



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

October 12, 2022 at 3:00 PM

[www.fortlauderdale.gov/government/edab](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/government/edab)

**Meeting Minutes**

<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Michael Stara, Chair	P	8	1
Jay Adams	P	7	2
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	P	6	3
Enrique Bargioni, Vice Chair	P	3	0
Russ Klenet	P	2	1
William Feinberg	P	7	2
Kenneth Herz *new*	-	0	0

**Staff**

Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Representative/EDAB Staff Liaison (Present)  
 Amber Cabrera, Administrative Supervisor (Present)  
 Daphnee Sainvil, Government Affairs & Economic Development Division Manager (Absent)

**Communication to the City Commission**

No Communication to the Commission.

**I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum**

**Chair Stara** called the meeting to order at 3:08 PM. Roll was called, and it was noted that there was a quorum.

**II. Approval of the September 14, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the September 14, 2022, draft minutes was made by Mr. Bargioni and seconded by Mr. Feinberg. The motion was passed unanimously.

**III. New Business**

**a) Presentation by Lord Matt Ridley via zoom as he was presenting in London.**

Lord Matt Ridley was introduced by board member Enrique Bargioni. Lord Ridley provided a presentation and explained the how the City can lead innovation. A question-and-answer discussion was held; and is summarized below. *The full presentation from Lord Matt Ridley will be found with the audio online with the backup materials. The presentation will also be attached to the minutes.*

- QUESTION AND ANSWER DISCUSSION with LORD MATT RIDLEY -

**Vice Chair Bargioni** asked what the best way is to bring a state of innovation to the Leadership of the City.

**Mr. Ridley** answered that you must know the leaders you are dealing with and where they are starting from and try to translate some of the general ideas that was presented and tie to it to how it implies to the City. He reiterated the freedom to innovate is key and also ask the question, what is the city doing to



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encourage the exchange of ideas for small businesses and not just big businesses?

**Chair Stara** asked if there were any case study of innovative city that can be used as an example for other inspiring innovative cities.

**Mr. Ridley** responded that the most innovative places in the world at that time of Leonardo Da Vinci was the Italian City/States because they are small unit that think about commerce and trading with the world. The Dutch City/States are also another example. He also mentioned when China was governed by emperor, they suppressed innovation. Recent examples include Silicon Valley as they had a melting pot of people who came and monetized off of science and became successful. Singapore could have done better; however, it's overly run by the government and their innovation hub isn't promoted as it should.

**Member Adams** said the city can encourage the next generation to live in the city and create the quality of life to get them to stay. **Mr. Feinberg** said the City is moving the right direction by creating incubators for allowing new ideas to thrive. He also stated that the Mayor is being proactive by going to other countries and traveling to different parts of the world to bring innovation to the city.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** said the city should target and attract a broad set of innovative companies. **Member Feinberg** asked if the Levan Center of Innovation is meeting its goal and attracting innovative companies?

**Member Klenet** said that it never worked for government to incentivize businesses on a major scale. For example, Broward County has provided small incentives for permitting fees, inspection costs, and some few dollars. He said that the innovation center was funded by Alan Levan who made a lot of money from his business ventures. He's invested in the innovation center to bring innovation to South Florida. Technology innovation and incubation is tied to number of graduates in those universities. The idea of the city being a technology hub is not happening because other cities have tried using incentives like providing free space and monetary incentives and weren't as successful as one would hope. FIU and FAU are not technology schools. Closest thing is UF.

**Chair Stara** let Lord Ridley know that he was free to sign off as the discussion was now moving in a direction past Q&A and his presentation is over.

- END QUESTION AND ANSWER DISCUSSION with LORD MATT RIDLEY -

**Vice Chair Bargioni** asked if there was anything wrong with showcasing the advantages of the City. **Member Klenet** replied that the city does not have those advantages. He said when the Broward Workshop started to survey CEOs across the country to understand why corporations aren't relocating to Fort Lauderdale is because the CEOs believed there weren't a good supply of high-end real estate for them and their partners to purchase.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** maybe that was the case 20- 30 years ago but now there's a ton. Member Klenet said there isn't enough. We need to figure out what we are, not what we aren't. Shouldn't private companies invest? **Member Klenet** countered by asking what the City really has. Further, the City has limited



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industries and that Miami has financial sectors, insurance sectors, and international trade. **Member Etienne-Harvard** responded that it's because Miami does a better job advertising, and the City fails at advertising in the capacity as Miami and the City is slowly starting to advertise in some capacity. She also said, the City may not get to Miami's level but there is some level of traction taking place in the City. Innovation has to start somewhere, saying it's not or can't happen is false.

**Member Adams** asked what the number 2 and 3 reason were for CEOs not coming to Fort Lauderdale. **Member Klenet** said it was education. They didn't know where the kids were going to school. There are more opportunities for kids to live downtown. So the question is where are their kids going to go to school? Living in a condo can only be enough for so long. Options result in sending kids to private school or to the west side such as Weston, Miramar, and other cities in Broward County. The EDAB should focus on what the City is and not what the City wants to be.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** said we should try new areas for development. Mr. Ridley mentioned "the key to growth is the standard of living", and that the City has grown by 40 percent in the last ten years and millennials have upscale places to live, which didn't happen before. We shouldn't be so rigid in thinking that it's not going to happen based on what is happening now.

**Member Klenet** most people are working remotely in Miami. ½ of 1 building opened as class A office – the Main. Most of the building is set up for conference space. Miami is building more office space than us. We are building more residential because the dirt is cheap. Even though rent is high, it's cheaper than in Miami. People are remotely working in Miami. **Member Bargioni** asked if the City should be defined as a marine, tourism City and responded, he doesn't think so. **Member Klenet** emphasizes that currently the city doesn't have Class A office space or industrial space. The city should continue to invest in the tourism and the marine industry and that should be the focus. Miami doesn't compete with the City's marine industry. The City has the largest yachting refurbishing business on the east coast – largest in the world.

Shifting gears, **Chair Stara** said that he has met with each individual member of the board and is scheduled to meet with Member Etienne-Harvard. The things that were brought up was the need to be more educated on tourism and marine and would like to invite the proper industry speakers to get an understanding of what the city relationship is like, as well as what works and what doesn't. **Member Etienne-Harvard** suggested adding the film industry to the list of speakers.

**Ms. Suzy Joseph** reminded the board that the City Commission has given the Division the directive to diversify, not to do away with marine and tourism. There has been direction from the Economic Development Division Manager to the EDAB to provide recommendations as to new industries to focus on, like film.

**Chair Stara** said he would like to have one speaker from the three major industries. King of the marine industry would be one. **Member Feinberg** said that was easy – Phil Purcell, and it was also voiced by **Member Klenet**, who said the meeting could be held at the Marine Industries office or at City Hall. The marine industry has a number of businesses that feed it (i.e. mechanical, manufacturing) and feeds others.



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**Chair Stara** understands their direction they've been given but wants the low-hanging fruit. **Member Klenet** said that film is a county thing, there is no city film office. There is a newly appointed film czar, and she would be interesting to speak to. Chair Stara wants names for the record. The billion dollars plus project in the Everglades would be interesting.

**Action Item:** *Request speakers to come: (1) Film industry – County Film Commissioner, Sandy Lighterman; (2) Marine Industry – Phil Purcell, Marine Industries; and (3) Tourism – Stacy Ritter, CVB President/CEO (Member Klenet's wife). Also added, further in conversation, was FXE Director, Rufus James.*

**Vice Chair Bargioni** said we have certain industries and companies are already discovered in Fort Lauderdale and that other industries need to discover Fort Lauderdale. Member Klenet disagrees. He says the name of the committee is economic development. If spending \$100 million in marine and gets built to \$200 million it's a big deal. **Vice Chair Bargioni** asks what is wrong with adding other industries and companies not traditional. He's identified 50 different innovative companies with no presence in the city because they don't know Fort Lauderdale.

**Ms. Amber Cabrera** reiterated the diversification aspect to the commission's request to be diverse in portfolio. **Chair Stara** chimed in and said there is an understanding that the Commission wants to do both, not one over the other. Moved into what other speakers could come to discuss each industry. If there is low-hanging fruit if something is not working, they can see what else is going to make it work – with a positive attitude. Would getting a speaker for innovation from NSU be worth it?

**Member Klenet** said this is like show and tell. What are our assets in the city of Fort Lauderdale. Once that's figured out, ask who's interested. **Member Adams** – there's an untold story in Flagler development combined with major homes with yachts happening. Plus, all the technology companies tell a story – work, play, work, play is huge benefit for jobs and the working CEO. **Member Klenet**, that's not Fort Lauderdale, as he told the story of former City Manager Pat Salerno and his development in Sunrise. Member Adams, you can build here now because there is no land.

Multiple questions from multiple members – what is the real appetite in Fort Lauderdale? What is the new City Manager's vision for Fort Lauderdale. They would like to hear his vision. **Member Adams** asked what the city manager can really do. For example, **Member Klenet** said that [back then] Pat Salerno waived all permits and accelerated the process to get certain developments built – that is something that can't happen now.

**Member Feinberg** said they can come back with a bunch of ideas but won't go anywhere because there hasn't been a cohesive board. **Member Adams** said they need to come up with solutions and recommendations to present to the Commission and they can take it or leave it.

**Chair Stara** moved the conversation along and asked who could speak to them about entrepreneurship in Fort Lauderdale. Would it be the Alliance. **Member Klenet** explained the role of the Alliance. In a nutshell, they are tasked with bringing business to the entire county, not just the city. The very first



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meeting is with representatives of the Alliance because they can tell us what their working on and their successes. Forget the marine industries.

**MOTION BY MEMBER KLENET** to extend an invitation to the leadership of the Broward Alliance to speak to the EDAB and tell them what they've learned with the research dollars, CEOs interviewed, etc.

*\*Note there was no second before the ensuing discussion occurred.*

**Member Adams** stated that it would be obvious. **Chair Stara** said that they haven't done it and from that point we can get more speakers. **Member Feinberg** said that they [Alliance] knows the players in the industries out there that are interested in coming to Fort Lauderdale. **Member Bargioni** acknowledges that while they may disagree the objective is the same and members should approach ideas with an open mind. **Chair Stara** asked Member Bargioni for his thoughts. **Member Bargioni** stated that he's thinking of the word "Diversity" and to increase the diversity of the city. It doesn't matter if it's two new companies that bring a sales office – it brings diversity. At the other end of the spectrum, **Member Klenet** suggested having a conversation with the real estate side – CBRE, Kushner, etc. and invite one of their representatives because they would tell you who is interested in this region.

\*Inaudible brief discussion\*

**Member Etienne-Harvard** said, the board need to be careful to not repeat or ignoring efforts that have been put in place, that they created a system with organizations to tap into and if the Alliance is one of them then it's okay. \*Inaudible conversation\* **Member Adams** said the Alliance is the last one to hear about it and they are very secretive.

**Chair Stara** reiterated the invite list for future speakers and **Member Klenet** asked to amend the list to add the Director of the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE), Rufus James. There are aviation related businesses and is a huge economic driver. Does city need to incentivize the aerospace industry to come to Fort Lauderdale.

**Chair Stara** read the [now amended] motion by Member Klenet and gave priority to the Mayor and City Manager. **Member Bargioni** asked to get two speakers per meeting. It was agreed on through nonverbal communication. **Member Klenet** said that before just sending a blind invite, they [EDAB] needs to provide them [speakers] with what they want to know. **Member Bargioni's** question was (1) what are the key factors attracting them to Fort Lauderdale and (2) what are the barriers? **Member Feinberg** asked (3) what can the city do better to attract the specific industry to Fort Lauderdale?

**Member Klenet** said before inviting all those on the list is to invite the mayor and city manager. Used the film industry as an example of dollars driving economic development. Look at Pompano Beach putting dollars away for economic development.

- *\*Inaudible voice\** - amend motion to get the Mayor and the City Manager in the room first to get a reality check. (4) What is palatable to the Commission? The EDAB is struggling to figure out recommendations to incentivize and attract businesses. Once EDAB gets the basic vision "arrows in



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the quiver” to move forward. The EDAB needs to understand the overall appetite of the Commission.

The discussion then turned to the monetary incentives and the benefits, significance, or insignificance of the city contribution. Essentially the board wants to know what the Mayor and City Manager need; and what they see as economic development.

**Member Etienne-Harvard** wants them to understand that the goals are realistic, mayor understand, and city manager knows there is budget for it [economic development]. **Chair Stara** adds that he doesn't want the November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting to be confrontational and wants the meeting to be productive. Wants to know how to improve the economic tax base of the city.

**Ms. Joseph** asked the members if they wanted to create the questions now in order to prepare for the meeting with the mayor. Members said later at the time of the November meeting, as they don't even know what to ask. **Chair Stara** said that the mayor would probably talk, if doesn't talk, then members will ask him questions. He also wanted to get a timeline as to how soon members would hear about the city manager confirming his attendance at the next meeting and perhaps stay after the mayor speaks. **Ms. Joseph** responded by saying that they would send an email to the city manager requesting he attend. **Chair Stara** added that he wants to better understand the role of the board in order to be more successful.

**Member Klenet** mentioned that Fort Lauderdale would be in competition with other cities. He used the City of Plantation as an example as to the money that has been poured into the city to create the lifestyle and vibe. The Commission must be willing to compete for the business. **Member Adams** chimed in about the surtax dollars and the inequitable distribution to the city. **Member Klenet** explained that the surtax funding has been focused on traffic flow technology versus construction. **Member Bargioni** said that the meeting with mayor and city manager may prove valuable. EDAB will find out if there's a current answer to assuming a company wants to come in, are there resources or is there nothing to secure it. **Member Klenet** then said that the Alliance would carefully state that they are speaking to companies, and this is what they need to be competitive, because they represent the entire county. Then the EDAB could recommend to the City that funding needs to be set aside as a “war chest” to remain competitive against other cities. **Member Adams** alleges the incentive amount is small and insignificant.

**Chair Stara** recaps: however, doesn't know if there is a motion on the table. He states that the members are all in agreement that they want the mayor and city manager to be present. And would like the City Manager to stay. EDAB wants to understand where economic development stands in the City and their thoughts. [Staff liaison] recorded/wrote the list of names for future speakers. If the City Manager can't make it, then he wants to have the Alliance attend. **Member Etienne-Harvard** asked if the Assistant City Manager could attend. Chair Stara said no, wants City Manager in attendance. There was consensus.

*\*Note the original motion made by Member Klenet has died.\**

**Member Klenet** said there's no need to go through the list inviting people before the City Manager and Mayor let the EDAB know their parameters and the members agreed. **Note: this places the action item on hold for staff.**



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**Ms. Joseph** asked members if they have any recommendations for the Himmarshee, (2<sup>nd</sup> Street). Member Feinberg said they are building another building on the strip. No real response came from the members. Chair Stara asked if anyone had reports to provide.

**Member Etienne-Harvard** asked about social media and website involvement. Ms. Joseph let her know that it would be better to send recommendations to the Division as she is not city staff and it would be more appropriate. Member Etienne-Harvard wanted to know if she could participate in the meetings. Member Etienne-Harvard is not a city employee. However, she will work with staff to voice her recommendations for how social media should promote the city's business community.

**Chair Stara** expressed his dissatisfaction with the Daphnee's [Division Manager's] mode of communication and lack of presence at the meetings. He says that Daphnee prefers to communicate in writing, and he prefers to be in-person. He would have liked Member Etienne-Harvard to be a part of the meetings, accepts the city decision. He also says if Daphnee were present, then it would maybe be discussed. Then asked if Member Klenet wanted to discuss charter schools; Member Klenet declined.

**No area of concentration reports was conducted.**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was moved by Member Klenet and seconded by Vice Chair Bargioni. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned at 4:50 PM.**

**IV. Next Meeting: November 9, 2022 at 3:00 PM**

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