



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

November 12, 2025, at 3:00 PM

www.fortlauderdale.gov/government/edab

Meeting Minutes

Board Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Enrique Bargioni, Chair	P	11	0
Russ Klenet, Vice Chair	P	10	1
Jay Adams	P	10	1
William Feinberg	P	9	2
Nicholas Kollias	P	11	0
Marianna S. DeJager	A	9	2
Allyson Meyers	P	10	1
Jason Hughes	P	6	3
Haley Dowling	P	7	0
Kymrae Mizell-Hill	P	5	1

Staff

- Von Howard, Administrative Supervisor (Present)
- Porshia Garcia, Community Services Department Director (Present)
- Katrina Johnson, Interim Asst. Community Services Department Director (Not Present)
- Melissa Mata, Management Analyst (Present)
- Michael Ferrera, Urban Planner II (Present)

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Chair, Enrique Bargioni, called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM. Roll call was issued, and it was noted that quorum was established.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chair, Enrique Bargioni, carried out a motion to approve the EDAB Minutes from the meeting that took place on Wednesday, October 8, 2025. Motion moved by Member Feinberg and seconded by Member Hughes. Motion passed; EDAB Minutes were approved at 3:04 PM.

III. Certificate of Use Discussion

Staff reintroduced the Certificate of Use (COU) initiative for Board feedback before its presentation to the City Commission. The discussion consisted of the purpose of COU as a front-end-zoning verification tool to prevent incompatible business uses before leases are signed. Community Services Department Director, Porshia Garcia, gave a brief explanation of the discussion as a reminder of the purpose of the requested feedback.

There were concerns from the Board about the complexities of the existing permitting structure, including unexpected inspection requirements, high impact fees, and change-of-use challenges. Member Adams highlighted that change-of-use processes often remain burdensome even when a business transitions between uses that appear similar on the front end.

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Examples included:

- A space cycling between office, retail, office again, still triggering full architectural drawings, fire review, and ADA upgrades.
- Businesses paying thousands in fees simply because of use classification changes that did not materially alter intensity.

Director Garcia and Mr. Ferrera clarified distinctions between zoning-based COU and state-regulated building code-driven Change of Use. They also informed the members that parking calculations and intensity-of-use triggers were reviewed. It was further explained that it is recommended that each business owner confirm that a proposed business use is permitted *before* the tenant signs a lease or proceeds with costly buildout investments.

The new process will help reduce the number of businesses unknowingly entering incompatible or non-permissible spaces. It will also improve efficiency by routing applications directly to the appropriate divisions (Zoning, Business Tax, Building).

Vice Chair Klenet proposed having staff consider integrating AI-driven pre-screening tools to modernize and expedite the permitting process

A motion was made by Member Feinberg for EDAB to support the COU proposal and recommend forwarding it to the City Commission. Member Hughes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. 2026 Meeting Calendar Review

Staff presented the proposed EDAB 2026 schedule that would be submitted to the City Clerk's Office for implementation. Director Garcia suggested the board to have meetings held at the 101Tower on the 11th floor as it is commonly used by other advisory boards and committees. The Board Members expressed they would like to continue having their meetings held at the conference rooms of the Development Services Department Building.

There was discussion amongst the Board to move the November 11, 2026, meeting as it would be conflicting with Veterans Day observance. Also, a possible implementation of a summer recess (June–August) due to typically lighter agenda needs.

Chair Bargioni motioned to accept the proposed 2026 meeting calendar with the proposed adjustments. Member Feinberg seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. The Board Members will not meet during June and July and the November meeting has been rescheduled to November 4, 2026.

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V. Division Reports

There were no division report updates presented at this meeting. However, Member Feinberg inquired if Manager Williams would be attending a future meeting as previously requested. Director Garcia informed the members that she would inquire to see if Assistant City Manager Chris Cooper could attend in her stay.

VI. Areas of Concentration

Member Dowling stated that she would like to focus specifically on economic development through real estate. Member Feinberg will only concentrate on the restaurant industry. Chair Bargioni nominated Member Adams to concentrate on small business permitting. Member Adams accepted the change. Changes of the concentrations will be reflected in the December Agenda.

VII. Member Reports

No individual member reports were presented at this meeting.

VIII. Expanded Board Discussion Items**a. EDAB Request for Tour Discussion With local Marine Industries**

Vice Chair Klenet proposed that the Board revisit the idea of hosting a field visit to major marine economic centers such as Roscioli Yachting Center, Denison Yachting Center, Broward Marine, and Frank & Jimmy's Propeller Shop.

The trip to meet local marine industries would be with the purpose of gaining firsthand awareness of the operations, workforce pipeline needs, and economic contribution of the marine industry. Additionally, it will help strengthen the Board's understanding of infrastructure and space requirements associated with one of Fort Lauderdale's strongest economic engines.

b. School Board of Broward County Invite

Member Feinberg suggested inviting both City of Fort Lauderdale's Chief Education Officer and Broward School Board Member Dr. Allen Zeman to be a part of an upcoming meeting focusing on under-enrolled and underutilized school properties that sit on large parcels of land. These sites may offer long-term opportunities for public-private partnerships, mixed-use redevelopment, workforce housing, early childhood centers, or innovation-focused facilities.

Members emphasized that education, land use, and economic development are closely connected, affecting talent attraction, corporate relocation decisions, neighborhood stability, workforce readiness, and the City's long-range planning goals. Engaging education leaders would allow the Board to better understand which properties may be suitable for redevelopment, explore partnership models used in other cities, align school district assets with the City's



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economic development priorities, and ensure the City is prepared should the School District consider consolidating or repurposing any sites.

Member Feinberg stated that he would reach out to Dr. Zeman to inquire about his availability for the December 2025 meeting and include staff following his response.

IX. Meeting adjourned at 4:53 PM.

With no further business, Chair Bargioni motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Member Hughes and seconded by Member Mizell-Hill. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

The next EDAB meeting will be on December 10, 2025, at DSD Building.

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