DRAFT

MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2019 – 3:45 P.M.

January-December 2019

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Jordan Yates, Chair	P	12	0
Nicholas Kuchova, Vice Chair	P	12	0
Jay Adams	P	6	3
Michael Buonaiuto	P	12	0
Christopher "Kit" Denison (arr. 3:50)	P	10	2
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	A	5	4
Bernice Lee	P	8	4
David Neal	P	11	1
Brett Rose	P	2	1
Michael Stara	P	1	0
John Vratsinas	P	2	0

Staff
Michael Chen, City Liaison, Economic and Business Development Manager
Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Program Aide
Krystal Permanan, Economic and Program Analyst

Communications to the City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Chair Yates called the meeting to order at 3:47 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present. The Board and Staff members introduced themselves.

II. Approval of November 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Vice Chair Kuchova, seconded by Mr. Stara, to approve the minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Staff Updates – General Update (5 minutes)

Mr. Chen reported that building permit data is not yet available, as the Department of Sustainable Development is still undergoing software conversion. He noted that a summary of Economic and Community Investment (ECI) Division activity is attached to the November 13, 2019 minutes, including participation in the Florida International Trade and Cultural Expo (FITCE). Meetings related to the Mission-to-Market (M2M) objective continue, including attempts to identify prospective candidates as transfer recipients.

- **ECI Media: Presentation of new ECI webpages and BEAMs promotional video**

Mr. Chen showed the Board a new economic development promotional video prepared by the City, which will be embedded in the new ECI webpages. The City has also produced a video to promote the Business Engagement, Assistance, and Mentorship (BEAMs) program, which supports small businesses in all phases, from startup through expansion.

The ECI webpages are currently in the beta testing stage. Mr. Chen anticipated that they will go live on the City's website during the last full week of December 2019. He reviewed the pages further, noting that they include a list of tools with specific functions, direction, and foundational references, such as City planning documents. The pages include information on Fort Lauderdale as an international business destination, its cultural environment, and key industries. Brief descriptions of the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, and Port Everglades are included under the heading of Economic Engines.

The webpages include information on the workforce that the City's primary industry clusters require, which helps promote Fort Lauderdale as a relocation destination. This shows that there is an existing workforce and infrastructure to support these businesses' needs. Data reflecting the City's business climate and economic indicators are also included. This information comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which tends to be roughly three years behind the present day.

Mr. Chen continued that a consultant, Local Intel, will update the webpages as source data is updated. Most BLS data is updated annually. Links to the BEAMs application and schedule are included on the webpages. A summary of tax bases and rates is provided, as well as building permit information, labor cost by industry, and cost of living for both Fort Lauderdale and Broward County. The information is presented in a way that is understandable to both novices and professionals.

The webpages include a section on incentives, which lists brief descriptions of the incentive programs available. Mr. Chen advised that the City, the County, the state of Florida, and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance prefer not to lead a conversation for business relocation with incentive information, as Florida incentives tend to be weak due to the strong business economy. Florida in general and Fort Lauderdale in particular tend

to be more expensive in the first three to five years of a company's relocation, but make up for this afterward due to the state's tax structure.

Mr. Stara noted that the rapid growth in Florida's population also contributes to the business economy. Mr. Chen confirmed this, adding that a lot of this growth is in fact linked to the economy. While there is some concern at the national level regarding the possibility of a coming real estate recession, there are no indicators that show a decline. Fort Lauderdale is the most searched relocation option in the nation as companies relocate from northeastern states with higher taxes.

Mr. Chen continued that there are also corporate relocation inquiries from Miami, which are one result of Brightline service. Companies no longer have to be in the Downtown Miami area to serve that market, and Fort Lauderdale is a less stressful environment.

Mr. Stara observed that two major advantages for Fort Lauderdale over the rest of Broward County are the location of both Port Everglades and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL). Mr. Chen emphasized the importance of promoting Broward County and the Broward/Miami-Dade/Palm Beach County Metro area as well as Fort Lauderdale, as the City functions as the heart of the County's economic engines. He works closely with the Broward County Mayor on a regular basis.

Mr. Chen noted that the Fort Lauderdale labor market has a significant population of individuals with Bachelor's degrees, which is significantly higher than that population for the County at large. The webpage also provides a demographic profile of the City which shows the percentage of the workforce in different types of industries, household information, income and poverty levels, and housing values.

The ECI webpages include information on industry trends and market factors that influence the profitability of specific industries. This also reflects nationwide trends for profits, margins after taxes, and debt. Companies considering relocation can also see where prospective customer bases for their businesses are located, as well as information on local competition.

The webpages also include a section mapping investment areas, opportunity zones, and Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs), as these specially designated areas are targets for some types of investors. They include a zoning map of Fort Lauderdale for relocating businesses as well, along with a map of areas with recreational and cultural activities, including beaches and parks. Community facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, and schools, are also included. The webpages are in need of additional work regarding transportation, as current routes are not yet displaying correctly on the maps.

Available properties can be searched by size, zoning designation, and value. Mr. Chen stated that the company constructing the ECI webpages is a competitive resource and is most likely using data provided by realtors' listing services, which means information will be kept current.

Mr. Chen reiterated that the version of the webpages shown to the Board is in the beta testing phase for review and comment. Once they go live, the pages will be on an independent micro-site that is overlaid onto the City's website. A link may be forwarded to interested businesses so they can access the information.

It was asked if the new webpages will be accompanied by a digital marketing strategy. Mr. Chen replied that his focus will be on providing access to this information to the public. This could include producing a flyer with a link to the opening page, as well as placing a link on ECI emails. It was suggested that there may be opportunities to direct traffic to the site based on search engine optimization. There may also be limitations to the changes that can be made to the platform.

IV. Old Business

- **2020 Meeting Conflicts – Feb. 12th (Commission meeting) and Nov. 11th (Veterans Day)**

Mr. Chen explained that the meeting room may be unavailable on February 12, 2020, while November 11, 2020 is a federal holiday. It was determined that Chair Yates and Mr. Chen would look into options for these two meetings.

V. New Business

Mr. Stara asked how the Board can interact with Port Everglades and its activities so they are aware of what this key resource needs to succeed. Mr. Chen replied that he is frequently in contact with Port Everglades. As the City is very interested in expanding its international profile, he often brings Consuls General to the City to ensure they are aware of the Port and FLL as important economic generators. The Board may request presentations by these entities if they are interested.

Mr. Chen added that he has reached out to Fort Lauderdale's Department of Transportation and Mobility regarding a presentation on the Broward County transportation surtax. A representative of this Department can provide a presentation on this topic at a subsequent meeting.

Mr. Stara also asked how the Economic Development Advisory Board interacts with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance. Mr. Chen stated that the Alliance does not interact regularly with the Board, although they provide an annual presentation. The Mayor is a member of the Alliance and provides alignment and coordination between the Alliance, the County, and the City. Mr. Chen is directly involved in the corporate relocations that the Alliance helps bring to Fort Lauderdale.

The next Economic Development Advisory Board meeting will be January 8, 2020.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 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.]