member Nannette Maxson (Arrived at 2:25 p.m.). Also present were: Grant Alley, City Attorney, Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, Steven Belden, Community Development Director, and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Board Member Roy Kennix and Alternate Board Member Duane Dyar.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Landfried called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Landfried led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

### **PRESENTATIONS**

1. Discuss the possibility of instituting an internship program with universities or colleges  
*Marvlyn Scott, Human Resource Director*

Marvlyn Scott, Human Resource Director, gave a brief overview of the City's Internship Program.

Vice Chair Miller asked about the City's outreach efforts to market the Internship program. Ms. Scott replied that they wait for interns to seek them, and they have not outreached to have a direct relationship with the Universities and suggested that they begin reviewing that opportunity. Vice Chair Miller stated that he will provide the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) contact information for their Internship Availability List where the City could advertise their internship program. Chair Landfried asked if there are other things that the Board could do to help spur more internship activity. Ms. Scott recommended outreach.

City Attorney Alley stated that the City Attorney's office has a connection with Ava Maria Law School and University of Florida. He noted that their office has had law students, college students, and high school student interns. Councilperson Bochette advised that WINK News reached out to him because they have had more interns apply than they can use and offered the internships to the City as they are primarily looking for experience, credit, and a letter of recommendation. He noted that he will provide that information to the Human Resources Director.

2. Updates on: (1) FDOT maintenance program for US 41 bridge area; (2) Timetable for John Yarborough Linear Trail  
*Nicole Monahan, City Engineer*

Nicole Monahan, City Engineer, reported that the City reached out to Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to inquire about their maintenance program addressing cleaning and

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

2 | Page

maintaining bridge walls or parapets. She was advised that they have a preventative progress program of bridge inspections related to structural repair and maintenance, but it does not address aesthetics. She was advised by FDOT that they recognize that bridge barriers collect mildew and tire marks over time, and they have tried several attempts at spraying and cleaning a bleaching solution and unfortunately, the results were unremarkable. Ms. Monahan asked FDOT if painting or public art murals could be an option and they replied that painting one color requires a General Use Permit, and a painting of public art murals requires a Community Aesthetic Features Agreement with review.

Board Member Kakatsch stated that the Fort Myers Beach bridge is painted a solid color and to get it repainted is an ordeal, and then when it is finally repainted, it is done in spots and the colors do not match. Ms. Monahan stated that once the commitment is made to paint the bridge, the FDOT will hold the City to a continuous maintenance responsibility. Vice Chair Miller inquired if the US 41 Bridge may be getting an extension for a multi-modal path. Ms. Monahan replied that FDOT is looking at possibly adding a pedestrian sidewalk on the side of the US 41 Bridge in the interim before the entire bridge needs to be replaced which may be 10-15 years.

Councilperson Bochette advised that the first Joint Committee Chairs Meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2022 at the Collaboratory to trade information.

*Board Member Maxson arrived 2:25 p.m.*

Ms. Monahan reported that the City received funding from the FDOT Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Program for the design of the John Yarborough Linear Trail which will include a pedestrian overpass over Colonial Boulevard. The design plan is being worked on at this time, however, the funding for the construction is not available until July 1, 2025 from FDOT.

3. Update on Southward Village and the Choice Neighborhood Grant.  
*Marcia Davis, Executive Director, City of Fort Myers Housing Authority*

Marcia Davis, Executive Director, City of Fort Myers Housing Authority, explained that the City and the Housing Authority partnered and was awarded a \$30 million Choice Neighborhood Program grant wherein they leveraged that into \$360 million to redevelop the Southward Village community. She gave a brief overview of the housing, services, and neighborhood plan and noted that the link to a video outlining the initiative is on their website. Discussion ensued regarding the housing units, commercial section, and neighborhood improvements.

### **OATH OF OFFICE**

4. Ken Pariser (Ward 5)

City Clerk Carlisle administered the Oath of Office to reappoint Ken Pariser for a term effective until January 17, 2025.

5. Dennis Landfried (Ward 4)

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

3 | Page

City Clerk Carlisle administered the Oath of Office to reappoint Dennis Landfried for a term effective until January 30, 2025.

### **ELECTION**

#### 6. Election of Chair and Acting Chair

Chair Landfried opened the floor for nominations for Chair. Board Member Kakatsch nominated Board Member Pariser. Board Member Schulman nominated Chair Landfried. Board Member Pariser stated that he would like to pass on the nomination.

***MOTION: Board Member Schulman moved to elect Dennis Landfried as Chair; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.***

Chair Landfried opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Board Member Kakatsch nominated Board Member Pariser. Board Member Pariser nominated Vice Chair Miller. Chair Landfried asked for a show of hands of who is in favor of electing Board Member Pariser and who was in favor of electing Vice Chair Miller.

***MOTION: Chair Landfried moved to elect Jerry Miller as Vice Chair; seconded by Board Member Pariser; motion carried unanimously.***

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### 7. Approve Minutes of the January 6, 2022 Meeting

***MOTION: Board Member Miller moved to approve the Minutes of the January 6, 2022 Regular Meeting; seconded by Board Member Maxson; motion carried unanimously.***

### **STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS**

#### 8. Business and Economic Development Administrator's Report

##### a. Update on creating a tech corridor marketing plan

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, reported that she has been researching the best way to create a tech corridor marketing plan. One idea is that the Site Selectors Guild has an Advisory Forum that will tour a community to evaluate the business climate and give what the City would attract for business investments. She has had meetings with data center developers to learn why it is important for businesses to have access to data centers and how it attracts businesses to an area.

Vice Chair Miller inquired if the CenturyLink building Downtown could be leased. She noted that she has previously talked with the leasing broker for the CenturyLink building, and she will follow up with him again to see if that could be a location for a data center. Vice Chair Miller mentioned that Midtown has better fiber infrastructure than other areas. Ms. Carr noted that she reached out to Florida Power and Light (FPL) about the electrical capacity and the ability to add to the substation and FPL replied that is an option within that area.

Ms. Carr mentioned that the development located on Luckett Road near I-75 is being advertised as "Southwest Florida's Newest Industrial Development" to be completed Spring

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

4 | Page

2023. She noted that Enterprise Florida is looking for businesses interested in serving on their Education Strategy Focus Group and she asked the Board Members to provide her with the names of any businesses that they think would be interested in serving so she can forward it along to them. Ms. Carr advised that the Florida Economic Development Week is February 7-11, 2022. Board Member Pariser inquired if she will be going to the Florida Economic Development Week and Ms. Carr replied no. Vice Chair Miller inquired if the funding budgeted for the Board to attend conferences will be lost if it is not used and Ms. Carr replied that she was unsure. Chair Landfried stated that he and Ms. Carr worked on a list of potential conferences for the Board to attend that he will bring it to the next meeting.

Ms. Carr stated that she received a bid for video droning to create a marketing video which was approximately \$23,000.00. Vice Chair Miller offered donating his time to video drone for the City. City Clerk Carlisle mentioned that the Police Department produced their own video in the past and used in-house resources which could be something the Board could consider. Ms. Carr advised that she has been asked to be involved in the Yacht Basin Request for Proposal (RFP) review. She also discussed with a Babcock Ranch associate the plans for their property along the Caloosahatchee River and asked that they consider ways to collaborate with the Yacht Basin to create connectivity. Vice Chair Miller questioned whether a water taxi is still a consideration and Ms. Carr replied that she can reach out.

Chair Landfried asked if there is anything that the Board should be exploring relative to the growth of the City. Ms. Carr felt that there is a need to attract businesses, create the infrastructure to support the businesses, and find ways to improve the businesses that are already here.

### 9. Community Development Department Director's Report

#### a. Monthly Development Activity Report

Steven Belden, Community Development Director, reported that in December 2021, there was \$44 million in permits issued over \$25,000.00; wherein \$36 million of the permits were in Ward 6. In January 2022, there was \$63 million in permits issued over \$25,000.00; wherein the majority was in Ward 6 and Ward 4.

Board Member Kakatsch asked if there is infrastructure in place to support all the development. Mr. Belden replied that infrastructure and capacity is in place despite the recent challenges with the water infrastructure. Discussion ensued regarding the water and sewer infrastructure system. Board Member Kakatsch proposed considering the use of the Imaginarium Water Tower. Mr. Belden replied that he will pass along the suggestion of putting the water tower back in use.

Mr. Belden reported that the City is going to be entering into a contract with Florida International University (FIU) and bringing onboard interested parties to begin the implementation of the Corridor Study. When the process gets started, he will bring FIU to the Board for input on implementation ideas.

Board Member Kakatsch asked if Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be putting in middle medians on Cleveland Avenue. Mr. Belden replied that the City requested FDOT to add middle medians, however, they advised that they are not installing middle medians. Discussion ensued regarding safety on the roadways. Councilperson Bochette suggest that

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

5 | Page

this Board recommend to the Council a police enforcement focus on roadway safety. Chair Landfried asked for an update on what will happen to the empty Lee Memorial building on Cleveland Avenue once they move to their new location. Mr. Belden replied that he has not heard any news yet.

*Board Member Ford arrived at 3:31 p.m.*

Vice Chair Miller noted his concern about the new flood maps coming out changing some of the Downtown area to VE-11 which may affect development potential. He inquired if there is anything this Board could do to oppose that change. Mr. Belden replied that once the maps are published, there is a process to request a map revision. He stated that the City did go through the appeal process initially by hiring a consultant to submit a study and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rejected the study and advised the City that they can request a map revision after the maps are published.

Board Member Kakatsch asked for an update on the City of Palms Park baseball stadium. Mr. Belden replied that the Council is still determining how it wants to move forward although the infrastructure must be done either way. Board Member Kakatsch inquired about the progress to annex the property off Cleveland Avenue. Ms. Belden replied that they have began the annexation process with the County for the Maravilla enclave and he is expecting that to be finalized before the end of this year. Board Member Kakatsch asked if there is interest on the north side of the Caloosahatchee River to be annexed into the City. Mr. Belden replied that the City is always looking at opportunities for annexation and noted that the City just annexed 62 parcels of property at Treeline Avenue and Daniels Parkway.

Chair Landfried inquired if the funds the Board was budgeted for conferences is still available and how much. Mr. Belden replied that he will check with the Finance Department to see if the funding is available. Vice Chair Miller asked if there has been progress with the Naples Botanical Garden. Councilperson Bochette stated that the contract has been signed and the City's Public Communications Manager is scheduling a media announcement along with the Naples Botanical Garden. He felt that this Board could help bring businesses to the community particularly the health industry and raising the education level of the citizens. Councilperson Bochette advised that he is on the Governor's Board for Economic Development and extended an invitation for a Board Member to go with him to the next meeting wherein he will advise the Board when that is scheduled.

### **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

10. Board Member suggestions to Staff for changes to the MLK Overlay District Ordinance (Board Member Ford)

Board Member Ford asked that this item be tabled.

### **BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS**

11. Report on MLK Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Maxson) – None

12. Report on Palm Beach Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Kakatsch) - None

13. Report on US 41 Corridor (Board Member Dyar) - None

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

6 | Page

14. Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (Board Member Ford) - None
15. Report on business development/education assistance with FGCU, Enterprise Center & technical training (Board Member Pariser) - None
16. Report on water quality (Board Member Schulman)

Vice Chair Miller reported that the Council agreed to piggyback on the County Fertilizer Ordinance and discussed educational marketing to the City residents through the utility bills. He suggested that the Board review the current County Fertilizer Ordinance and come up with suggestions for educational information. Board Member Schulman felt that the City would want it written in a certain way which would require the Public Communications Manager to condense it, and noted in her experience, the fliers in the utilities bills are rarely read.

17. Report on parks and beautification (Vice Chair Miller) - None
18. Report on Affordable Housing (Board Member Kennix)

Board Member Ford stated that the affordable housing issue of rental increases needs to be addressed by the Board to find answers. He noted that the waiting list at Housing Authority is maxed out and no others are being added.

Board Member Maxson suggested an Ordinance to cap yearly rental increases to control steep rises. Board Member Kakatsch stated that he owns rental properties and explained the issues landlords are facing are increases in insurance, taxes, and renters continually destroy and steal from the properties. He suggested that the City become a partner with the rental community because they can support the maintenance with its tax base, as an individual landlord cannot sustain the increases wherein their only alternative is raising the rents. Board Member Ford stated that a public/private partnership could maintain affordability. Vice Chair Miller conveyed that new developments could provide multi-income properties. Board Member Ford stated that the developers have a percentage of units maintained at different levels of rental amounts depending on the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) received for that project, but they are only held at that amount for a certain amount of time and then it gets converted to the open market. The key is to maintain a level of affordability to the working class because businesses cannot afford to pay wages needed to afford the rental payment.

Mr. Belden reported that Council adopted the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Ordinance that addresses homeownership and rental assistance, however, the biggest challenge now is funding the Ordinance. He noted that the City currently has a Local Affordable Housing Advisory Committee whose primary focus is to address the funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Programs, however, he is going to get their input regarding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Board Member Ford felt that to coordinate a quick plan of action, the primary people in the industry need to get together. Mr. Belden noted that he will reach out to those people to get further input.

## **MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

February 3, 2022

7 | Page

Vice Chair Miller suggested that the City create an Affordable Housing Master Plan created by the stakeholders in the community similar to what Miami has. Mr. Belden noted that the Council's focus for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is 100% Area Median Income (AMI) and below with the majority of that going to 85% and below for homeownership or rental assistance. The focus for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund is on implementation, funding, and sustainability. Chair Landfried recommended the Board suggest ideas to help with this issue. Board Member Ford requested that the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Ordinance be provided to the Board and added to the agenda next month.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Board Member Maxson presented to the Board information on the BCycle System in which she recommended bringing to Downtown and Midtown. Chair Landfried suggested adding it to the recommendations to Council and the Board agreed.

Vice Chair Miller suggested removing the list of Board Member Focus areas off the agenda until a Board Member has a report to present. Chair Landfried replied that he would like to leave them on the agenda due to their importance.

### **PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL**

19. Discuss next presentation to Council

Chair Landfried requested that the Board Members bring forward ideas at the next meeting to discuss as a body potential recommendations to Council. Vice Chair Miller suggested picking a date in April to address Council. Chair Landfried felt that the Board can aim for April, however, it depends on the number of recommendations the Board has to present to Council.

### **NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – March 3, 2022**

**ADJOURNMENT: Board Member Kakatsch moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:19 p.m.; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.**