



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**

September 14, 2022 at 3:00 PM

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

**Meeting Minutes**

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<b>Board Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Michael Stara, Chair	P	7	1
Jay Adams	P	6	2
Dudly Etienne-Harvard	P	5	3
Enrique Bargioni, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Russ Klenet	A	1	1
William Feinberg	A	6	2

**Staff**

Suzy Joseph, Economic Development Representative (Present)

Amber Cabrera, Senior Management Fellow (Absent)

Daphnee Sainvil, Government Affairs & Economic Development 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 July 13, 2022, Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the July 13, 2022, draft minutes was made by Mr. Bargioni and seconded by Mr. Adams. The motion was passed unanimously.

**III. New Business**

**a) Election of New Vice Chair**

Due to a recent vacancy in the position of Vice Chair, an election for the position took place. Member Bargioni nominated himself. For the record, no other names were presented for the position. This self-nomination was seconded by Member Etienne-Harvard. A voice vote was taken and the nomination of Member Bargioni to be the Vice Chair passed unanimously.

**b) Area of Concentration updates:**

**a) Member Adams** - Small business and CRA – No report.

**b) Vice Chair Bargioni** - Innovation and CRA.

There is a company called *South Florida Jeeps*, which restructures Jeeps using cutting-edge technology. Vehicles sell for approximately \$150,000. Several vehicles have been purchased by



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the City's police department. There is a company named *Start Up Space*, which offers low-cost rental spaces for businesses for as little as \$400 a month.

Economic development in a city has many facets, and permit approval delays can be very costly for small businesses. Approval of developers' plans usually takes 17 months.

**Chair Stara** suggested raising the issue of permit approval time frame with the City Commission or during the City Commission's visit to the EDAB meeting.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** suggested speaking to departmental personnel about permits.

**Chair Stara** voiced in his attempts to speak with the permitting personnel who could provide answers to the boards' permitting questions, Chair Stara was told that all questions needed to be written down. Upon becoming Chair, he wanted to get answers to permitting questions, but encountered roadblocks.

**Action Item:** **Member Adams** suggested that the board could draft permitting suggestions or solutions.

**Chair Stara:** To avoid the sense of dictating what the commissioners should do, Chair Stara believes that the board needs the commissioners buy-in. In a meeting, he stated that he was told he was being hostile when he wasn't.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** asked if it was okay for him to try to reach out to the permitting department.

Board members agreed, and Chair Stara noted that any success he has in his quest to get someone to discuss resolving permitting issues would be appreciated.

**Vice Chair Bargioni** emphasized that if the city can reduce the permit approval time by 20-30%, it would be a huge benefit to businesses and will enhance the city's reputation as a developer-friendly city.

**Suzy Joseph** indicated that she would discuss permitting concerns with Daphnee.

While the board agreed the permitting approval timeline is a national issue, they wondered if Fort Lauderdale could be as efficient as possible.

**Suzy Joseph** asked the board if they could provide an example of a city that has an effective permitting process.

**Action Item:** In response, the board stated further research will be conducted, and recommendations will be provided by the board



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**Member Adams** reported from his experience that the permitting process in the City is challenging because of the various reviews and requirements.

**Member Etienne-Harvard** commented on Daphnee's Economic Diversification recommendation request and indicated that permits might be an issue if the city is not proactive in fixing the permitting issues.

**Member Adams** stated that permits approval timelines affect small businesses negatively.

**Action Item:** Seeking a meeting with a permitting professional to discuss permit concerns and solutions.

c) **Member Etienne-Harvard** - Web and Social Media Liaison.

Interested in assisting the Division with the redevelopment of the website and social media page and would like to attend meetings when possible.

**Action Item:** Ask Daphnee if Member Etienne-Harvard can participate in website and social media meeting discussions.

**Member Etienne-Harvard** states that as part of the Broward Commission's efforts to support the film industry, Etienne-Harvard suggested that the City create a database of local businesses that provide services to the industry. In her remarks, she stressed that Broward County is creating a database and that the City might consider creating one as well, and that she is willing to assist with the creation of the database.

**Suzy Joseph** reminded the board of the June 16<sup>th</sup> Division Report which requested members to identify new target industries outside of the existing City target industries, such as marine and tourism.

**Action Item:** **Member Etienne-Harvard** recommended that the City make a commercial to inform film industry type businesses that the film industry is coming to Broward County/City and to be prepared to do business in Fort Lauderdale.

**Recommended target industries:** Film, venture capital, and innovation technology.

**Action Item:** **Chair Stara** seeks detailed information concerning the board meeting with the Mayor and Commissioner(s). He asked for the meeting to take place, what document or request should be created?

**Vice Chair Bargioni** stated that he would like to suggest speakers and said he has been following innovation for quite some time and discovered a popular innovation authority named Matt Ridley, who is a London native who is highly knowledgeable about innovative cities.

**Suzy Joseph** advised that June 16<sup>th</sup> Division Report recommendation request included recommendations for the Economic Incentive Program, specifically the target industry tax refund.



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED**

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**Member Adams** expressed the opinion that tax refunds for target industries are insignificant relative to costs associated with business operation.

**Chair Stara** asked if the city offered tax abatements and what incentives are available for businesses?

**Action Items:** Speaker's request was made for permitting personal, Matt Ridley and Daphnee to discuss incentives. Suzy will resend the June 16<sup>th</sup> Division Report which includes the recommendation list for the board review along with the incentive ordinance and include it on the October agenda. A reminder will be sent to the board by Chair Stara to review the items and be prepared to discuss them at the next meeting.

- d) **Member Feinberg** - Restaurant industry and GFLCC Real Estate/Construction Council Absent, No report.
- e) **Member Klenet** - Absent, No report.
- f) **Chair Stara** - LGBTQ+ and Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) No report.

**Action Item:** **Chair Stara** asked what needs to be done for the board to meet with the Mayor and/or Commissioners? In addition, what document or request should be created for the meeting to take place? In his remarks, he reiterated that the board would like to speak to the permitting department.

**Suzy Joseph** Displayed the Economic Development Incentive Ordinance for the board's review and discussion.

The board took some time to review the projected ordinance and agreed to discuss it in more detail at the next meeting.

**Action Item:** **Chair Stara** asked if a property tax abatement is possible for a few years?

#### IV. Next Meeting: **October 12, 2022 at 3:00 PM**

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

**Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.**

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