

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 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, March 3, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. Present were: Chair Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair Jerome Miller, and Regular Board Members Ori Lee Ford, John Kakatsch (Exited at 4:08 p.m.), Roy Kennix (Arrived at 2:42 p.m. and exited at 3:58 p.m.), Sharon Schulman, and Ken Pariser (Arrived at 2:05 p.m.) and Alternate Board Member Duane Dyar (Arrived at 2:04 p.m. and exited at 4:04 p.m.). Also present were: Grant Alley, City Attorney (Exited at 3:24 p.m.), Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, Steven Belden, Community Development Director, Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk, and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Alternate Board Member Nannette Maxson

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

Board Member Kakatsch stated that the Council needs to be aware that Larchmont Avenue adjacent to the Edison Ford Estate is in terrible shape and needs to be resurfaced as soon as possible.

Steven Belden, Community Development Director, advised that the reason that Larchmont Avenue has not been resurfaced is due to the Edison Ford Estate Master Plan vacating it for development.

1. **PRESENTATIONS** - None

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: *Board Member Kakatsch moved to approve the Minutes of the February 3, 2022 Regular Meeting; seconded by Board Member Pariser; motion carried unanimously.*

3. STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS

- Business and Economic Development Administrator's Report

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, reported that at the recent Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting she learned of funding opportunities related to carbon reduction and micro-mobility/bicycles/pedestrians paths that the City can try to secure.

Vice Chair Miller inquired about a mobility test pilot project in the City. City Attorney Alley stated that the test project is for charging areas for e-bikes, smart bikes, scooters, golf carts,

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 3, 2022

2 | Page

etc. and the City is in the process of determining the appropriate area and engineering dynamics.

Ms. Carr reported that Lee Tran has a “Mobility on Demand” link on the Uber App allowing citizens to request a pickup for the cost of \$1.50. She advised of an upcoming Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Speed Management Workshop to discuss traffic calming methods and reducing roadway fatalities. Ms. Carr reported that Jacobs Engineering purchased the StreetLight data software which provides data to measure vehicle, transit, bike and foot traffic anywhere and she reached out to them to get additional information on how they are going to utilize that platform. She stated that she is in the process of gathering information to create a collection of what businesses are in the area which will also show the business gaps. Ms. Carr reported that she recently toured Charlotte County with the CareerSource Ad Hoc Committee to help understand the region around Fort Myers. She showed a power point presentation that she prepared to address a commercial real estate group regarding site readiness and housing. Ms. Carr advised that on March 23, 2022, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is sponsoring a supply chain forum with the topics addressing management of supply chain disruptions.

Board Member Ford stated that rental housing overcharges started in March 2022 and requested that the Board find some solutions. He asked Ms. Carr if she could provide a color map with available land use sites in the corridors. Vice Chair Miller suggested Ms. Carr coordinate with the City’s Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division to help create a geographic data map. Chair Landfried conveyed that the City hired an employee for marketing and requested that she be invited to a meeting to discuss her ideas. Ms. Carr replied that her name is Liz Bello-Matthews, Public Communications Manager. Vice Chair Miller inquired how the City can be proactive with site selection information and discussion ensued.

- Community Development Department Director’s Report

o Monthly Development Activity Report

Steven Belden, Community Development Director, reported that building permits over \$25,000.00 for February 2022 was approximately \$45 million and the majority was for residential projects in Ward 6 and Ward 2. He stated that the Board of Adjustments approved a 1.4 million square foot warehouse distribution facility on State Road 82 with a goal to be operable in approximately 2 years which will create thousands of jobs. Chair Landfried inquired how that company found out about the site. Ms. Belden replied that the company did their own due diligence and found the site themselves. Board Member Ford stated that the area around the warehouse distribution facility will need to develop services to support that network. Chair Landfried inquired if the City could work with the company on affordable housing and Mr. Belden replied yes and they will have that conversation with them.

Mr. Belden reported that the recent water system flow challenges in the City are being resolved with short-term and long-term resolutions, however, some citizens are advocating to stop all development in the City due to the recent water challenges. He requested that the Board help communicate accurate information to limit the spread of misinformation or a misunderstanding of information. Board Member Schulman asked the Board to consider recommending to the Council that they hire an outside operational consultant to identify how the water can be managed better. Chair Landfried suggested that the Board create an

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 3, 2022

3 | Page

education document with the City's short-term and long-term resolutions. Discussion ensued regarding water issues.

Board Member Pariser suggested the Board come up with innovative incentives that will encourage building contractors to invest in affordable housing. Vice Chair Miller agreed and noted that at the recent CRA workshop incentives were addressed.

Board Member Dyar suggested reevaluating the Board's priorities and focus areas. Each Board Member can review their respective areas and decide whether to continue working on that area or move onto something else. Vice Chair Miller agreed that the focus areas could be consolidated or eliminated, and the Board could focus more on a few issues. Chair Landfried requested that Board Members review their focus areas and bring their suggestions to the next meeting.

Vice Chair Miller requested an update on the Florida International University (FIU) Corridor Study. Ms. Belden replied that the City is in the process of contracting with FIU for their support to implement the Study.

City Attorney Alley left the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

- Affordable Housing Trust Fund Ordinance

Mr. Belden gave a brief overview of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Ordinance. Board Member Pariser asked if there is an anticipated projection of the tax benefits to the City. Mr. Belden replied that an analysis has not been done, however, it could be done and discussion ensued.

Board Member Ford asked for an update on the workforce and business development activities at the Enterprise Center. City Clerk Carlisle noted that the Board could add to the agenda an item for an update from the Assistant Director of Community Redevelopment Agency and the Board agreed and Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency agreed.

ADDITIONAL ITEM

Phyllis Calloway, Assistant Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), announced the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center is rolling out their enhanced incubator program on March 15, 2022 in which they will have 41 participates. The Enterprise Center has interviewed 28 tenant partners and plan to be at full capacity by April 1, 2022. They are continuing with their Business-to-Business lunches, the SCORE Program, Train-to-Gain Program, and are collaborating with other community organizations.

Board Member Kennix inquired about the status of McCollum Hall. Ms. Calloway replied that the CRA Advisory Board recommended that the McCollum Hall Request for Proposals (RFP) go back to the CRA Commissioners to determine when to send it out. Vice Chair Miller inquired about setting up a tour of the Enterprise Center for the Board. Ms. Calloway suggested having a Board meeting at the Enterprise Center in its new training room and the Board agreed to schedule their May meeting at the Enterprise Center.

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 3, 2022

4 | Page

4. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

- Discuss next presentation to Council

Chair Landfried stated that the Board's tentative list of recommendations to Council are: (1) To fully support and endorse the Black Cultural Center, and (2) to promote the BCycle System. He asked each Board Member if there is anything they wanted to add.

Chair Landfried noted that the City Council has an Agenda Item at their March 7, 2022 meeting regarding the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Programs. Board Member Ford conveyed that he is working on the MBE and DBE Programs along with the Lee County Horizon Council's Inclusion and Diversity Committee and is in the process of coordinating a meeting with the Florida Office of Supplier Diversity to gather information.

Board Member Kakatsch suggested adding on the list of recommendations to Council the need for grocery stores in the areas of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Palm Beach Boulevard, and Cleveland Avenue. He inquired about the status of the vacant Sears Store at the Edison Mall as that could be a good location for a Walmart or Target store. Chair Landfried mentioned that he was advised by Councilperson Burson that he is communicating with Edison Mall management about that space and that it is a priority. Board Member Kakatsch suggested that the Board encourage the Council to make filling that space be a priority. Vice Chair Miller requested that grocery/retail opportunities in the corridors and an update on the Sears space at the Edison Mall be put on the agenda at the next meeting. Chair Landfried requested the Community Development Director address both issues at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Miller requested to add to the Council presentation a parks and recreation update so he can briefly highlight progress on some projects. Board Member Ford suggested getting the endorsement of other City Board's that have an interest parks and recreation prior to presenting the update to Council. Vice Chair Miller suggested that the Board should reach out to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board prior to making a recommendation to Council for the BCycle System as well. Chair Landfried noted that a meeting was scheduled for the Chairs of each Board to discuss overlapping issues, however, it was cancelled due to not enough interest from the Chairs of the Boards. He spoke to the Mayor about the importance of the Chairs collaborating and the Mayor stated that he will reach out to encourage the importance of participation.

Board Member Kennix left the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Board Member Schulman requested to add to the list of recommendations to Council that they contract with a water utility operations expert, not an engineering firm, to review what is happening with the City's water utility and how it can be improved immediately. Vice Chair Miller requested bringing forward the report done by the outside consultant, that was done for the City, as well as, other factual information to the next Board meeting.

Board Member Dyar left the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

City Clerk Carlisle advised that at the February 22, 2022 Council Meeting they discussed the draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire an operational consultant for a performance audit of the entire City as well as a timeline. Chair Landfried asked if the draft RFP for the audit and

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 3, 2022

5 | Page

its timeline can be provided to the Board. He asked that the Public Works Director or a staff member be invited to the April Board meeting to provide an update on the water issue facts. Vice Chair Miller suggested that with the factual water information from Staff the Board could come up with a deliverable product for the public.

Chair Landfried requested to add to the list of recommendations to Council an item that the Board brought up previously to Council regarding electronic signage in the gateways entering the City of Fort Myers like the one at the Alliance for the Arts. After the Board's recommendation, Council approved and budgeted for the signage, however, none of the signs have been implemented and he would like to bring it back up to Council the importance of implementing the signage. He also requested to add the US 41 bridge clean up as a recommendation to Council.

Chair Landfried suggested the Board finalize its list of recommendations to Council at the April meeting so that they can present them to Council at their meeting on May 2, 2022.

Board Member Pariser inquired if the Board could request its Council liaison attend the meetings to provide clarity on issues that are brought up during the meeting. Chair Landfried noted that he will contact the Board liaison and request that he attend the meetings. City Clerk Carlisle mentioned that there can be more than one Council liaison for a Board.

Chair Landfried asked if the Environmental Board that will deal with the water issues has been approved by Council yet. City Clerk Carlisle replied that the permission to advertise for the Environmental Advisory Board is on the upcoming City Council May 7, 2022 Meeting Agenda and thereafter it will be scheduled on the City Council Agenda for a public hearing and approval at the March 21, 2022 meeting. Vice Chair Miller recommended that Board Member Schulman become a member of that Board. Board Member Schulman replied that she will discuss becoming a member of the Environmental Advisory Board with Councilwoman Bonk in her Ward.

Chair Landfried requested that if a Board Member has something to present at a meeting, they get their paperwork to the Clerk seven days prior to the meeting so that it can be attached to the agenda for review prior to the meeting.

5. BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

- Report on parks and beautification (Vice Chair Miller) - None
- Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (Board Member Ford) – None
- Board Member suggestions to Staff for changes to the MLK Overlay District Ordinance (Board Member Ford)
- Report on Palm Beach Boulevard corridor (Board Member Kakatsch) - None
- Report on affordable housing (Board Member Kennix) - None
- Report on water quality (Board Member Schulman) - None
- Report on business development/education assistance with FGCU, Enterprise Center and

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 3, 2022

6 | Page

technical training (Board Member Pariser) - None

- Report on MLK Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Maxson) - None
- Report on US 41 Corridor (Board Member Dyar) - None

6. OTHER BUSINESS

7. NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – April 7, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: *Vice Chair Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:21 p.m.; seconded by Board Member Schulman; motion carried unanimously.*