

MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

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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, March 5, 2020, at 2:01 p.m. Present were: Ori Lee Ford, Chair, presiding, Dennis Landfried, Vice Chair, Regular Board Members, Jerome Miller, John L. Kakatsch, Roy Kennix, and Ken Pariser, Alternate Board Member Nannette Maxson. Also present were: Steven Belden, Community Development Director; Phyllis Calloway, Legal Administrator for the City Attorney; Gwen Carlisle, MMC, City Clerk; and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ford called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Gwen Carlisle administered the Oath of Office to new Regular Board Member Jerome Miller.

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

Councilperson Kevin Anderson thanked the Board Members for meeting with him individually to share their economic development views and insights for the City. He encouraged the Board to invite Council Members separately to attend their meetings.

Board Member Miller thanked Councilperson Anderson for attended recent meetings and asked if there is an avenue to suggest that he become the City Council liaison to this Board. Councilperson Anderson noted that at this time the Council is in the process of reviewing Committee assignments. Board Member Kakatsch asked if there is anything active regarding the Coronavirus. Councilperson Anderson stated that the City is encouraging all employees to stay home if they are sick, use hand sanitizers that are displayed, keep the public informed, and everyone to take the right steps. Board Member Kakatsh noted that it is high priority and it will affect the community dramatically if it goes forward in this area. He noted that we rely heavily on the airport as this is a tourist destination and he hopes that government officials are thinking about that. Councilperson Anderson mentioned that between the Cities, County, and the Airport Authority, they are doing what can be done. Board Member Kakatsch recommended that the City Council recommend to the Airport that there is a sanitizer station where people get off the airplanes. Councilperson Anderson noted that he will pass that recommendation along to the City Manager. Board Member Kakatsch mentioned that economic development is dependent on travel activity. Steven Belden, Community Development Director, noted that the Airport Authority is not in the City limits but Staff will follow up with them. Chair Ford stated that he will deliver the Board recommendation to the Airport Authority. Mr. Belden mentioned that additional hand sanitizing dispensers have been distributed throughout the City to different departments and facilities.

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MOTION: Board Member Kakatsch moved to ask the City Manager's Office to ensure that the City is doing everything that it can to reinforce opportunities to sanitize or wash hands and relay to the Port Authority the Board's suggestion to place sanitizer stations at every deport throughout the airport; seconded by Board Member Miller; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ford asked Councilperson Anderson where he sees this committee economically engaging. Councilperson Anderson stated that he would like the Board to focus on development of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (MLK), Palm Beach, and US 41 corridors so that action is taken to accomplish the vision of those corridors. Chair Ford requested that each Council Member be asked to express their opinion on the Board's objective, economic issues in the community, and what they would like to see accomplished, and that they address this question when they attend an EDAB Meeting. He felt that the questions be provided to them at the time of the invitation so they are prepared. Board Member Kennix stated that he supports asking all Council Members to express their expectations, priorities, and direction for this Board. Councilperson Anderson noted that the Board was formed to contribute direction, information, guidance, and suggestions to the City Council and City Manager. Board Member Pariser stated that this Board remains handicapped without having an Economic Development Director. Councilperson Anderson noted that finding the right person for the position is important and challenging. Vice Chair Landfried noted that the Board is striving for more communication with Council and would like more clarity on where each Council Member stands on economic issues.

Councilperson Anderson noted that he met with the Edison Mall Manager and felt confident that the Mall recognizes the changing trends. He mentioned that they are addressing the issues, however, cannot disclose specific plans publically at this time. Councilperson Anderson stated that it is important for the City to support beautification around the Mall to assist in its success. Board Member Kakasch mentioned that he would like this Board's support in urging the Mall to consider a home improvement type store. Councilperson Anderson stated that there is a Home Depot inside the City and Tropical Hardware is a local small business. Board Member Kakatsch stated that Walmart also could be a major employer in the Mall. Councilperson Anderson mentioned that the box stores have their own way of picking the locations of their stores. Board Member Kakatsch noted that Walmart was requesting to build in the area where Krispy Kreme is now, however, the City did not allow it because of traffic issues. He asked the Board to think about asking the City to reconsider that decision. Mr. Belden stated that he will look into it.

Dan O'Berski, Managing Broker, Trinity Commercial Group (TCG) mentioned that he has an upcoming meeting with the Edison Mall personnel and will express the Boards suggestions. He noted that he recently had a meeting with Walmart personnel and was told that they will not be building any new sites in the State of Florida. Mr. O'Berski stated that his company represents Home Depot on site selection, acquisition, and disposition. He mentioned that he will speak with Home Depot personnel to determine whether or not they would consider a site in the old Sears space and will follow up with the Board. Board Member Maxson asked about JC Penney closing. Councilperson Anderson noted that he does not know the financial health of JC Penney but that they do own their building at the Mall. He mentioned that the Mall owners cannot do anything with the Sears building without their approval. Board Member

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Kennix asked who owns the land where the Mall sits. Mr. Belden stated that there are multiple owners of the land. Councilperson Anderson noted that the multiple owners also own portions of the parking lot as well.

OATH OF OFFICE

City Clerk Gwen Carlisle administered the Oath of Office to Regular Board Member Roy Kennix.

REGULAR ITEMS

1. Minutes of the February 6, 2020 Economic Development Advisory Board Meeting

MOTION: Board Member Kakatsch moved to approve the Minutes of the February 6, 2020 Economic Development Advisory Board meeting; seconded by Board Member Miller; motion carried unanimously.

2. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Programs
 - Howard Wheeler, Chris-Tel Construction

Howard Wheeler, President, Chris-Tel Construction, noted that he was asked to discuss diversity and inclusion on construction projects. He listed the different types; Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Women Businesses Enterprises (WBE), and Veterans Business Enterprise (VBE) his company works with. Mr. Wheeler stated that there are four certifying entities that his company works with: the Department of Transportation (DOT), Office of Supplier Diversity (OSD), Housing Authority, Port Authority and the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Small Business Development Center. Mr. Wheeler explained that they get the list of certified businesses and reach out to different businesses on the list to ask if they are interested in projects, however, each construction project is different, and not all certified businesses are qualified participants for each project. He mentioned they work with participating businesses on whatever they need, such as understanding payroll or project specifications. He recently was asked by City Manager Kazemi how they track participation which he explained how Lee County keeps track of participation through monthly pay applications. Mr. Wheeler referenced a job fair to recruit a labor force for a project at Sable Palms. He noted that a thousand people attended the event, 564 individuals filled out applications, and 98 people were hired. Mr. Wheeler mentioned that kind of data does not get counted or recorded. He asked the Board if they could include in their recommendation to Council a recording technique for that kind of information.

Chair Ford mentioned that the City must realize the value of having a program like this in place. He asked Mr. Wheeler to read the percentages of program participants and if they are local businesses. Mr. Wheeler mentioned all program participants are local, wherein, the money stays in the community. Chair Ford noted that the DBE program is not about getting minorities to work, it is about economics. Mr. Wheeler stated that they are advocates to use local businesses and workforce. Chair Ford noted that the DBE Program will help minorities, women, and veterans secure opportunities to develop businesses and guarantee capital dollars stay within the community. Mr. Wheeler noted that the City procurement selection does have

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different tiers of points for local businesses and outlined Chris-Tel project percentages of local diversification participation.

Board Member Miller stated that the City Ordinance has a 15% goal for City contracts although there may be a path to incentivize private development to have goals. Board Member Miller asked if Mr. Wheeler felt that the minority companies know where to get involved in these programs or do they need to be educated. Mr. Wheeler stated that they partner with the FGCU Small Business Development Center as their mission is to get the word out to minority businesses. Board Member Kennix asked if the existing City Ordinance was under the jurisdiction of the Office of Supplier Diversity. Chair Ford mentioned that the City is currently operating under the State MBE Program and that the DBE Program is different from the State Programs. Board Member Kennix asked if the minority businesses have to continuously update their certification and Chair Ford replied yes. Board Member Kennix asked if a business completes an application for a 100% owned activity and asserts being a minority, will it have to present a Certificate from Supplier Diversity. Mr. Wheeler noted that there is more than one certifying entity. Chair Ford noted that each entity has projects that qualify for specific certifications. Board Member Kennix asked if the Housing Authority is under the City operations. Chair Ford replied that the Housing Authority is federally operated and has criteria for minority and disadvantaged businesses.

Board Member Pariser asked if they have any exposure to the trade schools. Mr. Wheeler stated that he is a member of the Fort Myers Technical College (FMTC) Carpentry Advisory Board and the FGCU Construction Management Advisory Board and that Chris-Tel hires interns. Board Member Pariser asked if he has exposure to high school trade classes. Mr. Wheeler stated that he is a Member of the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools and promotes trade skills. Board Member Pariser asked if they hire high school students for projects. Mr. Wheeler stated that they have an age limit of 18 years old on construction sites. Board Member Kennix noted that to expand the program there needs to be a commitment from local government to have Staff dedicated to oversee the program. Board Member Kennix felt that when developers receive tax credits on projects, there should be minority program requirements. Board Member Miller noted that at the previous CRA Advisory Board meeting they discussed presenting to the CRA Commission minority participation criteria for projects receiving TIF incentives. Chair Ford asked that the CRA Staff present the CRA Advisory Board's recommendation to them before they present it to the CRA Commission as the Board is in the process of putting together a proposal for this exact program.

MOTION: Board Member Miller moved that the CRA Advisory Board recommendation for the minority participation incentive present their proposal first to the Economic Development Advisory Board prior to presenting it to the CRA Commission for approval; seconded by Board Member Kennix; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Ford stated that the Board's focus is on a program for local City of Fort Myers certified businesses. He felt that the City needs a program with goals that can engage local City of Fort Myers businesses and residents in these contracts. Vice Chair Landfried asked if the City had a DBE program in the past and Chair Ford replied yes but that the DBE Ordinance was rescinded. Board Member Miller stated that they need to review the new and old Ordinances to either use or make changes. Vice Chair Landfried asked if there is historical information that can be found on why the program was stopped and proof of the value of the program.

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Chair Ford mentioned that the City needs to understand the economic value of the program and several projects that he worked on under the previous DBE Program with 12% to 15% participation: Stars Complex, Harborside, Parking Garages, State Regional Service Center, Boston Red Sox Stadium, Martin Luther King Landing, Public Works Building, Dunbar Library and Three Oaks Library. He felt that a business can qualify for a DBE program by being in a certain group or on an economic basis. Vice Chair Landfried recommended finding project records from the previous DBE Program to indicate a sense of the program's worth. Board Member Kennix mentioned the City of Richmond v. Croson Supreme Court decision where the contractors took the City of Richmond to Court and overturned the minority goals oriented program and that sent a shadow throughout the world of minority participation. He mentioned that to continue some level of minority participation without violating Croson, many cities created aspirational goals wherein the goal was not mandatory or used economic conditions. He asked Mr. Belden to find other municipalities in Florida that have DBE Programs that could be models for the Board. Mr. Belden stated that he will do research and bring back Ordinances from local governments for the Board to review. Chair Ford mentioned that the DBE Program has escaped all challenges of lawsuits to date, it can be limited to City residents, and it has history in the City. He noted that the Board will review what once worked well, change or add what the Board feels should be covered, and forward it to staff. Chair Ford mentioned that there will need to be a designated staff person responsible for the program and certification process, however, the City could possibly get an interlocal agreement with FGCU for the certification process. Board Member Pariser felt that the emphasis for the DBE Program should be strictly on the City, define minority owned organizations, and increase the point system giving incentives to general contractors who use the DBE Program.

3. Update on Jerome Miller as a Regular Member to the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) (Ward 3 Representative)

Clerk Carlisle reported that Jerome Miller was approved by City Council to represent Ward 3 as a regular member to the Board. She noted that from the direction of the Board at the previous meeting, she will ask the Ward 6 Council Member if Alternate Board Member Maxson can be placed in the vacancy Board Member position for Ward 6.

4. Review of Board presentation to Council on EDAB (Board Member Miller)

Board Member Miller noted that he was elected at the last meeting to make a presentation to the City Council, highlighting projects the Board is working on and suggested he draft something, circulate it to the Board Members through the Clerk, and then have a discussion at the April 2, 2020 Board Meeting. Chair Ford stated that the draft list should include the DBE Program, Affordable Housing, Mall Corridor, MLK from Palm to downtown Corridor, and the Parks Master Plan. Board Member Miller noted that Fellowship Park in Cape Coral was funded by sponsors and would be a good model for City parks. He suggested future discussions on Cape Coral's Impact Fees and creating a specific incentive deferral program to target one industry to build up in the City. Board Member Miller asked for an update on the Florida International University (FIU) initiative. Mr. Belden noted that FIU will be giving a presentation soon to update City Council, Second Muse will be initiating the community engagement, and FIU anticipates the entire study being complete by the end of May. Chair Ford asked if FIU will give a presentation to this Board and Mr. Belden replied yes. Vice Chair Landfried noted that initially FIU gave a presentation to the Board regarding their initiative and, at that time, stated

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that they would come back and present it once they were done. Clerk Carlisle advised that the usual time allotment for Board and Committee presentations to City Council is 15 minutes and all presentations must be reviewed by the City Manager prior to the Council meeting. Board Member Miller asked about the status of hiring a new Economic Development staff position.

Mr. Belden noted that they have refocused and decided to hire two positions as there are many facets to Economic Development. He noted that the first hire will be the Economic and Business Development Administrator position that will work under the City Manager's Office and that person will be involved in hiring the second person. Mr. Belden stated that they will be advertising for the position as soon as possible.

Vice Chair Landfried asked when the Board's presentation will be given to the City Council and felt it should not keep getting delayed. Board Member Miller suggested sometime in April. Chair Ford felt they can work on more than one project at a time and suggested that they keep working on the DBE Program and host a workshop on affordable housing with different interest groups. He stated that he will give names of who should be invited for the affordable housing workshop to the Clerk and suggested Mr. Belden invite obtainable housing group representatives to attend and advise on what business they are doing or going to be doing in the City. Board Member Miller suggested five or six projects be presented to the City Council. Chair Ford stated that the presentation to Council needs to be poignant enough so that when the Board goes before the Council again in three months they have made progress. He recommended inviting Council Members, the Mayor and City Manager to Board meetings as soon as possible. Board Member Miller suggested including the Board's Mission Statement with the invitations. Clerk Carlisle suggested that the Board collectively draft a letter signed by the Chair inviting each Council Member to a different meeting. Mr. Belden stated that Council also can be asked for feedback when the Board gives their presentation. Board Member Pariser stated that if the questions for Council is attached to their invitation it will give them notice of what they are expecting. Board Member Miller stated that he does not want to wait until June to give a presentation to Council. Clerk Carlisle suggested creating a timeline of the next six to nine months of what the Board wants to accomplish or items to put on the agenda for discussion. Board Member Kennix recommended that an item to set priorities for the next six months be on the next agenda. Chair Ford noted that the DBE Program and affordable housing will consume most of the meeting time in upcoming meetings and that the Board should not take on any more at this time. He stated that there is already six or more affordable housing projects beginning in the next 12 to 18 months and the Board must be ahead of the start of the projects or it will be too late. Chair Ford felt that housing for those with yearly incomes of \$30,000 to \$50,000 needs to be addressed.

Clerk Carlisle noted that the Board requested at the previous meeting a copy of the Riverwalk Master Plan to go with the Luminary Hotel tour which will be April 2, 2020. Chair Ford mentioned that the Riverwalk Master Plan could be an item on the Agenda to review next meeting, however, the Board should concentrate on the DBE Ordinance and the affordable housing initiative primarily for the next six months. Chair Ford suggest at the next meeting, Board Member Miller bring recommendations for the presentation to the Council and the Board will review it.

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PRESENTATIONS – None.

REPORTS

5. Community Development Department Director's Reports
 - a) Monthly Development Activity Report

Clerk Carlisle noted that the information was provided on the dais.

BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

6. Chair's Report – None.

9. Next Meeting – April 2, 2020 – Luminary Hotel instructions: Meet at the corner of **Edwards and Monroe at 2:00 p.m.** Appropriate dress is required: **NO** open toed shoes, heels, dresses, shorts, or sleeveless shirts; **DO** wear shoes that you do not mind getting dirty; **PROVIDED** are hard hats, vests, and protective eyewear.

Clerk Carlisle noted that the April 2, 2020 meeting will begin at the Luminary Hotel starting at 2:00 p.m. and asked what time to notice the meeting reconvened at City Hall. Board Member Miller suggested returning to City Hall at 2:45 p.m. Chair Ford agreed that 45 minutes should be enough time.

Vice Chair Landfried asked that Board Member Miller send his recommendations for the presentation to the Clerk so that it can be sent out to the Board Members prior to the next meeting. Board Member Maxson recommended that Board Members review the DBE/MBE Ordinances prior to the next meeting and write down their ideas for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, it was moved by Board Member Kennix; seconded by Board Member Kakatsch, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 3:59 p.m.