



City of Fort Lauderdale
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
August 11, 2021, 3:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Michael Buonaiuto, Chair	P	7	1
Nicholas Kuchova, Vice Chair	P	6	2
Jay Adams	A	5	3
Michael Stara	P	7	1
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	P	5	3
Michael Lorigas	P	4	0
Katherine Koenig	P	3	1
Willian Feinberg	P	6	0

Staff

Daphne Sainvil, Liaison, Governmental and External Affairs Manager

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Ms. Sainvil called the meeting to order at 3:15 PM Roll was called, and it was noted a quorum was present.

Communications to the City Commission

Motion to recommend that the commission emphasize establishing incentives to attract and assist small business to open and thrive in Fort Lauderdale.

Motion made by Mr. Feinberg, **seconded** by Mr. Lorigas. Voice vote taken and the motion passed unanimously.



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II. Approval of the July 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Michael Lorigas, seconded by Ms. Koenig, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Old Business

Nothing pending on old business was discussed.

IV. New Business

Discuss COVID-19 Protocols – Ms. Sainvil

- Business Survey Questions/Format: Comments at the end. Survey questions should be more substantial and city. The results of the last business survey was sent to EDAB

members. They think it was pretty substantive and to send out a 10-question survey would be easier for staff and the business community.

- Distribution? How do they get this – could completion of a survey be part of getting their business tax license.
- Make it easier to answer

Survey Questions

1. What is your greatest challenge doing business in the city? (Permitting, financial incentives, etc)?
2. What can we do to help you?
3. What is your scope of service?
4. If you had the power to resolve your challenges, what would you do?
5. How can we help you hire and retain employees?
6. Do you believe the city is family friendly?
7. Which of the following incentives would be most beneficial to you:
 - a. Monetary
 - b. Concierge to assist you through the process
 - c. Business Coach (mentor)
 - d. Tax based incentives, if so, tell us which ones – real estate, local business tax, etc...
8. Are you a member of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce (if not, are you interested)
9. Do you think an Economic Development Trust Fund would be beneficial to you?

Executing Success Stories

- Who you are/what your business industry is in
- Why Fort Lauderdale
- Why stay and not leave
- Your satisfaction with Fort Lauderdale
- Ms. Sainvil will send a reminder to members about non-business owner testimonials

FTL Brand Ambassador Program Discussion – Staff Liaison, Daphnee Sainvil

Member Feinberg wanted to know if the program would be tailored for just the city or the county. Ms. Sainvil said for the city: CVB, Alliance, Chamber are county driven.

Member Kuchova is a member of a National Exports. Congressional District member could do a roundtable to discuss export promotion in the city. One percent is export. Stakeholders Dept of Commerce, State, Enterprise FL, Economic Development Offices (sending more information).

- Implementation: as an advisory board and through the larger organizations. Chamber, DDA, Riverwalk, Workshop, Alliance, Winterfest, Marine Assn, Cruise Industry, FXE, etc. Example: Ask the Chamber to promote the city with appropriate branding materials.
- Member Etienne-Harvard – going to conventions and conference as to why going to Fort Lauderdale. Can play a bigger role by using hashtags and posting about economic development expos, conferences, etc.
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Issues with attracting business:

- Transportation
- Crime
- Business Permitting/Taxing for Infrastructure: Beautification of own sidewalks is difficult.

The build out costs are extraordinary and timelines. A simplified process or pot of money for these types of projects will be useful.

Overall lack of incentives

Incentives are essential, Ms. Sainvil said she's going to try to apply for grants and create a trust fund. Also, will work with partner organizations (Broward Workshop, Chamber, etc).

Already working with the Alliance by providing cash incentives on the backend for companies expanding and relocating. Convincing Administration for tax abatement and business loyalty program. Presented ideas to the Commission but didn't get a straight answer. No more state money through the QTI is available.

Mr. Adams: the driver should be transportation and lifestyle. Discussion on the surtax and alleged lack of funding. Ms. Sainvil will send the Oversight Committee information to the members. Mr. Adams, Mr. Feinberg feel that the city overtaxes and has a difficult time permitting.

Incentives, incentives, incentives. Buildout, signage, marketing, etc aren't going to small businesses, and other monetary incentives are going to large business. Unless it's the CRA and CRA funding is all encumbered, and they are about to be sunset.

Mr. Kuchov: would it be okay to reiterate strong recommendation to incentivize businesses? Answer is yes. There was future discussion about the types of incentives and members then circled back to the wordsmithing of the below recommendation

Recommendation from EDAB to Commission – Communication to Commission: To underscore Daphnee's presentation on the need for incentives particularly to small businesses. The motion was clarified to say: *Motion to recommend that the commission emphasize establishing incentives to attract and assist small business to open and thrive in Fort Lauderdale.*

Motion made by Mr. Feinberg, **seconded** by Mr. Lorigas. Voice vote taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Further discussion about incentives: create and look at incentives as a priority to bring future businesses to the city. Emphasize establishing incentives to assist business on the front end.

- Focus on the Sistrunk area.
- Establish guidelines: for small- and first-time businesses. Establishing and/or wants to expand. Could also be for low income and needs to expand. Minority oriented.
- Member Feinberg – pulling permits and talks to the Business Assistance Coordinator – Andre Cross.
 - Permitting as a whole is a work in progress. Advertising/marketing – part of the city being a friendly business environment.
- **Question:** Ask Andre how businesses can utilize him/office through the process. Can he do a 1–2-minute video.
- Promote the fact that we have a Business Assistance Coordinator.

TASK: Ms. Sainvil – ask the DDA to do a Trolley tour and some stops – video and still photos; also do a water taxi tours.

- Schedule meeting with Andre Cross for the next meeting.

- Las Olas Park visit there.

Discussion of the definition of small business is 500 or below and PPP loans.

Boat show video for international promotion: October 27-28, 2021. Rimini and Venice could send us a video.

Next Meeting Tentative Agenda

- October Ethics Training by the City Clerk @ 2:30 PM (October 13th).

The next EDAB meeting will be September 8, 2021.

Adjourned 4:33 PM

V. Next Meeting: September 8, 2021.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 PM.

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