

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 the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center, 3903 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, a meeting place in the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on Thursday, May 5, 2022, at 2:01 p.m. Present were: Chair Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair Jerome Miller, Regular Board Members Ori Lee Ford and Ken Pariser (Arrived at 2:11 p.m.) and Alternate Board Members Duane Dyar and Nannette Maxson (Arrived at 2:21 p.m.). Also present were: Travis Cary, Assistant City Attorney, Steven Belden, Community Development Director (Arrived at 2:53 p.m.), Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director, Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk, and Jennifer Myers, Recording Specialist. Absent: Board Members, John Kakatsch, Roy Kennix, and Sharon Schulman.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Landfried led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None.

1. **PRESENTATIONS** – None.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2.1. Approve Minutes of the April 7, 2022 meeting

MOTION: *Board Member Dyar moved to approve the Minutes of the April 7, 2022 Regular Meeting; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.*

3. STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS

3.1. Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director

Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director reported on the status of the following CRA projects: (1) The West End at City Walk - Finished, leased, and Phase 2 design will begin and include 60 additional rental units, 5 for sale townhomes, and 16,000 square foot of retail and office space. (2) The Montage at Midtown - Plans are complete and break grounding is expected in October 2022. (3) Silver Hills at Fort Myers/Triton Cay – The South Building is occupied, the North Building is expected to be open in a couple of weeks, and the boardwalk is expected to be finished in June or July then Phase 2 will begin. (4) First Street Apartments – The land is cleared, and building will take approximately 2 years. (5) The Hampton Inn - Drywalling and interior finishes will take place in the next month.

Board Member Ford inquired about the status of the McCollum Hall restoration. Ms. Calloway replied that the Request for Proposal (RFP) for McCollum Hall received 3 proposals and the Selection Committee will be meeting next week to discuss rankings.

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1. Tour of the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center

Ms. Calloway mentioned that the tour will take place at the end of the meeting.

AGENDA REORDER

4. BOARD MEMBER FOCUS AREAS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

- 4.1. Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program (Board Member Ford)

Board Member Ford noted that the Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Committee is still working on the research and development process of a DBE Program and then they will present it to the Horizon Council. He recommended inviting DBE Committee Members to the next meeting to discuss the status of the program.

Board Member Pariser arrived at 2:11 p.m.

City Clerk Carlisle mentioned that the City Manager noted at a recent meeting that the reevaluation of the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and DBE Ordinances are a priority. Board Member Ford explained that the MBE is a state certified program, and the DBE will be a program that is specific to the City and driven by economics. Discussion ensued regarding the programs.

Chair Landfried inquired if there is an update to give Council pertaining to the DBE Program. Board Member Ford conveyed that the Board could share with Council that the DBE Program is being worked on in a joint effort and there could be a working document by September wherein they will start engaging the City.

1. Suggestions of changes to the MLK Overlay District Ordinance

Chair Landfried stated that this item will be tabled until the Community Development Director is present.

Nannette Maxson arrived at 2:27 p.m.

- 4.2. Report on Cultural, Sport, Tourism Development (Vice Chair Miller)

1. Parks, Open Space, Recreation Master Plan including City of Palms Park

Vice Chair Miller stated that Councilperson Bonk brought up at a previous City Council meeting the need for open space in the City and during that discussion it was determined that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan needs to be updated. Chair Landfried noted that he was advised that there is a need for recreational space to play lacrosse. Vice Chair Miller suggested that the City needs better marketing of the parks and green space that is already available within the City.

Vice Chair Miller inquired if the City hired a consultant to evaluate its financial viability. He noted some revenue sources to fund the City of Palms Park such as bed tax, penny tax, naming rights, General Obligation (GO) Bond, or usage fees. Discussion ensued regarding the City of Palms Park.

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Assistant City Attorney Cary advised that at the January 3, 2022 City Council meeting there was a Council vote that failed for CBRE Services to provide Development Advisory Services related to the disposition and/or redevelopment of the City of Palms Stadium and there has not been an RFP since that time.

2. Economic Development Office

Vice Chair Miller inquired if the City is going to post the vacant Business and Economic Development Administrator position.

City Clerk Carlisle stated that the City has posted a position for an Economic Development Director. Discussion ensued regarding the position.

Richard Calkins, Information Technology Director, stated that Garrett Hyzer in the Community Development Department did most of the GIS work for the former Business and Economic Development Administrator.

Vice Chair Miller stated that Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone maps are changing significantly Downtown and suggested that someone attend a meeting to discuss how the new zones will affect economic impacts to the Downtown properties. Board Member Ford agreed, and they can explain how it will impact the homeowner community.

Mr. Calkins recommended asking the City's Floodplain Manager for more education on this matter. He conveyed that if a land parcel is in a high-risk area, it will be harder to get financing and insurance for development, however, there are ways to mitigate. A Letter of Map Revision or Letter of Map Amendment can be submitted to FEMA to request a change of flood hazard designation for specific structures or properties. Discussion ensued regarding property insurance rates. Chair Landfried suggested that the City's Floodplain Manager be invited to a meeting for more information.

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

1. Follow-up on the list of recommendations presented at the previous meeting.

Board Member Pariser recommended that there be a points incentive for local contractors and/or on the job training from local trade school students. He recommended that the topics that are brought up by this Board be shared with similar Boards in that specific area and then this Board can take on the responsibility to bring the topic to Council if they do not. To maintain the uniqueness and appeal of the community by promoting the people and businesses through incentives. Board Member Pariser asked for an update on the meeting of all the City's Boards Chairs to discuss overlapping topics.

Chair Landfried stated that he is still working on getting that meeting of the Chairs scheduled.

Community Development Director Belden arrived at 2:53 p.m.

Board Member Ford stated that the City does have preference points for local businesses. Chair Landfried requested that the Board get a copy of the Ordinance pertaining to local business preferences. Mr. Calkins mentioned that he has ranked and scored on different

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Selection Committees and the standard RFP does have location scoring where a bidder that is located in the City or the County would receive points, however, it can depend on the RFP. Vice Chair Miller suggested the Board review the local preference policy to see if it could be enhanced. Board Member Ford recommended having someone from the Procurement Department come to a meeting and explain the criteria of local preferences. Chair Landfried noted that person can also address the Boards questions regarding the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program as well.

4.4. Report on MLK Boulevard Corridor (Board Member Maxson)

1. Update on the presentation of the BCycle System to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

Board Member Maxson stated that as she was researching more on the BCycle System, she discovered another bicycle rental system that she will continue researching and bring forward.

Steven Belden, Community Development Director stated that Councilperson Bochette requested the City Manager and the City Attorney to investigate micro mobility opportunities wherein he was asked by the City Manager to assemble a group of staff members to investigate all of the components and issues that could exist with micro mobility systems. The group will begin researching this matter soon and will work together with this Board as well.

Board Member Maxson stated that she is scheduled to give a presentation on the BCycle System to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Board on May 19, 2022. Chair Landfried stated that the BCycle System is on the list of recommendations to Council, however, at this time he feels the Board should advise the Council that it is exploring and would like them to explore micro mobility systems and the Board agreed.

-Report on Palm Beach Boulevard corridor (Board Member Kakatsch) - None

-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

3. STAFF UPDATES AND REPORTS

3.2. Steven Belden, Community Development Department Director

1. Monthly Development Activity Report

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Steven Belden, Community Development Department Director reported that in April there was \$12 million in permits which was a drop from the previously months.

Board Member Dyar asked if there is a difference in investments in new development versus redevelopment. Mr. Belden replied yes and that there are a lot of challenges that come with redeveloping a site such as unknown factors like infrastructure or environmental issues, however, it can be worth it from an investment standpoint. Board Member Dyar questioned whether sites like the City of Palms Park is worth redeveloping or building new. Vice Chair Miller inquired if the City has hired a consultant to evaluate the City of Palms Park. Mr. Belden replied that a consultant has not been hired at this time and felt that the Council wanted to determine the future disposition of the former News-Press Building first. Vice Chair Miller stated that due to the deadline with the County, he felt that a consultant should be hired to assess the City of Palms Park for economic viability and suggested making that a recommendation to Council. Mr. Belden suggested the Chair discuss this with the Board's liaison to get his thoughts on how to proceed. He conveyed that an assessment of the facility has been done, it was determined that the building is viable although it needs work, and public works has a good grasp of what the needs to be done. Board Member Ford noted that it needs to be determined what maintenance was done by the County and what Council wants to do with the site before a consultant is hired.

Chair Landfried stated that he will have a conversation with the liaison, Councilperson Burson, to see what information he may have about the City of Palms Park and bring it back to the Board. Mr. Belden stated that he will check with Public Works regarding the needs of the building and if there was a formal inspection done by the City or the County on the building and bring it back to the next meeting. Chair Landfried stated that the Board needs more information before making a recommendation to Council.

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

Mr. Belden reported that there was not an apartment project that went before the Planning Board and that it was a request for a Future Land Use Map Amendment for 19 parcels recently annexed into the City which needed to be assigned a zoning designation. The City recommendation the zoning designation of Commercial Intensive (CI) which includes a variety of uses one of which is multi-family residential. The Planning Board recommended denial of the request based on their concerns about the water issue and traffic, and it has not been scheduled to be heard by City Council.

Vice Chair Miller inquired if it is true that the Health Department is considering holding permits. Mr. Belden replied that Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Health met with the City Manager for an update on the water issues and for a short term, the Health Department only wants to issue specific permits not general permits until the additional wells come online. Discussion ensued regarding water issues.

Board Member Ford noted his concern that if the City is not careful about how the land is planned out there will be a problem with too much residential and not enough commercial businesses, services, or green space. Mr. Belden replied that the challenge to do that is due to there being established zoning categories and property owners would not appreciate zoning modifications as they could perceive it as a reduction in their property value. Board Member Ford noted that is the purpose of an overlay system and land parcels should be evaluated to

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decide what kind of land uses needs to be in an area. Mr. Belden stated that the City could go through that process which takes a lot of public involvement and property owner engagement. Discussion ensued regarding more opportunities for job creation.

3. Florida International University Economic Community Economic Development Study and Scope of Services Implementation Plan

Mr. Belden reported that he is having a kick-off strategy meeting next week with Ned Murray, Florida International University (FIU) and John Talmage, Lee County Economic Development Director to discuss the implementation process and other resources to engage in the implementation.

Board Member Pariser inquired about the status of Lofton's Island. Mr. Belden replied that Lofton's Island is not City property, however, the developers are working on it. He noted that the RFP was sent out for the Yacht Basin and the selection committee held presentations in which they recommended that Council hold presentations to rank the top proposals for negotiations. Board Member Ford mentioned that the Yacht Basin project is one where the City can request local participation be part of the contractor team.

5. PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL

5.1. Discuss next presentation to Council

Vice Chair Miller recommended discussing this item further at the next meeting and Board Members agreed.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Board Member Ford noted that he works with Lutheran Services to help provide support to Afghan refugees that are coming to the area. He advised that the Lee County Health Department helped over 1,400 Afghan families that moved to the area last month and are predicting more. He would like to invite the services that help refugees to a meeting to give the Board an update on the number of refugees they anticipate will be moving to the area and what should be done to support them.

Mr. Calkins advised that the Board was discussing earlier in the meeting that they would like an overview of the FEMA flood zone changes and management program. Mr. Belden stated that he can invite the building official to address that matter.

7. NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – June 2, 2022

ADJOURNMENT: *Vice Chair Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:01 p.m.; seconded by Board Member Dyar; motion carried unanimously.*

Following adjournment, Phyllis Calloway, Community Redevelopment Agency Assistant Director gave a tour of the Southwest Florida Enterprise Center.