

**MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING**

May 24, 2021

1 | Page

The Economic Development Advisory Board of the City of Fort Myers, Florida, met in special session at Oscar M. Corbin, Jr. City Hall, 2200 Second Street, its regular meeting place in the City of Fort Myers, Florida, on Monday, May 24, 2021, at 2:02 p.m. Present were: Chair, Dennis Landfried, presiding, Vice Chair, Jerome Miller, and Regular Board Members, Ori Lee Ford, Roy Kennix (Arrived at 2:49 p.m.), Sharon Schulman, Ken Pariser, and Alternate Board Members Nannette Maxson (Arrived at 3:04 p.m.) and Duane Dyar (Arrived at 2:19 p.m. and left at 3:56 p.m.) Also present were: Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator; Grant Alley, City Attorney (Arrived at 2:09 p.m.); Gwen Carlisle, City Clerk; and Lily Baker, Recording Specialist. Absent: Regular Board Member John Kakatsch, and Steven Belden, Community Development Director

**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 Baker.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None

**PRESENTATIONS** - None

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

1. Discuss Board Member topic assignments (Chair Landfried)

Chair Landfried stated the Board Members will focus on each of these charges:

- Board Member Kennix will take lead on the Affordable Housing
- Board Member Pariser will take lead on the Florida International University (FIU) Corridor Planning, oversee all areas including land use map, infrastructure, business development within the corridors, and technical training; other Board Members will take on subcategories:
  - Board Member Dyar will focus on US 41
  - Board Member Kakatsch will focus on Palm Beach Boulevard
  - Board Member Maxon will focus on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK)

Chair Landfried suggested having time limits during the meetings and asked that Board Members prioritize their comments. Board Member Schulman stated that their talking points should be submitted prior to the meeting so all Board Members could review them.

*City Attorney Alley arrived at 2:09 p.m.*

Vice Chair Miller asked when the final FIU Corridor Study will be done. Barbara Carr, Business and Economic Development Administrator, responded that the study is complete and will be presented to City Council in June. Board Member Ford requested the study be presented to the Economic Development Advisory Board prior to being presented to City

**MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING**

May 24, 2021

2 | Page

Council. Chair Landfried asked if the study could be shared and presented at the June 3, 2021 meeting. City Clerk Carlisle stated she will check availability with Community Development Director Steve Belden.

**MOTION: Board Member Ford moved to approve having FIU return to the Economic Advisory Board prior to presenting to City Council; seconded by Board Member Pariser; motion carried unanimously.**

Vice Chair Miller asked about the Fowler Street Interim Pedestrian Concept and shared his disappointment that the Advisory Board was not unified on the concept. Board Member Ford responded that he likes the concept however, he would like to see more progress with intersections along MLK Boulevard. Board Member Ford shared his concern of the impact of MLK and Dunbar being left out of new development planning.

*Board Member Dyar arrived at 2:19 p.m.*

2. Review of the City's land use map for vacant land for industrial and commercial use  
(Board Member Ford)

Board Member Ford stated there are developers interested in coming to Fort Myers however, the issue is finding enough land that is zoned properly for commercial and industrial use and that businesses coming to Fort Myers will have a positive impact creating places for residents to shop and work. Ms. Carr presented a land use map of the City of Fort Myers.

Board Member Dyar asked if there is a disproportionate amount of permits out for multifamily development in comparison to commercial development. Board Member Ford confirmed this is true. Vice Chair Miller shared that commercially zoned land allows for multifamily development. Board Member Ford stated that the City needs to stay ahead of this issue to make sure enough land is zoned for industrial space. City Clerk Carlisle suggested addressing the land available by corridor. Board Member Ford stated that the focus should be around one mile east and west of I-75. Ms. Carr presented a City map that shows available land, land use, and current business information. She stated that while zoning is important, the surrounding businesses and neighborhood can greatly impact what should be developed on the property. Chair Landfried suggested that Ms. Carr bring back a map that outlines the I-75 corridor including the trends of multifamily units.

*Board Member Kennix arrived at 2:49 p.m.*

Board Member Ford requested information showing how many multifamily units are being developed currently in the City and how many are permitted. Ms. Carr stated 17,400 units are being built as of the first quarter and suggested that marketing of available property be targeted towards new businesses. Vice Chair Miller suggested the Board make a recommendation to have funds in the budget for business and economic development to use towards marketing. Board Member Ford suggested having a director position for business and economic development and Vice Chair Miller agreed along with staffing. Ms. Carr stated she is involved in all conversations and meetings regarding economic development regardless of her title. Chair Landfried stated there needs to be a recommendation to Council that the City have an Economic Development Office. Board Member Pariser noted that they would like one person who can be the spokesperson and make decisions without going through

**MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING**

May 24, 2021

3 | Page

multiple people. Board Member Kennix questioned what policy makers want, what is the role of the Economic Development Office, and what the Chief Economic Development Officer does.

*Board Member Maxson arrived at 3:04 p.m.*

**MOTION: Board Member Schulman moved to recommend to Council that the City of Fort Myers develop a fully staffed and funded Economic Development Department that is on par with the major departments of the City that report to the Mayor through the City Manager; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; motion carried unanimously.**

3. Report on water quality (Board Member Schulman)

Board Member Schulman stated she cannot find a fertilizer Ordinance for the City of Fort Myers. City Attorney Alley stated that Ordinance 3489 is a fertilizer Ordinance, however, it may not be comprehensive. Board Member Schulman recommended the City create a fertilizer Ordinance. She also suggested the City develop a Stormwater Retention Credit Program to give credit or incentive to commercial and industrial users who are willing to reduce stormwater runoff and install green infrastructure. City Attorney Alley noted the City currently has a stormwater retention program for credits, however, the Board could ask for the program to be updated to best management practices in which Public Works would need to be involved. Board Member Schulman recommended the City should xeriscape or add porous pavers in areas along major roads where people do not walk. Vice Chair Miller stated that the Public Works Department has suggested a paver drain system. Board Member Dyar stated there are options to incentivize residential homeowners to install rainwater collectors. He questioned how a fertilizer Ordinance would be enforced and stated that education on the subject would be beneficial. Chair Landfried stated all 3 suggestions from Board Member Schulman should be brought before Council. Vice Chair Miller suggested getting feedback from Public Works prior to presenting to this item to Council. Chair Landfried suggested reviewing the County Ordinance regarding fertilizer. Vice Chair Miller felt that the recommendations need more research. Chair Landfried requested to have the current fertilizer Ordinance and Stormwater Retention Program information for the next Board Meeting to finalize what should be presented to Council.

4. Report on Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) Program (Board Member Ford)

Board Member Ford stated that nothing has changed since the last discussion.

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

Vice Chair Miller stated he will table this discussion until the next meeting.

6. Report on affordable housing (Board Member Kennix)

*Board Member Dyar left the meeting at 3:56 p.m.*

Board Member Kennix mentioned discussions with the Affordable Housing Task Force regarding racism, public policy, affordability, and income factors. Five recommendations were made:

- City of Fort Myers should appoint an ombudsman to facilitate access to information

**MINUTES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING**

May 24, 2021

4 | Page

- City of Fort Myers should have a person who can help individuals with short-term or emergency income needs access available resources
- Expand the scope of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to rental and homeownership
- Create a position of grantsmanship solely for helping developers find grants for developing Affordable Housing
- Create a position in the Community Development Department for helping contractors find assistance for developing Affordable Housing

Vice Chair Miller inquired if some of these positions could be combined into one position. He suggested creating a mini-master plan to crystalize the Board's efforts.

**REGULAR ITEMS**

7. Discuss addressing the City Council on June 7, 2021 (Chair Landfried)

Chair Landfried stated discussions will continue next meeting and the Board will firm up their agenda to present to Council.

Board Member Pariser noted Ordinance 3710 which states a Council representative will attend each meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Board and suggested a new liaison. Chair Landfried stated he will speak with the Council liaison the next time he meets with him.

**REPORTS** - None

**NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT – June 3, 2021**

**ADJOURNMENT:** *There being no further business, it was moved by Board Member Pariser; seconded by Vice Chair Miller; and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.*