



DRAFT
City of Fort Lauderdale
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
 April 14, 2021, 3:30 PM
 Virtual Meeting Minutes

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Jordan Yates, Chair	P	3	1
Nicholas Kuchova, Vice Chair	P	3	1
Jay Adams	P	3	1
Michael Buonaiuto	P	4	0
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	A	2	2
David Neal	P	3	1
Michael Stara	P	4	0
William "Bill" Feinberg	P	2	0

Staff

Daphnee Sainvil, Liaison, Governmental and External Affairs Manager
 Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Representative
 Krystal Permanan, Economic Development Representative

Communications to the City Commission

None.

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Mr. Yates called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

Mrs. Joseph called roll, and it was noted a quorum was present.

II. Approval of the March 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Stara, seconded by Mr. Feinberg, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

III. Old Business- Mission, parameters, and establish year end goals

Mr. Yates announced his exit as chair and stated this item should be postponed until next month's meeting, where a new chair will be elected. He cited his decision on professional obligations which will inhibit him from being an effective chair.

IV. New Business

- **Discussion and Election of EDAB Board**

Mrs. Joseph advised, per the City Clerk's office, that Mr. Yates will complete this meeting as chair. That the election of a new chair would be added as an agenda item in the next meeting, as the first order of business.

- **Discussion of the FTL Business Ambassador Initiative**

Ms. Sainvil described the FTL Business Ambassador Initiative (initiative) as utilizing the members of the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB), business influencers, and community leaders to engage other businesses with a welcome package of branding materials. It serves as a statement that the city is here for you, rather than the city is here to drack down on you. This is in conjunction with what others have suggested over the past couple of months. A few potential business owners who've wanted to relocate to Fort Lauderdale have inquired about it. Essentially, it would be a pilot to see how it would work. Our division would provide the EDAB with materials to give to businesses in face-to-face meetings, or just to walk the neighborhood that their business is located. For those who are not comfortable with face-to-face, you can do a Zoom meeting alone or with Economic and Community Investment (ECI) present to note what resources are required from the city. Ms. Sainvil further explained that this initiative is going to be part of her proposal in marketing the city and marketing economic development and the business community, to get them engaged with the city, and ECI engaged with businesses. This initiative will be presented on May 18th to the Board of Commissioners, as Ms. Sainvil has been tasked with doing a presentation on how she intends to bolster the marketing efforts of the city to attract businesses. Therefore, Ms. Sainvil believes that this initiative will set the City of Fort Lauderdale apart from other states and cities. However, the initiative is only a proposition. Currently, Ms. Sainvil is presenting the initiative to the EDAB for feedback.

Mr. Kuchova asked if the initiative would be done in conjunction with retail or neighborhood organizations.

Ms. Sainvil responded that she intended to utilize other organizations to collaborate on other initiatives such as sponsorship of digital ads. That we are already working with the Fort Lauderdale Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, and Broward County, which can only strength our relationship.

Mr. Neal stated that he believes the meeting should not proceed without electing a new chair and a set of goals. Having had the most experience and diplomatic abilities, that Mr. Kuchova should be the next in line to assume the position.

Ms. Sainvil responded that she is informing the EDAB of what the division is proposing to do. That the EDAB is one component of the initiative, and the business community as a whole is another component. So regardless of what happens at the meeting, the initiative

is not something that'll happen in the next two weeks- that the initiative is developing, and she wanted to provide an update.

Mr. Stara asked Ms. Sainvil who tasked her with this initiative.

Ms. Sainvil responded that she is directed by the Mayor, City Manager, and the Commission. That unlike Miami, which has a major wallet when it comes to marketing strategies- the City of Fort Lauderdale does not. So, this initiative was an out-of-the-box idea she presented to city leadership, who were completely supportive of the idea.

Mr. Neal stated that he still believes that a chair should be elected before moving forward with discussions of this initiative.

Mr. Yates responded that an election isn't necessary to continue a discussion on the initiative because whoever the new chair is will carry on the initiative.

Mr. Neal asked for an interim chair, and recommended Mr. Kuchova.

Mrs. Joseph, per the city clerk's office, advised that this being Mr. Yate's last meeting, that he can complete this meeting as chair. That the election of a new chair would be added as an agenda item in the next meeting, as the first order of business.

Mr. Neal clarified that there was a quorum and requested that Mr. Kuchova be placed as the interim chair until the next meeting.

Ms. Sainvil responded that action is not in accordance with the process, as per the city clerk's office. That Mr. Yates is present and will continue as chair in this meeting. That it is not necessary to have a chair between the end of today's meeting and next month's meeting.

Mr. Neal stated the meeting should talk about economic development- that there's two towers going up in Fort Lauderdale and that the board hasn't addressed the traffic issue, the idea of the tunnel, and the pandemic. That how is the city planning to address traffic and parking issues with the building of these towers.

Mr. Yates stated that although Mr. Neal's questions are valid, that it's important that the meeting stick to the agenda items and let the city liaison lead the meeting. That there's no reason to go off topic, and off the rails because there is no interim chair- that he (Mr. Yates) is still the chair.

Mr. Buonaiuto asked if there was a uniform resource locator (URL) that he can use to research the initiative. That if there is another city that has a similar program.

Ms. Sainvil responded that it is only a proposition, and nothing has been put on paper. That it is merely a marketing initiative that she is intended to present to the city commission at the end of May. That this initiative is unique because it involves one-on-one engagement.

Mr. Feinberg stated that he recently attended a meeting, hosted monthly by the economic council at the City of Oakland Park, which invites current and potential business owners. That these meetings are extremely useful because it allows the welcoming of new businesses to engage with current businesses for guidance and assistance with starting and running their business. In one example, the new business owner was able to receive useful advice on the permitting process. Mr. Feinberg further explained that the City of Fort Lauderdale's digital permitting process is finally starting to work. That an observation he's made has been in the attitude of everyone at the city has been much more positive and helpful. That Fort Lauderdale is attracting more businesses and residents now for the first time in a long time. That in his 37 years of business, he's never received so many calls from out-of-towners wanting to move to Broward County. That the board should identify the priority issues that the commissioners should be addressing.

Mr. Buonaiuto responded that's what he believes the SWOT analysis was intended to do- to identify to the city commission areas of weakness, applaud areas of strength, and areas to protect our future from risk and shock by giving them some foresight.

Ms. Sainvil encouraged everyone to review the top of their monthly agendas where it states the EDAB purpose, which is the mission statement of the EDAB. That it is narrowly tailored to what the EDAB needs to advise the city commission. The EDAB's recommendation comes through ECI, so it hits her (Ms. Sainvil) and then hits the commission, to then come back to her- so it's a boomerang effect. Therefore, the recommendation that comes from the EDAB, some may be initiatives that the division is already working on, or ones that this division can not do because another department or division within the city has already been tasked to do it. For example, infrastructure is under transportation, and resilience is under public works. Our division (ECI) is strictly economic development and how we're going to attract, retain, and grow businesses. That's the three main focuses of our division. We need businesses to invest in the city and our community. What we do may overlap with the rest of the city, but as an advisory board, the recommendation that I (Ms. Sainvil) have for you (EDAB) as the city liaison is to encourage you to look at your purpose, and stick to that purpose.

Mr. Neal interrupted by stating that he asked the liaison (Ms. Sainvil) to put the World Trade Center on the agenda, which would support every person in this county, but she did not.

Ms. Sainvil responded that it is already in front of the Mayor and City Manager, so the EDAB does not have to focus on the World Trade Center anymore.

Mr. Feinberg asked if the EDAB was not getting direction from the commission and where

the board could be helping them. That economic development is bringing businesses to the city and making current business owners successful. If we are not addressing the issues to help our businesses stay in business and be successful and bring new businesses here, then we're not doing economic development.

Ms. Sainvil responded that is why the EDAB is supposed to establish a list of goals, and what can be done in conjunction with ECI to accomplish those goals, then provide a year end report to the city commission.

Mr. Neal stated that the EDAB is not accomplishing anything.

Mr. Stara asked Ms. Sainvil regarding Miami, is their big budget due to tax money or another dedicated funding source.

Ms. Sainvil responded that it is both through their revenue and private funding. Most of what Mayor Francis Suarez is doing with City of Miami is being funded by private dollars, with county backing, outside of what revenue brings.

Mr. Stara asked which group the ambassador initiative would be most effective with.

Ms. Sainvil responded that it applies to businesses in Florida and afar. Hence why the direction she received from the commission was to focus on marketing efforts and expose our ecosystem. To make the distinction that Fort Lauderdale is not Miami. The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance has brought three potential projects where a business is about to expand and bring 225 jobs to Fort Lauderdale in a 4-year projected timeframe. Therefore, I (Ms. Sainvil) am tasked with using the EDAB to let the city know what is being done to market Fort Lauderdale and distinguish it from other cities within the tri county area.

Mr. Stara inferred that it is possible that the ambassador initiative should then tie in with one or more of the goals of the SWOT analysis.

Mr. Neal stated that there was no point in doing a SWOT analysis on an entire city.

Mr. Adams stated neighboring cities write checks to bring businesses, but not Fort Lauderdale, which also lacks a sufficient talent pool of engineers like those offered at the corporate park in Sunrise, Plantation, and Miramar. What Fort Lauderdale has is lifestyle. However, Fort Lauderdale lifestyle is affected by being one of the most dangerous cities in the United States, contributed to traffic and vehicular dangers. That we have billions of dollars from the county to make our city and overall lifestyle better. However, we do not qualify for any of the tax dollars because the City of Fort Lauderdale does not have a planning department, so these billions of dollars coming through the county is given to every other city except Fort Lauderdale because we have no plans and no qualifying

projects.

Ms. Sainvil explained that the city does provide certain incentives for certain projects. That a part of her initiative for the city is to apply for more federal dollars to establish an actual economic development pot. Note that other cities have ordinances where they take a portion of the taxes collected and put it towards their economic development funding pot, which the City of Fort Lauderdale has not done yet. What the city does have is a direct cash incentive that is tied heavily to the Qualified Target Industry (QTI) tax incentive program, which the state did not reauthorize. According to our city ordinance, there is a direct cash incentive fund that is tied to payroll, as long as ten or more jobs are created at above average wage, there is a certain amount of money that can be received for each job created. This is tied into general revenue, which is problematic. Hence, why Ms. Sainvil is in communication with the City Attorney to create an actual economic development fund.

Mr. Neal stated that taxes are divided based on where people live. That there's been a special tax division, which is supposed to end in 2025.

Ms. Sainvil replied about the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), most of their funds have been encumbered by projects they have committed to.

Mr. Neal exclaimed that Ms. Sainvil is wrong, lying, and he intends on reporting her. That Ms. Sainvil as an employee of the city, who's salary is being paid by the city, that she is stealing. That money is being stolen from the taxpayers and given to developers.

Mr. Buonaiuto asked Mr. Yates to call a point of order.

Mr. Yates called a point of order.

Mr. Feinberg interjected that Mr. Neal was overreacting and that he does not believe Ms. Sainvil, per se, is stealing anything. That what Mr. Neal probably intended to imply was that the city was not properly using funds for its intended purpose. Because the use of CRA funds was determined years ago.

Mr. Yates reiterated the focus of the meeting which is the discussion of the ambassador initiative. That the meeting has nothing to do with the CRA. That like Ms. Sainvil, when Michael Chen served as the city liaison, he too also discussed matters that came directly from the City Manager. Basically, we must assess how best we can support the efforts of the commission, as well as our own goals for this board. That the point of the SWOT analysis was to figure out what the commission thought about economic development and what they would like to bounce off the board. That, as stated prior by Mr. Kuchova, we only have convening power; we have no other power other than that.

Mr. Adams stated that he heard at a commission meeting that the commission is not going to give direction. But they need to give us direction and the exact items for the agenda. That's their job. That the board is wasting a lot of time on items such as the SWOT analysis and mission statements. That like Mr. Feinberg stated prior, the board needs to determine its top three priorities. Mr. Adams then recommended one- that the city needs a planning department that can make our streets and overall lifestyle better. Many chief executive officer (CEO's) will not come to Fort Lauderdale because it's so dangerous- you can't walk your dog or ride a bike with your kid. That there's billions of dollars in surtax money that would create jobs and a better lifestyle. That this is his top agenda item.

Mrs. Joseph responded to Mr. Adams that the city does in fact have a planning department.

Mr. Adams stated that the city used to have a handful of transportation planners, but fired them all, and are now trying to hire a few back.

Ms. Sainvil asked that portion of Mr. Adams' conversation to be held offline- to insinuate that the city does not have a planning department when there exist planners in the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), Urban Design and Planning (UD&P), and Transportation and Mobility (TAM). That this board is not the appropriate forum for that issue.

Mr. Feinberg stated that the Mayor is juggling many projects now with the tunnel and the water treatment facility. That there are multiple plans happening, many of which members of the board just aren't aware of. That Mr. Adams must stay focused as to how the board can help.

Mr. Neal stated that the board needs to look at the city budget, how the funds are being allocated, then come up with projects the board wants to do.

Mr. Yates clarified that the EDAB does not choose projects. That is outside of the scope of what the board does.

Mr. Neal responded that the EDAB, however, was asked to complete a SWOT analysis on the entire city, which is the silliest thing he's ever been involved in.

Mr. Feinberg requested that the board come up with recommendations for economic development.

Mr. Adams responded: transportation, pedestrian safety, capture surtax dollars with good plans. That plans must be submitted to get any money. In short, to increase transportation planning personnel to increase those dollars, which will lead to economic

development with more businesses coming, due to the city being safer with a better lifestyle.

Ms. Sainvil stated that there are projects submitted for surface infrastructure and Community Investment Plan (CIP) projects from federal dollars. That the city did not go after member-related projects on the state level, in the next session. That if the board has any further questions regarding transportation that they would like her to inquire about, that they must submit their questions to her in writing.

Mr. Neal stated his two ideas to create economic development are the World Trade Center and a narrative for an underground tunnel to ease traffic.

Mr. Adams then shared his screen to show “Municipal Surtax Capitals Projects Priorities (Fiscal Year 2020)” to demonstrate how the City of Fort Lauderdale received less funding when compared to other cities.

Mr. Buonaiuto requested that an official from TAM be invited to a future meeting to educate the EDAB on this issue.

Ms. Sainvil responded that she will submit a request for TAM’s availability for the next meeting.

Mr. Yates revisited Mr. Neal’s recommendation of the World Trade Center by stating that it is on the desk of the City Manager and the City Attorney.

Ms. Sainvil described the World Trade Center as a franchise of Brazilian developers, to be used as an incubator space, offices for Consulates, and mixed-use residential. The location in the letter of intent is near the Fort Lauderdale Downtown Heliport and projected to build in two years. That it is being done in conjunction with Broward County.

Mrs. Permanan reminded the board that this topic was discussed in the previous meeting, available under priority #5 in the meeting minutes. Mr. Feinberg and Mr. Neal both stated that they do not receive the minutes. Mrs. Permanan clarified that it was sent to all members of the board, which includes both Mr. Feinberg and Mr. Neal on April 5th at 9:28 a.m.

Mr. Feinberg asked for an update in writing from TAM regarding the surtax.

Mr. Adams responded to Mr. Feinberg that information is available in detail on the Broward MPO’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan’s website.

V. Next Meeting: May 12, 2021 (Agenda to be distributed at a later date).

VI. Adjournment

The next virtual EDAB meeting will be May 12, 2021.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

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

