



**City of Fort Lauderdale
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

December 8, 2021, 3:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Michael Stara, Chair	P	10	2
Nicholas Kuchova, Vice Chair	P	10	2
Jay Adams	P	9	3
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	A	8	4
Michael Lorigas	P	6	2
Katherine Koenig	A	6	2
William Feinberg	P	9	1
Aaron Baron	P	4	0

Staff

- Daphnee Sainvil, Government & Economic Development Manager - Liaison
- Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Representative
- Amber Cabrera, Senior Management Fellow

Communications to the City Commission

No communications to the Commission.

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Chair Stara called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM. Roll was called, and it was noted a quorum was present.

Approval of 2022 Meeting Dates

II. Approval of November 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the November 10, 2021, minutes was made by Member William Feinberg. The motion was seconded by Member Nick Kuchova. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to approve the EDAB meeting schedule dates was made by Member William Feinberg and Seconded by Member Aaron Baron. The motion was passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

Chair Stara: As a board, the Chair stressed the importance of following proper procedures when making a communication to the Commission. An example provided by him is: *“I would like the following to be considered a Communication to the Commission”*



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Member Baron: Provided the board with a list of issues to be discussed and reviewed. In his suggestion, the board should research the topics on the list to determine whether there are any opportunities. He mentioned the multiple conversations that are taking place about the redevelopment of the Galleria Mall. His thoughts on preserving stores like Macy's and Dillard's would keep the mall upscale. He informed the board that he would be attending a meeting to get an update on the redevelopment and growth proposal.

Chair Stara: Observed that the Galleria mall should include more green space.

Member Adams: Referenced that the Plantation mall revamp included the live work play model which consists of office buildings and residential mix-use buildings.

Member Baron: Shares that several factors are contributing to Galleria Mall's revenue, yet he believes the mall's marketing should be revised, as it is a positive community partner, but lacks business partnerships. After his meeting with Galleria personnel, he will have a better understanding of their plans and formulate reasonable recommendations.

Member Feinberg: Asked what ideas can be proposed for new business opportunities that can be recommended for areas like the Galleria where the numbers are not hitting their targets and what role the board can play in driving change.

Amber Cabrera: Communicated examples of recommendations that the board can make to the Commission. Advising that recommendations can be made in reference to the support of the growth of Galleria Mall.

Member Feinberg: Proposed that the Board make a recommendation to the Commission for ensuring that restaurants coming in will be provided with support that will reduce the roadblocks to opening.

Amber Cabrera: Recommended that the board select the top three issues to communicate to the Commission.

Board: Discussed deciphering which discussions relate to economic development, and which are specific to other advisory boards.

Amber Cabrera: Responded that everything has an Economic Development aspect and cautioned the board to steer away from discussion that isn't specific to the goals of the board and division.

Chair Stara: Suggested the board divide recruiting and sustaining businesses into industry categories so that each member could concentrate on a specific sector.



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Member Baron: Assigned to focus on the Galleria project and bringing in a franchise group that can connect people who want to start franchises and businesses.

Member Feinberg: Discussed how to bring more restaurants to the area by assessing challenges in the local food and beverage industry.

Chair Stara: Indicated that his focus would be on the permitting process and making adjustments for new and existing businesses.

Member Feinberg: Stated that he pulls permits and understands that the City's permitting procedures are being adjusted.

Member Adams: Mr. Adams disagreed with Feinberg and cited an example in which an out-of-town architect may run into permitting issues, and if they were not in the know, they may not achieve satisfactory results.

Amber Cabrera: A FAQ sheet could be created based on the findings of Feinberg to assist with the permitting process.

Member Adams: As the owner of the property, he is always required to sign and notarize an affidavit before a permit can be issued. It was pointed out that he receives thirty notices about pulled permits and suggested that a written email of approval should be sufficient. The current process can adversely affect small businesses.

Member Adams: Mentioned a case where the zoning reviewer took three weeks to notice a mistake in the code that required a planner review, resulting in the loss of his Landscape Architect, taking three to four months for the reviewer to realize the error.

Member Lorigas: Asked if policies and procedures pertaining to permitting were accessible to the public. As a result, recommended the board review the permitting policies and procedures and make recommendations where needed.

Amber Cabrera: Directed the board to develop a list of potential solutions to their recommendations. The list should be discussed and possibly communicated to the Commission or proper City personnel.

Member Feinberg: Invited the board to listen in on a Chamber Real Estate and Construction Committee meeting on Thursday to hear about the progress being made with the permitting process.



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Member Lorigas: Recommended that there be a liaison present at other Advisory Boards to raise awareness of other economic development issues. This will provide the proper knowledge and background that influences economic development.

Member Lorigas: Took on the task of being the Economic Development liaison at other boards to provide economic development insight.

Member Feinberg: Prior to COVID the approval to expand Port Everglades was passed, a million-dollar investment to widen the port in order to generate jobs in south Florida. COVID prevented the continued development of that project, adding that the coast guard station must be relocated.

Vice Chair Kuchova: As a member of the National Association District Export Council, he provides capital trade and export advice to the Secretary of Commerce. He also mentioned that since joining the board he worked with Consul Generals and embassy's overseas to attract businesses. He noted that he worked with the startup innovation community to link them to programs that are robust in the North Atlantic and Israel and nothing has been accomplished. Before COVID, the board was trying to attract investors and assist start-up companies with federally issued patents and intellectual property. The program was eventually suspended. More so, before COVID, a cocktail [hour/event] with investors and startup businesses was scheduled but did not occur. He offered to assist the city at several meetings with Consul Generals, but his assistance was declined. Vice Chair Kuchova outlined his focus on the board as making connections with international embassy.

Vice Kuchova suggested that the City invites the Consul Generals from Miami for coffee informing them of the City of Fort Lauderdale agenda and goals. The conversation may spark interest and serve as a reminder to connect the next business that wants to relocate to Fort Lauderdale. He adds there may be an opportunity for recognition with the Swedish Consulate moving into Dania Beach next to the Airport Authority. He emphasized that he had made offers in the past and nothing was done. He also shared that two years ago, a Norwegian company, Rev Ocean, was keen on building the largest research facility. They were interested in establishing a US headquarters. Vice Chair Kuchova stated he wrote a memo explaining why the Commission should attend this meet up, invited the delegation, but City wasn't there.

Member Feinberg: He believes that the City Commissioner should be aware of the board's efforts behind the scenes. It is also disappointing when connections are established without any value being delivered to them. If opportunities like Rev Ocean occur again, the board will ensure a communication is made to the Commission.



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Vice Chair Kuchova: The Sea Keepers Award was presented to Rev Ocean that year, insinuating that was a huge, missed opportunity. Moreover, after a long wait and the departure of the Rev Ocean reps, he crossed paths with the individual who was supposed to be at the meeting, and they responded that they were very busy to attend.

Chair Stara: Asked Member Jay Adams to clarify what is his topic of focus for the board?

Member Adams: Has chosen his area of focus will be small business and CRA

Board Recap Discussion: Chair Stara will provide a list of solutions to the permitting process that will be examined and brought for discussion at the January 12, 2022, meeting. Member Baron will meet with the Galleria Mall to discuss startup incentives and with the franchise group to determine what incentives are needed for success.

Chair Stara: Board members will be able to present their areas of focus and findings at the start of each meeting as a New Year's resolution. Those who were not present may contribute to the discussion and identify their areas of focus for the renewal or review of the board's goals.

Amber Cabrera: The Chair's directive is that all board members provide goals based on their expertise. Email them to Suzy Joseph so they can be reviewed in advance and discussed at the January 12th board meeting.

Chair Stara: Members who were absent will review the goals submitted by the board and include their area of focus.

Member Baron: Discussion of the P3 process recommendation.

Amber Cabrera: Clarified that Member Baron may make recommendations specifically regarding the P3 process in accordance with state law, rather than to address the City's P3 projects.

Chair Stara: Wishing everyone a happy holiday season

Member Kuchova: Wished the board well in the event of his termination from the board.

New Business

Chair: There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:17 PM.

Member Feinberg: Motion to adjourn.



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Member Baron: Second. Vote to adjourn, the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment Meeting adjourned at 4:17 PM

IV. Next Meeting: January 12, 2022 @ 3:00 PM; City Hall, 8th Floor Conference Rm.

EDAB Fiscal Year 2020 Goals:

- Expand Community Footprint via increased engagement and participation from citizen/residents, associations, other city boards.
- Outreach via City social media Economic Engine Focused Presentations.
- Speakers Presentation Format Board Engagement & Accountability (TBD).

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



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