

## **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, April 1, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. Present were: Chair, Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair, Jerome Miller, and Regular Board Members, Orie Lee Ford, John Kakatsch, Roy Kennix (Arrived at 2:15 p.m.), Sharon Schulman, Ken Pariser, and Alternate Board Members Nannette Maxson and Duane Dyar. Also present were: Steven Belden, Community Development Director; Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator; Grant Alley, City Attorney (left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.); Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk; and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: None

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Landfried called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG AND ROLL CALL**

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

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Anderson thanked the Board Members for all they do.

### **PRESENTATIONS** - None

### **REGULAR ITEMS**

1. Approve Minutes of the meeting held on February 4, 2021

***MOTION: Board Member Kakatsch moved to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2021 Economic Development Advisory Board Meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.***

### **UPDATE TO CITY COUNCIL**

2. Pick City Council Meeting dates to address the Council on a quarterly basis

Chair Landfried stated that at the last meeting the Board decided to be more proactive with Council by addressing them on a quarterly basis and asked for Board input on scheduling the next date to address Council. Discussion ensued and the Board agreed to give a report or recommendations to Council at the City Council Meeting on June 7, 2021.

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

3. Discussion regarding Board Member Schulman's invitation to give a presentation on behalf of the Board at the Ward 5 Community Meeting on April 14, 2021 (Board Member Schulman)

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*Board Member Kennix arrived at 2:12 p.m.*

Board Member Schulman stated that Councilperson Bonk invited her to give a presentation at the Ward 6 meeting on behalf of the Economic Development Advisory Board regarding its top 3 issues or recent successes. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that Board Member Schulman give the presentation at the April Ward 6 meeting.

Chair Landfried recommended that the Board Members attend their respective Ward Community Meetings or if they do not have Community Meetings meet with their Council Member to discuss their concerns and economic development priorities. He mentioned meeting with Mayor Anderson who agreed to have one Board Member on each of his Task Forces which are: (1) Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force, (2) Mayor's Unity Task Force, and (3) Mayor's Homelessness Task Force.

Chair Landfried felt that most of the work for this Board needs to be done outside of this meeting and from the information gathered outside of the meeting, Board Members will provide to the Board at the meetings their conclusion of actionable recommendations that can be presented to Council.

Chair Landfried asked the City Attorney the best way for Board Members to communicate outside of the meetings due to the Sunshine Law. City Attorney Alley stated that the Sunshine Law prohibits Board Members from communicating with each other outside the meetings. He recommended providing the documents to the Clerk who will review it for a Sunshine Law issue and can send it to the other Board Members. He recommended against position papers although the Attorney General's opinion is that position papers are fine. Chair Landfried stated that Board Members can send information to the Clerk who will then send it out to the other Board Members or attach it to the Agenda packet.

Vice Chair Miller suggested that when the Board makes recommendations to Council it be done through either the Council liaison or staff on a green sheet which becomes an actionable item on the agenda and Council can act on the recommendation. Chair Landfried noted that he has a monthly standing meeting with the Mayor and Councilperson Burson in which he will ask the best way to move actionable items forward on the Council Agenda. City Attorney Alley advised that to get an item on the City Council Agenda, the Board make a motion that a recommendation be presented to City Council and then the item will then go to the City Manager through the Council liaison who will then put it on the Agenda.

Chair Landfried handed out a list of the other City Boards and Committees and suggested that Board Members attend their meetings with respect to their assigned focus area to get ideas and gather information. He noted that he met with Michele Hylton-Terry Director of the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to discuss the CRA priorities. Board Member Ford suggested that the Clerk send notice to the other Boards and Committees advising them of this Boards meetings dates and inviting them to attend to discuss issues related to economic development that support their needs. Board Member Pariser stated that notices of this meeting should be sent out to the CRA as well. City Clerk Carlisle stated that notice of this meeting can be sent to the City liaisons. Chair Landfried suggested an email be sent with language inviting them to this meeting, however, letting them know they can communicate their ideas in any way to the Board. City Clerk Carlisle stated that an email will be drafted for the Chair's approval and will be sent to all the persons that are on the Board and

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Committee list. Board Member Ford stated that it should encourage their involvement and be communicated that it is a constant open-door invitation to come to any meeting in the future.

Board Member Pariser suggested advertising the meetings in the local newspaper and Chair Landfried asked if that is possible. City Clerk Carlisle explained the public notice process that takes place at this time. Board Member Dyar asked how the advertising would be funded. City Clerk Carlisle stated that small advertisements in the newspaper can start at \$150.00. Discussion ensued regarding the Board not having a budget.

Chair Landfried announced the Board's invitation to the Florida Economic Development Council's Southwest Regional Forum on April 21, 2021 which was sent to Board Members in a previous email from the Clerk.

#### 4. Discussion on changing the term limit of the Chair and Vice Chair in the Board's Ordinance (Board Member Ford)

Board Member Ford stated that this item was discussed at the last meeting and the City Attorney was going to bring it back options to the Board. City Attorney Alley read the language in Section 2.146 of the Ordinance: *The term of the chair and vice-chair will be for one year, at which time the chair and vice-chair must be elected or reelected by the members. The chair and vice-chair may serve for two consecutive years, at which time a new chair and vice-chair must be elected.* City Attorney Alley stated that changing the term limit would require an Ordinance change and if the Board agrees to a change, his office will prepare an Ordinance with the amendment for the Board to review and approve at the next meeting. Board Member Ford recommended the changing the Ordinance so that the chair and vice-chair have the right to be re-elected for longer than two consecutive years due to the length of time that it takes to process projects. Discussion ensued regarding the Ordinance language change.

**MOTION: Board Member Maxson moved to approve changing the Board's Ordinance by removing the following sentence in 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*; seconded by Board Member Ford; motion carried unanimously.**

#### 5. Report on FIU Corridor Planning (Board Member Pariser)

Board Member Pariser noted that he attended the FIU Presentation at the City Council Workshop and gave a brief overview of the presentation. Steven Belden, Community Development Director, reported that the final report should be completed by the end of the month and tentatively the final presentation to Council will be on May 3, 2021.

*City Attorney Alley left the meeting at 3:20 p.m.*

Board Member Pariser discussed photos he took of signage, streets with no bicycle paths, entryways into downtown, golf carts, and debris clean up.

Chair Landfried suggested that Board Member Pariser turn his ideas into recommendations and present them to this Board for discussion. He suggested that the items Board Members want to present to the Board as recommendations be subcategories under their heading on

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the Agenda. To do that, Board Members can submit their subcategories to the Clerk so that they are outlined on the Agenda. Board Member Dyar suggested that if the presenters have reports or recommendations, the handouts get to the Clerk prior to the meeting so that it can be back up material to the meeting and reviewed by the Board Members in advance of the meeting. City Clerk Carlisle stated that any meeting agenda materials for the next meeting be emailed to the Clerk by April 23, 2021. Vice Chair Miller stated that the paperwork would include the presenter's main points or outlined recommendations with discussion points and back up materials.

Chair Landfried asked how long it will take for the FIU detailed recommendations to take shape. Mr. Belden stated that he is working on building a platform for all entities working on economic development to come together and work on the recommendations wherein this Board will be a part of that. Vice Chair Miller stated that some recommendations may be quick and easy fixes such as some of the beautification on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (MLK) near I-75, Fowler Street, or signage. Chair Landfried agreed that little things mean a lot and they may be able to be implemented quickly. Vice Chair Miller suggested the City Engineer attend a meeting and brief them on the Fowler corridor plan, so the Board has all the factual information before presenting anything to Council.

*Board Member Ford left the meeting at 3:45*

Board Member Kennix mentioned that the model for community economic development was the Community Development Corporation (CDC) which found ways to secure public and private funding sources for neighborhood businesses. He felt that the past CDC model could be guidance on what worked and what was lacking with respect to expanding initiatives in the FIU community economic development report. He believed that federal funds are on the rise and a missing piece in the City is an entity that is charged with tracking new funding resources for business assistance.

Board Member Schulman felt that signage needs a background behind it such as shops, the signage is irrelevant as the driver does not look just at the sign, they look at the whole. She questioned where the FIU plan is coming from that details funding sources, what it will look like, and how to get those businesses that exist already get into this. She questioned does there need to be community partners to help fund it so that the beautification will be done along with the design element, and perhaps they can find funding that will help each of the fencings or facades to hide areas and maybe funding should go directly to the owner to fund the facades. She felt that the whole needs to be investigated further prior to doing little pieces. Vice Chair Miller suggested possibly implementing Form-Based Zoning Codes and asked that Mr. Belden provide more information about this concept at the next meeting. Chair Landfried conveyed that anything that goes to Council should be comprehensive. Board Member Schulman suggested reviewing the Main Street Programs that other states have used which provide funding for facades or fencing to businesses in a whole area. She mentioned that the federal funding, utilities, or banks may partner with the City to support some ideas if they get recognition by the people driving through.

Vice Chair Miller suggested inviting the person who finds funding resources for the City to the next meeting. Mr. Belden stated that the City has a grant specialist who monitors available funding sources for anything pertaining to the City. Chair Landfried suggested that the Grant Specialist be invited to the next meeting to give a summary of the process on how they find funding.

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**MOTION: Vice Chair Miller moved to recommended that Items 6-10 on this Agenda be suspended to the next meeting due to time constraints; seconded by Board Member Kennix; motion carried unanimously.**

6. Report on Water Quality (Board Member Schulman)
7. Report on Affordable Housing and Homelessness Sub-Committee of the Mayor's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Task Force (Board Member Kennix)
8. Report on DBE Task Force (Board Member Ford)
9. Report on Parks and Beautification Committee (Vice Chair Miller)
10. Report on Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force (Chair Landfried)

### **REPORTS**

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

Mr. Belden advised that there is a City Council Workshop on April 5, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. with two items: (1) Update on Workforce Housing by Sarah Owens, Southwest Florida Community Foundation and (2) Update on the activity and progress of the City's Safe & Clean Task Force.

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

Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator stated that any funding opportunities she is aware of are on the City's Economic Development website. The Economic Development website has a new demographic map which shows incomes, ages, information about segmented areas in the City, traffic counts that can provide information to developers as well as other statistics about the City. She discussed happenings with the Economic Development Finance Classes, meetings with developers, the City's warehouse space, the Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grant for the transformation of the Southward Village public housing complex and surrounding areas.

Ms. Carr announced that there is a free Minority and Small Business Boot Camp available and a Black Owned Business Expo on April 9-11, 2021 where she will have a table.

### **NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT - May 6, 2021**

Chair Landfried noted that in his discussions with City leaders he was advised that the Board consider a fertilizer ordinance, a public/private partnership to redevelop the yacht basin, developing a boardwalk along the waterway, establishing a walkway bridge across the canal at Sam Fleishman Baseball Complex, and expanding the Enterprise Center. He was given contacts for the Board's focus areas which he will send to the Clerk's Office for distribution to the Board Members. Ms. Carr stated that there was an Enterprise Center Plan for 2018 to 2020 and suggested that the Board review it for potential uses.

Board Member Maxson asked if the Edison Mall Manager could come to a meeting and give an update. Vice Chair Miller suggested that John Talmage, Lee County Economic

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Development Director, be invited to a meeting to give an update on Lee County's economic development perspective. Chair Landfried suggested that John Talmage be invited to the next meet for an update, and the Edison Mall Manager could be invited in June or July.

Board Member Kakatsch inquired about Lofton Island being cleared. Mr. Belden stated that the owners of Lofton Island have not submitted anything to the City at this time, however, they do have plans to develop it. Lofton Island did receive a permit from the State to remove exotic trees and shrubs. Board Member Kakatsch asked if there has been anything new happening at the Sears Building. Mr. Belden replied that the Health Department is relocating the COVID vaccination point to the Sears building from the Airport with a 4-month lease.

Chair Landfried advised the Board Members to meet with their Council Members, gather information from Ward Community meetings or other pertinent meetings, and bring to the next meeting actionable ideas that can be presented to Council.

**ADJOURNMENT: *There being no further business, it was moved by Board Member Kennix; seconded by Board Member Pariser; and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:31 p.m.***