

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

March 12, 2010

A meeting was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida.

Members present were: Chairman Starr, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Skidmore, Commissioner Duffy, County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, Minutes Secretary Carleton, Mayor Goldberg, Council Member McCormick, Council Member Wallace, Council Member Friedman, City Manager Howard Kunik, City Attorney Levin. The following members were absent: Vice Mayor Albers.

The meeting was called to order at **9:00 AM** followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions

I. Economic Development Incentives

Mr. Baltz stated that it was requested at the last joint meeting for staff to do a follow-up on economic incentives and to bring it back to the Board, commented that staff has been working with Howard Kunik and City staff, and that three meetings had been held in order to capture an inventory of items.

Don Root gave a PowerPoint presentation of current incentive programs offered per packet material furnished. Mr. Kunik gave an update on the City Impact Fee Installment Plan, the CRA Program, the Trabue Woods Economic Development Corporation, Fast Track permitting, Main Street Funding, and Tax Increment Financing projects.

Mr. Kunik fielded Board questions regarding Main Street Funding and the Impact Fee Installment Plan.

Jeff Ruggieri fielded Board questions related to the average length of time for permitting and relaxed regulations for landscaping.

Mr. Root provided additional comment on the Dollars for Jobs Program, EB5 Regional Center, Regional Angel Fund, and fielded Board questions regarding applications for Recovery Zone Bonds and a handout of Florida State incentives. Mr. Baltz commented on a snapshot of economic development for the County and Piper Road.

Brian Barnes gave a briefing on Piper Road, stating that it was currently under construction, and provided a handout. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on the federal agenda and savings realized.

Mr. Root continued his presentation and discussed the Charlotte County Industrial Development Authority, and fielded Board questions regarding calendar deadlines and applications.

Commissioner Skidmore commented that the hotel project needs to move forward quickly because of deadlines. **Commissioner Loftus** agreed with **Commissioner Skidmore**. Mr. Root fielded Board questions in regard to the IDA, the assistance that Economic Development provides in finding underwriters, and whether proposed projects come through on an individual basis.

Mr. Root went on to discuss Enterprise Florida. **Chairman Starr** suggested lobbying the legislators in regard to the Closing Fund, commented on the need to give guidance to Tallahassee, and providing incentives to attract businesses.

Councilmember McCormick endorsed **Chairman Starr's** comments. There was further Board discussion on the issue. **Commissioner Skidmore** suggested giving direction to County staff to send a letter to Tallahassee to give guidance on economic incentives (**BOARD CONSENSUS**). **Commissioner Duffy** mentioned a discussion in Washington last November at the Renewable Energy Summit regarding financial incentives different states are offering. Extensive Board discussion ensued.

Mr. Root discussed the Economic Development Administration Investment Programs, US Dept. of Agriculture, the Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board, and fielded Board questions regarding the possible termination of the Workforce Development

Board, the state's loss of its exemption, and criteria for qualifying for programs. There was Board discussion in regard to factors that attract business, lobbying the Legislature, tax abatement, impact fee waivers, tax increment financing, branding, and solar energy.

Mr. Root continued his presentation by outlining points that attract business and fielded Board questions in regard to realizing goals and conducting a mitigation study. **Chairman Starr** stated that there needs to be more information given before spending money on such a study. **Commissioner Duffy** opined that the Board needs to have a certain level of trust in staff when it comes to economic development. Mr. Root fielded Board questions in regard to the administrative expenditure cap. **Commissioner Skidmore** suggested putting a budget transfer on the agenda, working with Administration, and moving the item forward, and expressed the need to get an action plan in place. Bruce Laishley of Southwest Land Developers commented on the money needed for a mitigation study, property that is not developed, mitigating wetlands, and finding out the true cost and value of land. **Chairman Starr** suggested giving 100 acres of Murdock Village for infrastructure and making it shovel ready for new businesses.

Commissioner Loftus requested having the issue brought back at the next regular meeting. Mr. Root was agreeable with the request and stated that his staff is working with the airport on the proposal. **Commissioner Loftus** stated he wants to be sure that all the information is in so that a decision can be made at the next meeting. Mr. Root continued his presentation. There was Board discussion in regard to using solar energy as a local/regional brand. **Commissioner Loftus** commented on the need to lobby state legislators in order to move the issue forward. Mayor Goldberg inquired as to how to bring the issue within the County's/City's control. Mr. Root responded that the local/regional government needs to have a voice in Tallahassee, that he would be writing a letter for the Regional Group on energy, and mentioned Tampa Bay Partnership.

Chairman Starr commented on his idea of economic development and the need to have a brand. **Commissioner Cummings** agreed with Mayor Goldberg's comments. Councilmember McCormick suggested

that the discussion be tabled to a special meeting in the next three weeks to address specifics. (**CONSENSUS.**)

Mr. Root discussed the details of a yacht manufacturer trying to come to the area. **Commissioner Cummings** commented that it is based on money coming from outside the county, not helping one local business at the expense of another one, and having an idea of economic gains per job before committing to a per job number. Mayor Goldberg asked about the business plan for the company. **Chairman Starr** stated that he needs to justify what needs to be done by looking at the business plan and that there are a lot of factors to consider before making a decision. **Commissioner Skidmore** stated that he hoped that Administration would get back to the Board by next week in order to find funding and move forward. **Commissioner Cummings** stated that the amount of money might be an issue and gave his reservations. Councilmember McCormick pointed out that it is important to keep the discussion away from words such as "subsidy" and "gifts" and to defer future income.

Mr. Baltz referred to pages 13 to 18 of the presentation, commented that staff had identified a couple of items that letters will be drafted on, that staff will bring back mitigation costs for the airport property, and stated that the intention is to take economic incentives as far as desired.

II. Economic Development Suggestions Presentation by Southwest Land Developers (SLD)

Bruce Laishley of Southwest Land Developers gave a summary of ongoing projects and current incentive programs per packet material.

Commissioner Skidmore gave positive comments on Mr. Laishley's presentation, suggested embracing the proposal as presented, encouraged reaching out to developers, commented on the need to work with private development, referred to Mr. Laishley's funding source, commented on maintaining a position regarding enterprise funds, putting Charlotte County's landholdings on the market and reinvesting the money back into the county, commented on standard impact fees, and creating a local revolving fund.

Mayor Goldberg suggested identifying specific action items to pursue in the short term. **Commissioner Loftus** suggested working on a public/private partnership. **Commissioner Skidmore** suggested putting landholdings back on tax rolls. Chairman Starr commented on money needed for trees and landscaping and items that are within the County's control. **Commissioner Skidmore** suggested starting a discussion on Tuesday at the Land Use meeting and bringing it back at the next available meeting. **Chairman Starr** suggested putting together a task force. Mayor Goldberg asked Mr. Root to take the lead to coordinate a committee. Mr. Baltz stated he had a list of 6 action items that he had seen a strong **CONSENSUS** for during the meeting: **staff will prepare a letter regarding the Closing Fund and the Training Program funding that was eliminated; bring back an agenda item for Commissioners to consider for the mitigation issue; and form a task force consisting of two commissioners, two councilmembers, City Manager, County Administrator, and three representatives from the development community.** **Commissioner Duffy** pointed out that there should only be one Commissioner and one Councilmember because of the Sunshine Law. Mr. Baltz continued the list of items with: **identify and sell properties from county property inventory; review the collective direction to do a comprehensive review of ECAP Design Standards; and aggressively pursue a land swap of Mr. Laishley's 140 acres to Charlotte County's 120 acres.**

Mayor Goldberg asked about the real time business opportunity outlined by Mr. Root. Mr. Baltz asked for direction. **Commissioner Loftus** responded that as much information as possible needs to be brought forward as quickly as possible. **Commissioner Cummings** asked if the proposed working group was going to focus on pages 13-18 of the presentation, commented on the land swapping issue, developing the IDA property, developing financing alternatives for projects, and the Ad Valorem Tax Abatement. Councilmember McCormick recommended Councilmember Wallace for the task force and requested Mr. Kunik discuss with Mr. Laishley which three economic incentives the City Council could address. Mayor Goldberg stated that there is a sense of urgency to follow up on the seven action items.

Mr. Laishley commented on putting the task force together and on the land swap. Councilmember McCormick pointed out a piece of

property available in central Punta Gorda that used to be a utility barn.

III. South County Overlay Recap of Meeting

David Hills gave a recap of the Overlay Meeting per packet material.

Councilmember McCormick stated he had participated in the charette, commented on the input from community, and indicated that the process would be useful in other areas of the County. **Commissioner Loftus** stated he had also attended the charette and commented on the turnout of citizens.

IV. Drywall Issues

Councilmember McCormick gave an update on the drywall issue from the Governor's office and advised he anticipates having a report at the next joint meeting. **Commissioner Skidmore** commented on a resolution from Tuesday's Board of County Commissioner's (BOCC) meeting on the drywall issue.

V. Burnt Store Road Widening Project

Brian Barnes presented a handout to the Board and gave an update on the Burnt Store Road widening project per material furnished. Mayor Goldberg asked Mr. Barnes to read the construction dates for Phase I. **Commissioner Loftus** clarified when the bids are due back and requested speeding up the process in order to get people back to work. **Commissioner Skidmore** agreed, commented that Burnt Store Road is not a good road to travel on, encouraged finding funding elsewhere for Phase II, and commented on transportation authorization funds for Burnt Store. Mayor Goldberg explained the Burnt Store issue was discussed at the South Charlotte County Coalition Meeting. Mr. Barnes commented that the project will be phased in order to speed it up. **Commissioner Cummings** encouraged moving the project forward as quickly as possible, commented that he had strived for funding, suggested expediting the project within prudent bounds, and commented on bidding and construction dates. Mr. Barnes stated that the planning and specifications are done. **Commissioner Loftus** advised he had worked to push the project forward, would

never jeopardize quality, and expressed concern in getting people back to work.

VI. Status Aquí Esta Road Project

Mr. Barnes gave an update on the Aquí Esta Road project per packet material.

Mayor Goldberg inquired as to how much the roadway was raised between the bridge and Magdalena. Mr. Barnes responded in detail. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on the amount the road was raised.

Jim Brown commented on the Burnt Store Road project, reminded the Board that per Emergency Management Director Wayne Sallade Burnt Store is an evacuation route, and cautioned the danger if another hurricane occurs.

VII. Commissioner and Council Member Comments

Commissioner Skidmore commented on the quality of the meeting, cautioned not to lose sight of economic development incentives, commented on the need to work diligently, mentioned unfunded mandates, and procurement methods, asked that his colleagues send letters of support early related to two House Bills on Procurement and Public Records, and mentioned being mindful of TABOR and Medicaid funding.

Mayor Goldberg mentioned Amendment 4. **Commissioner Skidmore** spoke in opposition to Amendment 4. Councilmember Wallace cautioned the Board to quantify the economic development programs. **Commissioner Loftus** agreed with Councilmember Wallace's comments and stressed the need to move forward with Economic Development. **Commissioner Cummings** commented on Mr. Root's presentation. Mayor Goldberg stated he was encouraged by the gravity of the discussion on Economic Development and suggested getting together before three months.

ADJOURNED: 11:50 AM

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Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Chairman

ATTEST:

BARBARA T. SCOTT, CLERK
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND
EX-OFFICIO TO THE BOARD
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: Signature on file in Commission Minutes
Deputy Clerk

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