

**CITY OF FORT WALTON BEACH
ECONOMIC ADVISORY GROUP
MARCH 15, 2010**

The meeting of the Economic Advisory Group of the City of Fort Walton Beach was held on Monday, March 15, 2010 at 5:30 pm in the Council Chambers of Fort Walton Beach City Hall with the following members present:

Doug Reed, Chairman, CRA; Debbie Bodenshine, EDC; Ted Corcoran, Chamber of Commerce; Eric Davis, citizen; Glenda Glover, MPB; Katy Krueger, Historic Sites; and Douglas Pike, citizen

Absent: Don Amunds, County Commissioner

Also Present: Samantha Abell, Planning Manager

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Glover moved to approve the minutes of January 25, 2010. Ms. Bodenshine seconded motion and it carried unanimously with Bodenshine, Corcoran, Davis, Glover, Krueger, Pike, and Reed in favor (Amunds absent).

STAFF UPDATES

Samantha Abell, Planning Manager, briefed the group on the Planning and Economic Development Division's current efforts including annexation reports requested by the City Council; meetings with DCA regarding changes to the City's Comprehensive Plan to include the City's economic planning initiatives; economic stimulus programs and projects being prioritized by the CRA; and the group's Economic Improvement Plan that is scheduled to go before Council in May; and the final recommendations of the Business Retention Panel, of which Ms. Abell will provide a link.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

Chamber of Commerce – Mr. Corcoran announced the Musical Echoes in April; the upcoming Eglin Air Show; and that downtown will be open until 9:00 pm beginning March 19.

Economic Development Council (EDC) – Ms. Bodenshine advised the EDC is working with the Chamber of Commerce on Eglin's 75th anniversary; discussed the five-county trip to Washington DC by the Defense Support Initiative; informed the Tecmen Group was approved for a grant for training for employees in project management; stated the EDC is working with Eric Steinberg and Enterprise Florida on the Sister City initiative with Sweden; announced a public forum for public officials the end of April; and reported a new company, R.E. Michael Refrigeration Company, is opening in the City.

Citizen—Eric Davis – Mr. Davis discussed the Tennis Tournament that is taking place this week and the field of players include 30 of the world's top players.

Citizen—Doug Pike – Mr. Pike had nothing to report at this time.

Historic Sites Board – Ms. Krueger advised an archaeological dig was held the end of February at Merlin's and that Indian pottery was found 8 inches underneath the surface.

Municipal Planning Board (MPB) – Ms. Glover discussed the City's efforts to make the permitting process more efficient; advised that the MPB approved a conditional use for motorsports rental in the downtown area; and that the MPB is working policies to assist the Arts and Entertainment District.

Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) – Mr. Reed advised the CRA will have a presentation on Wednesday on the Soundside project, which is focused on work-force housing. Mr. Reed informed that the CRA has recognized the importance of the Indian Temple Mound Museum and are working with the museum director to place emphasis on the museum; and that the CRA is working with the Waterfront Task Force and City Staff on the boardwalk concept. Ms. Abell stated since the last CRA meeting, several property owners have come forward who want to begin their portion of the boardwalk between Sound Park and the Landing and Staff will present that to the CRA at their next meeting. Mr. Reed noted the cooperation between the City Council and staff, and staff and the citizens of the City, and that this cooperation is welcome after so many years of non-cooperation.

LANDMARK UPDATE

Ms. Abell advised the developers of the Landmark Center had requested a change to the site plan to include a hotel instead of condominiums; however, they have withdrawn that application and are looking at options to include residential development.

REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

Mr. Pike questioned if a revolving loan program had been discussed by the CRA to go along with their grants and stimulus programs. Ms. Abell responded it had. Chairman Reed advised that it that there is a lot of competition for CRA funds and that the CRA has requested additional from staff on the revolving loan program. Ms. Abell stated the group could make a recommendation to the CRA regarding any of the programs discussed this evening.

Mr. Pike moved that the Economic Advisory Group recommends to the CRA that they look at a revolving loan program. Ms. Glover seconded motion and it carried unanimously with Bodenstine, Corcoran, Davis, Glover, Krueger, Pike, and Reed in favor (Amunds absent).

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Chairman asked the group to contact Ms. Abell with any items they wish to include on the April agenda. Ms. Abell advised that the agenda will include the adopted Economic Implementation Plan.

TRAVELING VIETNAM WALL

Ms. Glover reported the traveling Vietnam Wall will be coming to the area in June.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Ms. Abell advised that the City has interviewed for a new Special Projects Coordinator for the CRA, and the new hire will attend the next meeting of the group.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Economic Advisory Group will be held on **Monday, June 14th, at 5:30 pm** in the Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:23 pm.

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