



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

July 12, 2023, at 3:00 PM

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

Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Michael Stara, Chair	A	5	1
Enrique Bargioni, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Jay Adams	P	6	1
William Feinberg	P	6	0
Kenneth Herz	A	2	4
Russ Klenet	P	4	1
Kevin Cochrane	P	3	1

**Staff**

Von Howard, Administrative Supervisor (Present)

Daphnee Sainvil, Government Affairs & Economic Development Division Manager (Absent)

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

Roll was called, and it was noted that there was a quorum. Vice Chair Bargioni called the meeting to order at 3:05PM.

**II. Approval of the April 12, 2023 and June 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Member Feinberg moved to approve the minutes from April 12, 2023, and June 13, 2023, meetings. Member Cochrane seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**III. Guest Speaker – Christopher Cooper, Development Services Department (DSD) Director**

DSD Director Cooper addressed various permitting concerns along with Deputy Director – Alfred Battle, Senior Building Official – John Travers, and Business Assistance Coordinators Andre Cross and Mike Maloney

**IV. Member Discussion**

**Member Adams** mentioned the concerns of small businesses being able to properly pull permits in the City (investors/users) due to the length of time. As well as mirroring the lifestyle of the city to help these small businesses running. He stated that simple permitting changes should go through the architect to help expedite the entire process.

**Member Cochrane** suggested assigning case managers to specific projects to ensure that they are streamlined throughout the process. He also asked what some of the best methods are to become the easiest city to do business within South Florida to help continuously streamline permitting process.

**DSD Director Cooper** explained that the change of use process will help streamline the information to go through the process by assigning task management team to ensure that the permitting process is viewed from beginning to end.



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**Member Feinberg** suggested having a direct contact to see what is expected from the City throughout the process. **DSD Deputy Director Battle** proposed creating a permit solutions team to help.

**Member Cochrane** proposed development of new business process improvement team to focus on a specific priority project to compare current permitting process with proposed streamlined process and bring comparisons to the EDAB for review. He also suggested that pulling an identified list of projects from process improvement team to categorize high level and low-level issues to address.

**Member Feinberg** suggested coordinating with county and state to help make changes to the permitting process guidelines. Also, establishing a listening session with outside contractors to help identify concerns from public to help improve permitting guidelines.

**Member Klenet** inquired if there is a standard practice of communicating to the persons coming into Fort Lauderdale and the perks of businesses relocating to the area. Also, the difficulties of having small businesses go through realtors to provide information of what businesspersons are looking for and managing their account/permits to promote customer advocacy for the new business owner. He also inquired if there was a division within the City to ensure that the buildings that are being developed have a futuristic look like Wynwood/Miami Beach.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** suggested learning from the quick redevelopment processes that have occurred post Hurricane Ian in SW Florida. He inquired if there are current measures that can be implemented in the short term to help expedite corrections of issues.

**Member Adams** suggested increasing staff for the Engineering department help expedite reviews as that seems to often be a hold up within the process. He also suggested the creation of an architectural aesthetic review board to ensure that upcoming building designs are more attractive throughout the City.

**DSD Deputy Director Battle** informed the EDAB that the division will always be at the pace where they will never be at capacity, however the efficiency and consistency is what is needed and monitored.

**Deputy Director Cooper** proposed developing a road mapping process to show to start a business from beginning to end in the City. He stated that the City is still building out the current systems (i.e. Accela and Lauderbuild) to help streamline the overall processes as there was an oversight of the technicality of the permitting process which the division is consistently working to improve. He informed the Board that there are architectural standards that are reviewed through the Developer Review Process, however building and design costs can be astronomical. Lastly, he suggested that the Board review the designs that will be developed along the NW CRA that will showcase a futuristic outlook of the upcoming architectural beauty that is currently being developed.

**Sr. Building Official Travers** informed the Board that the Business Assistance Coordinator position has been established (18 other cities follow the City of Fort Lauderdale's model). The City is also part of the Platinum Cities Permitting Action Team headed by Peggy Doty to promote and establish a building safety program to adhere with state protocols. Further, best practices will be available to share with other



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municipalities explaining/creating uniformed permitting application that can be used throughout the County and software to submit permit applications for municipalities.

Mr. Travers also stated that the rebuilding of SW Florida will go from the past mom-and-pop look to a more resilient outlook and that in order to have great workers, the City must pay great. The establishment of FAT Village is a prime example of the future redevelopment within the City. Lastly, SMS texting will help architects, contractors, business owners speak directly with City inspectors about any questions or concerns that they may have as well as more precise scheduling of inspection appointments.

#### **New Business**

No business discussed.

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

**V. Meeting adjourned at 4:13 PM.**

**The next EDAB meeting will be August 9, 2023**

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