



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD

March 13, 2024, 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	10	1
Enrique Bargioni, Vice Chair	P	11	0
Jay Adams	P	10	2
William Feinberg	P	11	0
Russ Klenet	P	7	2
Jadicineia Bess	A	1	4
Mark Giarratano	P	5	0
Nicolas Kollias	P	2	0
Marianna S. DeJager	P	1	0

#### **Staff**

Von Howard, Administrative Supervisor (Present)

Melissa Mata, Management Fellow (Present)

Daphnee Sainvil, Public Affairs Division Manager (Not Present)

Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation (Present)

#### **I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum**

Chair Micheal Stara called the meeting to order at 3:07PM. Roll was called, and it was noted that there was a quorum present.

Quorum was established at 3:07pm.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Stara carried a motion to approve the EDAB Minutes from the meeting that took place on Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. Motion passed; EDAB Minutes were approved at 3:08pm.

#### **III. New Member Introductions**

##### **New Member Introduction**

Roll call was conducted, and a new member, Ms. DeJager, was welcomed. Chair Stara requested all members in the room to introduce themselves. Members announced their name, their business background, and who they were appointed by.

#### **IV. Speaker, City of Fort Lauderdale, Parks and Recreation**

Chair Stara introduced Enrique Sanchez the Deputy Director from Parks and Recreation from the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Enrique Sanchez from Parks & Rec. opened a discussion emphasizing the significance of green



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space for the economic prosperity of the community. Mr. Sanchez highlighted the city's commitment to the national Mayor 10-minute pledge, ensuring every resident has access to a park within a 10-minute walk, with an 84% compliance rate achieved. Mr. Sanchez discussed efforts to acquire land for parks, including the 2019 parks bond of \$30 million for land acquisition on various parcels in different districts. Plans for passive recreation areas and open green spaces with benches were detailed along with highlighting challenges of unavailable and high-priced land.

Members asked to be explained the process of programming and city financing. Discussions ensued on how several parks cater to different needs, from community parks with amenities such as Holiday Park to neighborhood parks with more passive green space. Mr. Sanchez mentioned how regional parks such as the aquatic center and Holiday Park serve the purpose of community centers and recreational sports. Chair Stara asked about the availability of green space in downtown areas. Mr. Sanchez mentioned the Riverwalk extension to Marshall Point by the Broward Center. A small section will be developed followed by three undeveloped parcels with parks along the Riverwalk. Huizenga Plaza was a redevelopment built in collaboration with the Downtown Development Authority as a reinvestment to protect that space as a park. Huizenga Plaza will include a restaurant that will fund the maintenance of the park.

Consideration was given to partnering with Broward County schools for recreational spaces, with emphasis on the importance of greenspace for residents, particularly school-age children. Concerns were raised about access to parks and used crossing the Federal US 1 highway as an example. Suggestions were made for utilizing city-owned properties for parks such as the one stop shop park. Members addressed issues of overcrowding in certain parks like Holiday Park and the need for more green spaces was vital. Members suggested having closed-down schools to be redeveloped to green spaces. Member Klenet mentioned the school boards would use the redevelopment of space for high rises or family neighborhoods to maximize their profits.

Member Adams suggested undeveloped land should be considered a park first before other development plans. Member Feinberg asked if they could make a recommendation to look at city land and suggest which land can be considered as greenspace. Member Klenet mentioned the city will be asking for proposals to build city hall in the 6.3 acre. Member Klenet also explained the federal courthouse had green space restrictions due to security reasons.

The meeting continued with Member DeJager asking about the reallocation of acquisition funds for development purposes. Mr. Sanchez explained the reallocation of funds were earmarked for District 3 for the redevelopment of Carter Park and District 4 contributing to joint-use schools and community center projects. These funds had already been allocated for these purposes. The conversation then circled back to the motion regarding downtown greenspace and inquiries about the availability of properties for a one-stop shop. Member Klenet suggested that any such



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developments should primarily benefit residents and noted the absence of parking lots in these areas. Member Giarratano emphasized the high density of downtown and advocated for seizing available land to create greenspaces that cater to the diverse values of different demographics. Member Kollias highlighted issues with overcrowding at Holiday Park and the lack of parking at smaller parks primarily used by nearby residents, suggesting the acquisition and repurposing of small parcels of land for passive parks. Mr. Sanchez weighed in, indicating that park development plans depend on the desires of the neighborhood. Specific examples, such as Holiday Park with recreational fields for diverse sports and a community center, were discussed alongside the allocation of funds for various parks, including Carter Park, Tunnel Top, and Lockhart, among others.

The need for additional funding, specifically for land acquisition was emphasized. Mr. Sanchez provided insights into the department's focus on both acquiring new spaces and improving existing ones, acknowledging challenges in gathering precise metrics due to density and overlapping needs. Member Klenet highlighted the importance of considering county and state parks, not just city ones, highlighting the significance of parking availability in park planning.

A motion was brought up for discussion to present to the City Commission, to consider acquiring land for park space in the Downtown area and to consider current available space to be converted to beneficial use for the Fort Lauderdale economy. Member Klenet inquired about identifying city-owned land suitable for incentive zones and emphasized the importance of exploring opportunities in Broward County, particularly in underutilized or vacant areas. It was suggested to examine maps to identify potential opportunities in the City for next meeting.

A motion was made to invite a representative from the Broward Alliance (the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance) to provide insights on important factors for business recruitment, aiming to gather statistics for strategic planning. Member Feinberg requested assistance from Daphnee and City Liaisons in obtaining maps of city-owned properties and parks. Members agreed to request maps before the next meeting, including vacant city-owned land and unused buildings, along with maps of city parks. The motion to make a recommendation to the City Commission on consideration to consider acquiring land for park space in the Downtown area and to consider current available space to be converted to beneficial use for the Fort Lauderdale economy was tabled for future consideration. Members also expressed interest in speaking with the Broward Alliance (the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance) for economic development insights.

Members were reminded about a scheduled speaker for April from the Transportation and Mobility Department to speak on pedestrian safety and bike lanes in the city. Members expressed their preference to first engage with the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance before proceeding with other agenda items. A vote was taken on the inclusion of bike lanes in April, with the Alliance scheduled for the same month. The vote ended with Members asking for a representative from



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the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance to speak at the April meeting, alongside the presentation of maps. The speaker discussion ended at 4:36 PM.

#### V. Old Business

##### **Draft Recommendation on Permitting on Historic Districts**

Member Adams drafted a recommendation on permitting on historic districts. A digital copy was sent to the Board Members and will be a continued agenda item for the next meeting.

#### VI. New Business

Chair Stara opened the discussion for new business or announcements. Member Klenet provided a report on the historic district, highlighting recent developments in transportation infrastructure. He mentioned that the previous night, the US Department of Transportation allocated \$263 million for the completion of a commuter rail line from Miami to Aventura, including five stations in Miami. This funding, combined with Broward County's investment in the southern section along 17th Street across from Broward Health, underscores the need to address transportation issues north of 17th Street. Member Klenet also mentioned the proposed BDO commuter trail tunnel, estimated at \$3.7 billion, and noted the presence of portals in city parks. He emphasized efforts to enhance mobility downtown, mentioning discussions with the museum regarding connectivity between the Brightline station and the museum. Plans for an overpass from Brightline across the street to 3rd Avenue were discussed, aiming to facilitate secure pedestrian movement across Broward Blvd in that area. Mr. Klenet also mentioned ongoing developments in the downtown area, particularly around the performing arts center, generating excitement among members.

##### **Areas of Concentration**

Chair Stara reminded the Board they had areas of concentration. Member Kollias mentioned he would like his area of concentration to be Downtown and the Himmarshee revitalization along with safety and security of that area. Member Giarratano stated he would like his area of concentration to be the arts.

#### VII. Division Reports

Division reports were provided, which included information on board appointments and details on vacancies and terms. Members were reminded about absences and the automatic resignation if a member is absent on three consecutive meetings or four (4) absences per year term. Additionally, the board was reminded that the City Clerk had emailed additional information regarding the Sunshine Law and communication protocols between board members. Von Howard, City Liaison, mentioned a copy of the draft to recommend permitting in the Historic



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District created by Member Adams was emailed to the Board. It was restated that members tabled the motion proposed by Member Feinberg and would like a map of city parks, map of vacant city owned land and unused buildings to be sent to them before the next meeting. Members also requested a speaker from the Broward Alliance (Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance) to be invited to the next meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**VIII. Meeting adjourned at 4:47 PM.**

**The next EDAB meeting will be April 10, 2024 at DSD Building**

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