

# **Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**Thursday**

**May 13, 2010**

**7:00 PM**

City Council Chambers

16 Colomba Road

DeBary, Florida 32713

## **MINUTES**

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Vihlen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **II. Roll Call**

Present: Chair Sid Vihlen, Vice Chair Val Emerson, Dawn Fitzpatrick, Nathan Enright, John Atkinson, Chris Yacenda, Jim Chestnut and Kristi Knight

Also present: City Manager Dan Parrott

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

- Meeting of April 15, 2010

Chair Sid Vihlen entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Vice Chair Emerson moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Atkinson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### **IV. Old Business**

- City Brochure Update

Chair Vihlen handed out the city brochure and asked the members to look it over. He said that Mr. Parrott would forward it to the Volusia County Economic Development Office for their input and advice from their graphic design department.

John T. Kizer, business recruiter with the Volusia County Economic Development Office, stated that they have worked with a number of other cities. He referred the Committee to their website at [www.floridabusiness.org](http://www.floridabusiness.org). He noted that most of the work on the website was done by Jody Sylvester, and she is great to work with and will make the brochure unique and individualized for the City.

Chair Vihlen entertained a motion to accept the brochure and forward it through the City Manager to the Volusia County Economic Development Office. Vice Chair Emerson moved to approve the motion to accept the brochure, and Mr. Chestnut seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

### **V. New Business**

- Discussion on Forming a DeBary Business Organization

Chair Vihlen said that at the recent joint meeting between the Committee and the Council, Council Member Marks suggested the idea. Chair Vihlen stated that he requested a comprehensive list of businesses from the City, and that Finance Administrator Jimmie Seelbinder was able to get a list of businesses that hold occupational licenses within the City from Volusia County.

Chair Vihlen stated that Council gave direction to consider forming a loose net business organization that could meet on a bi-monthly basis to talk about the needs of the businesses.

Mr. Yacenda stated that he was concerned about marketing or trying to attract the attention of 400 businesses in DeBary, and he suggested reducing the list. He stated that when he was on the Committee a few years ago, the same idea was passed through; that not much was accomplished; and that possibly, there was not enough direction for the organization. He stressed the importance of good communication between the City, economic development, and business owners.

Vice Chair Emerson agreed with Mr. Yacenda, but stated with the absence of the West Volusia Commerce Center, smaller businesses with many purposes might need greater support than those businesses with a single purpose. She suggested having the Committee go around and see if this idea would strike interest in those types of businesses.

Mr. Yacenda said that as a business owner in DeBary, he suggested producing some form of communication that other business owners could easily correspond to or review upcoming agenda items that affect them directly. He suggested bullet points to open up communications for all.

Vice Chair Emerson suggested having a page on the City website that these business owners could go to, to get that information if they were not able to attend a Council meeting or other type of meeting.

Chair Vihlen suggested a business forum instead of a business organization. He stated that there was a recent business forum held in the City, and the spokesperson was put in charge of putting together a presentation for the Council. He suggested a virtual channel of communication as well.

Mr. Yacenda noted that forming an organization would not necessarily be as functional as one may think; that not everyone would be able to come together even just once a month to meet and discuss the likeness of one business to the other; and that it would be difficult to generate the proper communication channels between a home business and a regular brick and mortar business.

Mr. Yacenda suggested bringing the communication to businesses in a way that would alleviate unnecessary work for City staff. He recommended putting out information regarding things of greater importance like business specific code violations to help cut downs on costs and wasted time.

Mr. Enright suggested putting together a weekly or monthly business focused newsletter.

Mr. Yacenda suggested keeping it virtual to cut down on printing costs and cited more examples that could be placed in the newsletter.

Chair Vihlen recommended taking the list of businesses which hold occupational licenses in DeBary and have City staff reduce it to an electronic list. He added that emails could be sent to the businesses to promote better communication.

Mr. Parrott suggested contacting businesses to find out which of those would like to receive that information instead of wasting time sending it to some that would not be interested in receiving the information.

Mr. Yacenda said that there is a possibility that a lot of businesses have moved out of their commercial property due to the economic downturn; that they could be working out of their homes but may be violating codes and ordinances by doing so; and that there is a possibility that this could create more problems in the long run.

Chair Vihlen suggested having a few members of the Committee form a sub-group to meet with Mr. Seelbinder and Mr. Parrott to determine what it might take to create a list that the City could have of its businesses and consider eliminating home based businesses.

Chair Vihlen, Vice Chair Emerson, and Mr. Yacenda agreed to be the members of the sub-group and to report back at the next monthly meeting on their findings. There was Committee consensus to form the sub-group.

## **VI. Public Participation**

John Kizer, with the Volusia County Economic Office, offered handouts and went into detail about the vested interest he has with the current properties enclosed, as well as future properties. He also noted that there are interesting opportunities located within the City that might work well in the future with the incoming rail system.

Mr. Enright asked if they keep a tally of the number of hits produced on a particular piece of property listed on their site for future statistical data reference. Mr. Kizer answered that they do not, but there are site selectors who help locate such properties, and they always go to the website to find those opportunities.

Vice Chair Emerson asked if there has been an influx of people interested in vacant land with the approval of the rail system. Mr. Kizer answered that he has not noticed that, and currently nothing is listed on the website regarding the City's rail station.

Mr. Parrott discussed that there is not a current marketing plan surrounding the train station, and that the City is working with a planning firm to develop what the concept and vision is to procure a land use element.

Mr. Kizer noted that they might be able to assist the City with marketing or advertising if the developers did not offer that as part of their plan. He also noted that the City offers a lower wage rate of doing business, which ultimately encourages a greater business opportunity in the sense of lower taxes and such compared to surrounding counties.

Chair Vihlen suggested including the rail system in the City brochure to help promote the advantages it will further have for business owners and residents alike.

Mr. Yacenda discussed the brochure and asked if items to be included would mix recruitment and fluff.

Mr. Parrott and the Committee further discussed points to be included in the brochure and direction the Committee would like to take for finalization.

Mr. Parrott stated that there is a not-for-profit organization that is interested in bringing a global/technical college to the City and is interested in presenting the business concept to the Committee. The Committee agreed unanimously to have Mr. Parrott invite the organization and place them on the agenda for the next scheduled monthly meeting.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Chair Vihlen announced the meeting was adjourned at 7:46p.m.

**Approved June 10, 2010  
CITY OF DeBARY  
Economic Development Advisory Committee**

**Chair Sid Vihlen**