

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 7, 2022, at 2:02 p.m. Present were: Chair Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair Jerome Miller, Regular Board Member Ken Pariser and Alternate Board Members Duane Dyar and Nannette Maxson (Arrived at 2:04 p.m.). Also present were: Grant Alley, City Attorney, Steven Belden, Community Development Director, Phyllis Calloway, Community Development Assistant Director, Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk, and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Board Members Orie Lee Ford, John Kakatsch, Roy Kennix, and Sharon Schulman.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Landfried led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Matthew Leger, Planning Board Chair noted that he gave a presentation on Hendry Pedestrian Street to this Board on July 1, 2021 and wanted to follow up with the Board regarding its progress since that time. He stated that he has presented to City Council and the Downtown Owners Group, and several articles have been written about the project. He would appreciate that when the Chairs committee meets that they could discuss ideas to make Midtown successful and if that does not happen, this Board could evaluate the Hendry Pedestrian Street to consider the fundamental ways to move it forward and consider ways to engage vacant land, City Hall, and the Lee County government buildings that don't have facades that directly involve the street. He stated that the City Engineering Department submitted a request last week to the State through the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for funding in the amount of \$300,000.00 for a feasibility study to determine how the Hendry Pedestrian Street project would succeed along with Downtown, Midtown, Yacht Basin, Lofton Island, and surrounding areas.

Board Member Maxson arrived at 2:04.

Vice Chair Miller inquired what component of Midtown is in the Florida International University (FIU) corridor study. Mr. Leger felt that the City's direction with the City of Palms Park will create a different design in Midtown. Vice Chair Miller conveyed that the City of Palms Park could be funded possibly with a General Obligation (GO) Bond such as Cape Coral has done to fund major parks and recreation improvements, a partnership with Lee County's bed tax, or a recreation penny tax. He noted that the original Midtown Steering Committee is being reevaluated and felt that Mr. Leger should be on that committee and Mr. Leger agreed. Vice Chair Miller noted that the City is having a consultant evaluate the City of Palms Park facility to determine its value.

Theresa Lewis, Ward 6 resident, stated that she is for smart growth not anti-growth and noted that she attended the March 2, 2022 Planning Board meeting and wanted to bring to this Board what they perceive are issues in that project: (1) The first issue is transportation wherein the project's traffic assessment showed that residential will increase traffic 40% in

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evening rush hour traffic. She suggested having a transportation assessment which is the movement of people through all modes of transportation not just cars; (2) The second issue is water. (3) The third issue is economic development pertaining to the lack of business services in Ward 6. She requested that this Board help in guiding that issue. (4) The fourth issue is a significant gap in green space. The City has less than 10% of green space as similar size cities and in Ward 6 there is no green space. (5) The fifth issue is taxes. She questioned why this project was declined by Lee County on issues of density and transportation and the City is moving forward with the project; why was this project not submitted to the Planning Board for the annexation before going to City Council; why on December 28, 2021 the Community Development Department became the agent for the developer and not the agent for the community; and why the City continues to approve building permits before it has the water capacity to serve them. She suggested a moratorium on permits so that there is not more stress on the current water system until there is a resiliency plan established.

Phillip Dorfman, Plantation resident, stated that there is a water problem such as water pressure, water outages, and boil warnings in the Plantation due to it being located at the end of the water lines. He felt that if another development is built past their development, the water problems will get worse, and it may cause floods due to poor drainage. He mentioned that the City is conducting a water study and suggested holding development in Ward 6 until the water study is finished.

Jean Reed, Ward 6 resident, noted her concern about the lack of services in Ward 6 which is the fastest growing residential community going from 1067 to 11,442 households during 2020/2021. Although Ward 6 has seen the smallest growth in services which results in people traveling to obtain services. She suggested adding low level services that do not require a lot of traffic such as restaurants, office space, pharmacies, urgent care, dry cleaner, hair salon, barbers, and a park for green space. She suggested Ward 6 create an all-encumbrance plan focused on increasing commercial services with light vehicular intensity. She is for smart growth that makes sense for the people that live in the City.

Judy Button, Summerset resident noted her concern if the Council approves zoning for residential building and suggested zoning for light commercial as well as the addition of a community park. Current residents will be impacted with additional residential zoning by traffic congestion, water shortage, water pressure, sewage, schools, parks, and other basic City services as well as like long term consequences such as tax implications revenue deficient, quality-of-life decline, property values diminish, and people wanting to flee.

Vice Chair Miller advised that the City is updating the 2006 and 2017 Parks and Open Space Master Plan, green space is a topic on the April 18, 2022 City Council meeting agenda, and Ward 6 neighboring Ward 2 is opening the Challenger Park next week. He stated that he will follow up in Ward 6 as to what is the best area for a park and the Board could come up with a plan for zoning and getting more services in Ward 6. Chair Landfried noted that the Board recognizes that there is a water issue and wants to find solutions. Vice Chair Miller noted that the City is in the process of establishing an Environmental Advisory Board where they could voice their concerns.

1. PRESENTATIONS

1.1. Update on the City's water utility system by Richard Moulton, Public Works Director

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1. Update on the City's Water utility systems

Nicole Monahan, City Engineer advised that she will be giving the update as Richard Moulton is not available. She reported that there are 4 production wells that the City has designed, permitted, under construction and should be operable before November. Two wells will be in production in the next 30-45 days, the third well is expected to be in operation in September, and the fourth well is expected to be in operation in October. Three more wells are being designed and should be completed in the next 18-24 months. After that the City will be looking for locations for additional wells as the City's Water Use Permit allows for up to 20 new wells and piping to get the water back to the water treatment facility. The City is currently advertising for a firm to look at the current water treatment facility to determine its maximum capacity, when to begin building out that facility, and when to build additional facilities. She conveyed that the Water Master Plan, Sewer Master Plan, and the Reuse Master Plan are currently being revised which will give the City a roadmap for the next 20 years on what needs to be done. Ms. Monahan reported that the City is currently building a reclaim facility and pipeline scheduled to be finished by January 15, 2023. This facility will allow the City to convert treated affluent water that currently goes into the Caloosahatchee River into reuse water which will then be sold to Cape Coral. Discussion ensued regarding future water plans.

1.2. Update on marketing strategies for the City by Liz Bello-Matthews, Public Communications Manager

Liz Bello-Matthews, Public Communications Manager reported that she is working on several projects including water conservation materials that were added to utility bills; customizing a digital public communications program wherein there will be a promotional campaign where residents can sign up for voice messages, text messages, and email messages; a citywide communications policy; working with the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau to launch a City specific brand campaign; creating collaborative campaign with the City's partners; working on the City's participation at the Edison Awards wherein they will have a booth with messaging on what the City has to offer; creating a yearly resident survey to launch next fiscal year for a better sense of what is important to the residents; and creating a City guide that will address residents standard questions such as trash pickup and boundaries. Ms. Bello-Matthews advised that in terms of development marketing, she envisions the City attracting European companies that are looking for entry into the United States like the way that Miami has done for Latin America.

Vice Chair Miller offered to volunteer his drone video services for organic marketing. Ms. Bello-Matthews conveyed that she would like to engage people through apps and television by featuring a series of people and projects to create an understanding of lifestyle in the City. Chair Landfried requested that as she share the progress with her projects with the Board especially the residential survey and any new literature or marketing that is published.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Approve Minutes of the March 3, 2022 meeting

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

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3. STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS

3.1. Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator

City Clerk Carlisle announced that Ms. Carr is no longer employed with the City.

3.2. Steven Belden, Community Development Department Director

Vice Chair Miller requested information on the apartment project at Daniels Parkway and Treeline Avenue that went before the Planning Board on March 2, 2002.

a. Monthly Development Activity Report

Steven Belden, Community Development Department Director reported that the March permit totals were \$76 million although \$60 million is for one project in Ward 4. He felt that the City is developing rapidly and will potential transition into a redevelopment scenario on infill lots. Chair Landfried inquired if there is appropriate infrastructure to support the projects due to its population growth. Mr. Belden replied that all of Southwest Florida is growing fast wherein the City is a small part of the big growth so it coordinates with the regional partners for transportation and other infrastructure.

Chair Landfried inquired when the Fowler Street project will start and when the US 41 project will be finished. Mr. Belden stated that he will get updated information for the Board at the next meeting.

b. Opportunities for grocery store/retail in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Palm Beach Boulevard, and Cleveland Avenue corridors

Mr. Belden mentioned that there is commercial property on Treeline Avenue where nothing is happening, and he is unsure why. Vice Chair Miller stated that he will research that property.

Board Member Pariser inquired about the development on the previous Pontiac dealership property. Mr. Belden replied that the development will be market rate affordable rental housing at approximately \$1,000 a month.

Mr. Belden noted that City Council approved the Agreement with Florida International University (FIU) to work on the implementation of the corridor strategies. They will now start meetings so that it is a group effort of stakeholders, including this Board, to get input on strategic efforts to revitalize the corridors.

Vice Chair Miller requested that the final version of the FIU Study be emailed to each Board Member.

c. Update on the vacant Sears space at the Edison Mall

Mr. Belden reported that he has not heard anything recently about the vacant Sears location. He noted that it is a separate entity from the Edison Mall and if he gets an update on that location he will notify the Board.

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Chair Landfried requested an update on the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Yacht Basin. Mr. Belden replied that he is on the Yacht Basin RFP Selection Committee and that 7 submittals were received wherein the Selection Committee recommended 5 submittals give presentations.

Vice Chair Miller inquired what are the next steps now that the Business and Economic Development Administrator position is vacant. Mr. Belden replied that the City Manager will evaluate the position and potentially repost it.

Board Member Maxson inquired if the City is preserving land that will not be for development. Mr. Belden replied that the County preserves land through the 2020 Program, however the City does not have a program such as that. Vice Chair Miller noted that the City does own good undeveloped land that could be preserved for open space. Mr. Belden stated that open space is currently being discussed by Council which will be addressed and that there are several different types of public and private open spaces. Vice Chair Miller mentioned that the City has some open spaces already such as Riverside Park or Ford Street Preserve Filter Marsh and suggested that the City better advertise what is currently available.

3.3. Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director

Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director reported that McCollum Hall Request for Proposals (RFP) went out on March 30, 2022 and she will share more information after the deadline for the proposals. She stated that the Enterprise Center is in the process of identifying the community needs and will be developing more community programs. Local business owners are dedicating time for classroom studies and are implementing suggestions from the Enterprise Center to make their business even better.

Vice Chair Miller inquired if the Enterprise Center still collaborates with contractors for laborers. Ms. Calloway replied that they currently have an 8-week Senior High School Program with volunteer construction facilitators so after graduation the students can secure employment. They also train adult students on preconstruction work and have partnered with Lowes to teach the use of power and hand tools.

4. BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

4.1. Report on parks and beautification (Vice Chair Miller)

- a. Discuss changing focus area to *Cultural, Sport, Tourism Development*

Vice Chair Miller stated that a priority is updating the 2006 and 2017 Parks and Open Space Master Plan as the City is lacking green space per capita. He requested that his focus area be changed from Parks and Beautification to Cultural, Sport, Tourism Development and the Chair agreed.

- b. Report on City of Palms Park and upcoming Midtown Workshop

Vice Chair Miller advised that the City is hiring a consultant to evaluate City of Palms Park and that the County did a study in 2018 which stated that there is a need for a sport community complex for volleyball, basketball, soccer, and football. Chair Landfried

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mentioned that he heard Centennial Park will open at the end of April. Vice Chair Miller noted that there is a request for funding to add the curved pier at Centennial Park as well.

- c. Discuss a recommendation to Council to add Councilperson Bochette as a co-liaison with Councilperson Burson to the Board

Vice Chair Miller noted that this Board has expressed that the Board's liaison plays an important roll and suggested making a recommendation to Council that Councilperson Bochette be added as a co-liaison along with Councilperson Burson. Discussion ensued regarding adding a co-liaison.

City Attorney Alley read the mandatory requirement for the Board's liaison: "A representative of the City Manager will act as the Economic Development liaison to provide staff assistance and attend each meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board to provide expertise and suggests for the Board Members and shall be a non-voting attendee." City Attorney Alley recognized that the Chair has a monthly meeting with the Board's liaison as well as the Mayor and that Council is advised of the Board's progress through its presentations. It is not mandated by the Ordinance that the Board's liaison be at the meetings, however, there is a mandate for a liaison appointed by the City Manager's Office wherein now that is the Community Development Director. Chair Landfried noted that he will have a conversation with Councilperson Burson to encourage him to attend some of the Board's meetings. City Clerk Carlisle advised that the Council reviews the liaison appointments on a yearly basis.

Councilperson Bochette advised that there is a party interested in the City of Palms Park who manages facilities all over the country for profit by partnering with municipalities and there will probably be an Request for Proposal (RFP). Chair Landfried highlighted that Vice Chair Miller was very involved in promoting the reevaluation of the City of Palms Park.

Councilperson Bochette stated that he is still advocating for the Chairs of each City Board and Committee to meet for cross communication. Chair Landfried stated that the first attempt for the meeting did not work out, however, he will make another attempt for the Chairs to meet that he will host.

Councilperson Bochette advised that he is a proponent that the Board have a small working budget for miscellaneous materials or seminars. He requested that the Board determine a conservative amount for the request and outline how the funds would be used that can be presented during the upcoming budget process.

Vice Chair Miller suggested promoting for a marketing budget for the Public Information Office as well. He asked when the appropriate time would be to advocate for an Economic Development Office. Chair Landfried felt that now is a good time to move forward with advocating for an Economic Development Office. Councilperson Bochette felt that is an appropriate time to ask for the tools this Board needs to help the City moving forward.

Councilperson Bochette felt that the City needs a crisis management plan and an internal auditor to look for efficiencies. He recommended that this Board as well as the other boards to have an annual project to achieve a specific goal. Vice Chair Miller felt that the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program project could be that project for the Board.

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- d. Discuss the budget and appropriations for the Board

Vice Chair Miller questioned if the Board had a budget for trade shows or conferences and if they do, will it be lost or can it be used marketing or other things. Mr. Belden replied that that he was advised that this year there was no budget for the Board to go to conferences.

- 4.2. Report on business development/education assistance with FGCU, Enterprise Center and technical training (Board Member Pariser)

Board Member Pariser provided a handout outlining issues he would like to discuss: (1) He felt that the Board has been getting off track during its meetings and would like to emphasize the tasks for this Board pursuant to the bylaws and mission statement: (a) Make recommendations to Council on ordinances and policies; (b) have advisory duties consistent with business and economic development; and (c) strengthen relationships with partner agencies; (2) He recommended reaching out to the Lee County Sheriff to suggest a program to allow its incarcerated inmates to assist with beautification and clean up in the community with an emphasis on the cleanup of inland waterways. (3) When this Board has topics that correlate with other boards or committees, the topics should be presented to the appropriate board or committee and, if that other board agrees, this Board could be responsible for presenting the recommendation to Council; (4) engaging the community with participation advertised incentives or contests and have flags on utility poles that are changed periodically; (5) A recommendation to Council to have a "point" adjustment system on the RFP submittals to favor local contractors with a minimum 60% local workforce and/or on-the-job training (OJT) from local trade schools; (6) Recommend to Council that Council Members have at least an annual or semi-annual mandatory Ward meeting; and (7) New projects which necessitate zoning, permitting or are beneficiaries of any City originated benefits require this Board's approval before they happen so that the Board's input is considered before the project moves forward whereas now the projects come before this Board after it is already moving forward when the Board's input is negligible.

Vice Chair Miller agreed that the bicycle rental program needs to be vetted with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board to get their approval prior to this Board presenting the recommendation to Council. Board Member Dyar agreed that a lot of the Board's topics are similar to other Boards focus areas and this Board should engage with the other Boards about the mutual topic. He suggested that this Board could invite the Chairs or members from the mutual Board to present the topic and outline the economic impact. Vice Chair Miller recommended that Board Member Maxson present the bicycle rental program to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) as she did all of the research on the program. Chair Landfried inquired how Board Member Maxson would get on their agenda. City Clerk Carlisle stated that the Clerk's Office could contact the BPAB administrator and request adding Board Member Maxson to their Agenda to give a presentation. Chair Landfried noted that many of the other Boards do not give presentations to Council and suggested that this Board could be responsible for bringing recommendations to Council that are mutual topics with the other Boards. Board Member Dyer mentioned this Board can be a conduit for the other Boards by presenting the recommendations. Vice Chair Miller stated that he previously worked with the Teen Advisory Council on video contests to engage the teens by making videos for contests. He mentioned that Collier County Sheriff's Department is teaming up with local authorities to control loud exhaust sounds and that could be brought to the City's Chief of Police as a recommendation to piggyback on that program.

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Chair Landfried asked Board Member Pariser to bring back to the next meeting which recommendations from the list he presented he would like to add to the Board's recommendations to Council.

MOTION: Vice Chair Miller moved to approve Board Member Maxson giving a presentation to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board on the BCycle System; seconded by Board Member Pariser; motion carried unanimously.

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

Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist advised the Board that Board Member Ford was not able to attend the meeting due to travels, however, he requested that Item 4.3 be tabled to the next meeting and the Board agreed.

-Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (Board Member Ford) – None

-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 MLK Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Maxson) – None

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

5. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

5.1. Discuss next presentation to Council

Chair Landfried stated that Item 5.1 will be tabled until the next meeting. He thanked the Ward 6 residents for providing their comments.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

7. NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – May 5, 2022 at the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center, 3903 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

ADJOURNMENT: Chair Landfried moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:36 p.m.; seconded by Board Member Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.