



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019 – 3:45 P.M.

January-December 2019

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Jason Crush, Chair	A	1	1
Jordan Yates, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Steve Buckingham	P	2	0
Michael Buonaiuto	P	2	0
Christopher “Kit” Denison (arr. 4:18)	P	1	1
Mick Erlandson	A	0	2
Nicholas Kuchova	P	2	0
Bernice Lee	P	1	1
David Neal	P	2	0
Dustin Robinson	A	0	1

Staff

Michael Chen, City Liaison, Economic and Business Development Manager
Lutecia Florencio, Economic Development Program Aide
Sarah Hannah-Spurlock, Nighttime Economy Manager
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to the City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Vice Chair Yates called the meeting to order at 3:50 p.m. It was noted that a quorum was present.

II. Approval of January 9, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A correction to p.1 was noted: the header should be changed to reflect the correct date of January 9, 2019.

Motion made by Mr. Kuchova, seconded by Mr. Neal, to approve the minutes with the requested amendment. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Staff Updates

- **General Update (5 minutes)**

Mr. Chen provided handouts to the Board, noting that 2019 is on track with the previous four years with regard to the number and values of building permits issued. He advised that the City is receiving more and more contacts from companies interested in relocating to Fort Lauderdale: in January, he met with two qualified target industry (QTI) prospects, and has recently received word of another prospect that may relocate from Miami.

Mr. Buckingham recalled a recent article in the *Sun-Sentinel* regarding the City's outreach to a prospective business. Mr. Chen clarified that QTIs are companies whose relocation qualifies them for state incentives; however, they are not typically identified due to confidentiality agreements, which are often executed through the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance. When these industries are brought before the City Commission for approval, they are assigned code names to prevent identification. The confidentiality agreements often last up to a year.

- **Economic Development Strategic Plan (15 minutes)**

- **Mission, Vision, Values Statements**

Mr. Chen referred the members to their materials, which included a balance scorecard reflecting the City's mission, vision, and values statements. He encouraged the members to weigh in with any comments or suggestions. The statements are intended to be reflective of economic development services delivered to the City of Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Chen characterized the scope of discussion of these statements as comprehensive, but pointed out that they are open to further discussion. The statements have not yet been submitted to the Mayor.

Mr. Buckingham recalled that the last Economic Development Strategic Plan was developed in 2015. Mr. Chen confirmed this, but noted that the plan was never adopted. He explained that the Board is asked to revisit and update the plan, including improvements to its format and presentation. After their review, they would be asked to recommend the plan to the City Commission for adoption.

Mr. Kuchova addressed the mention of "better quality of life" in the City's mission statement, which he characterized as livability. He pointed out that this should be examined in terms of mobility, such as the adverse effects of congestion on the City's gross domestic product. Mr. Chen noted that the current City Commission seems to have a different approach to this issue than previous Commissions, pointing out that their focus appears to be on smarter growth that will have less impact on existing neighborhoods.

Mr. Chen continued that the Mayor is very focused on seeking alternative methods of transportation, although he had not been supportive of the proposed Wave streetcar system due to its limited technology. He recommended that Planning and Zoning Department Manager Ella Parker be invited to speak to the Board regarding how density is distributed throughout the City, as well as on the progress of a planning initiative within the Uptown/Cypress Creek Corridor area. He pointed out that many of the Board's questions and concerns are rooted in planning issues as well as in economic development.

Mr. Chen advised that in order to keep the Board up to date and engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan, he hoped to reserve time at future meetings for the Board to work toward this goal. He recommended approximately 15 minutes per meeting, with additional time to be requested as necessary.

Mr. Buonaiuto asked how the Board should determine what Fort Lauderdale businesses actually need and want from the City. Mr. Chen replied that the Department has partnerships with institutions such as the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, which conducts a business survey roughly every three years. The Department also has a set of defined priorities which can be translated into goals, objectives, and initiatives for accomplishment. This provides a strong basis for the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Chen continued that the City is currently recruiting for its Business Engagement Assistance and Mentorship (BEAMs) series. Thus far, 55 applications have been received. The first program begins in March 2019. Most of the applications are for the Solid Foundations program.

Mr. Buonaiuto requested clarification of what the BEAMs program accomplishes. Mr. Chen explained that there are three programs: one for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs, one for more seasoned businesses that are ready to grow, and one for businesses associated with international trade. Board members are invited to attend all three series if they wish.

Mr. Denison arrived at 4:18 p.m.

- **Starting a Business in Fort Lauderdale Flyer**

IV. Greater Fort Lauderdale Sister Cities Update (10 minutes)

Russell Weaver, President of Greater Fort Lauderdale Sister Cities International, provided a handout on the organization. He stated that his priority is to strengthen relationships with Fort Lauderdale's existing Sister Cities; however, opportunities may arise for new Sister Cities in the future. Fewer than 5% of the proposals he receives are made in writing: they are more often verbal, and 60% of proposals are pressed for time

in some capacity. Visitors may be Consuls General, politicians, prominent businesspeople, educators, and others.

Mr. Weaver described a hypothetical Sister Cities application, citing economic development, education, and culture as common driving forces behind the relationship. Different cities will have different government approvals for the relationship: for example, some European cities may operate from a city council perspective, while cities in Asia may work through the nation's central government. The organization will also need to know if a consulate or embassy in the city's home country will be supportive of them as part of the Sister Cities relationship.

Mr. Weaver strongly emphasized the importance of a Sister Cities Committee to the ongoing relationship between cities. The organization will also need to know the goals of this Committee, its fundraising efforts, its chair and membership, and whether there are any special requests that must be made before the agreement is signed. It is important to know everything about the pending relationship before it goes to the City Commission for approval. Most Sister Cities have a "point person" in Fort Lauderdale, but not all have established committees.

V. Presentation: Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance (30 minutes) – David Coddington, Vice President / Business Development

David Coddington, Vice President of Business Development for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, explained that the Alliance is Broward County's official economic development organization, formerly known as the Broward Alliance. They are a public-private partnership, with 40% of funding coming from the Board of County Commissioners and the remaining 60% from member businesses and cities.

The Alliance's goal is to attract and retain targeted industries that are creating jobs in order to stimulate the economy. This increases the tax base for the city, county, and state and makes the overall area more viable. They have relationships with all Broward County cities, as well as with Enterprise Florida, which is the state's economic development organization.

Mr. Coddington continued that when businesses are incentivized to relocate to Broward County, the state provides 80% of the incentive, while the remaining 20% is provided through local matching funds. Smaller projects may be funded directly by the city to which they would relocate, while larger projects' match would be divided between the city and the County. Once the incentive is approved by local Resolution, Enterprise Florida provides the state portion through the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Mr. Coddington advised that when a company is awarded an incentive, this means it is provided with the ability to recoup this amount in tax rebates. All incentives are performance-based and are not received in a lump sum. The program is set up to ensure the company will remain part of the local economy for a number of years.

Mr. Kuchova asked how the City, County, and Alliance work together. Mr. Coddington replied that programs are facilitated through the Alliance's office, which reaches out to the City, advises them of an incoming project, and asks if they would support it. The Alliance then provides information on the project, the expected return on investment, and the jobs expected to be created. He emphasized the importance of the impact of wages on the local economy, which is typically much greater than the impact of a capital investment. For a larger project, the Alliance would reach out to both the City and the County, which provide Resolutions that are then transmitted to the state.

Mr. Chen pointed out that the City works directly with Broward County when the County holds seminars and conventions in support of small businesses, often participating as an exhibitor. Broward County, in turn, teaches some of Fort Lauderdale's BEAMs classes dealing with local commerce. Mr. Coddington recalled the earlier discussion of quality of place and infrastructure, emphasizing these aspects of economic development. He pointed out that a business must feel comfortable in its ability to attract a workforce to Broward County.

Mr. Buckingham noted that the Alliance's website states its primary focus is on the retention and expansion of business. He asked which are the greatest challenges facing businesses already in Broward County. Mr. Coddington stated that the primary challenge is the workforce. There are two sides of economic development in Broward County: tourism and targeted industries such as aviation, life sciences, marine industries, and technology. While the average wage for workers in the tourism industry is roughly \$30,000/year, the Alliance does not become involved with any industry that has an average wage below \$58,000/year.

Mr. Buonaiuto asked if there are programs in place to increase the average wage in Broward County, pointing out the significant gap between wages and cost of living. Mr. Coddington replied that the Alliance targets industries that would raise average wages, and works with universities to facilitate a curriculum that would support higher wages. He acknowledged that the lower wages paid by the tourism industry can present a challenge.

Mr. Chen noted that in addition to the cash incentive aspect of qualified target industries, there is also a job training aspect. The state provides job and workforce training for existing companies in need of different skill sets or new companies that need a workforce trained to its needs. Partners in job training include Career Source Broward, as well as local universities and colleges.

Mr. Denison commented that the marine industry, in particular, is experiencing a challenge from other states, which may lure companies away from relocating to South Florida. Mr. Coddington advised that the Alliance works closely with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF) to counter this, planning efforts such as a signature event within the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show with speakers

from outside the marine industry. This helps foster connections between the marine industry and other businesses, and brings greater visibility to the Broward area.

Mr. Coddington showed a video and distributed a “Tech Gateway” map to the Board members, noting that one of the challenges facing the Alliance is the limitations of its budget. The Alliance is tasked with spreading the word about Broward County on a very limited budget. The Tech Gateway map is one way to tell the story of the area, showing the locations of technology companies in South Florida. It has been provided to high schools and middle schools throughout the County to reinforce the understanding that there are local opportunities in the field of technology, including positions in companies that may not be expected to have a significant technological background and academic institutions focusing on technology.

The Alliance has also made a video available on YouTube, “Life Less Taxing,” related to the lack of a state income tax in Florida. They provide a liaison to the Board of County Commissioners, and Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis has a seat on the Alliance’s Executive Board. The Alliance also provides both the County and the City with talking points.

Mr. Buckingham suggested that the Alliance’s website include a link to Fort Lauderdale’s Economic and Community Investment page. Mr. Chen concluded that Fort Lauderdale can help attract new qualified target industries by developing a branding and business identity.

VI. Old Business

None.

VII. New Business

Mr. Buckingham requested approximately 15 minutes at the March 2019 Board meeting for an update on branding.

The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting will be March 13, 2019.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]