

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## February 22, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Robert Cahill, Wanda Clegg, Greg Federline, Mike Gill, Joseph Marotti, Donald O'Brien, Jim Ulsamer, Frank Zedar

Members Absent: Barbara Revels

Staff Present: Helga van Eckert, Director  
Katrina Austin, Project Manager  
Lili Tuggle-Weir, Administrative Assistant

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman O'Brien called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.
2. **Roll Call:** A silent roll call was taken. A quorum was present.
3. **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** January 25, 2017 EOAC Meeting and January 25, 2017 EOAC Workshop minutes  
EOAC Meeting Minutes – Adopted  
EOAC Workshop Minutes - Adopted

#### 4. **Partner Presentations**

##### **Jerry Mallot, President, JaxUSA**

Mr. Mallot began by providing metrics from 2016. Regionally 16 projects were worked on, 3M jobs created, \$16M in capital investment, Amazon announced its second project in Jacksonville creating an additional 3M jobs.

He then spoke about the proposed Florida House bill disbanding Enterprise Florida. He stated the bill would affect the effectiveness and ability of the State of Florida to remain economically competitive. He noted Florida does have a good economy and the unemployment rate is as low as it has been in a long time, people continue to move to Florida and we need to be able to continue to provide jobs to accommodate those people migrating to the state. Now is not the time to stop marketing the state and taking away the ability for our counties to compete with other states and other countries.

The House is taking steps to eliminate Enterprise Florida and cut Visit Florida's budget by two-thirds.

Mr. Mallot stated it is disconcerting because there has been substantial return on investment.

He said the Senate and the Governor hold a different philosophy than the House but ultimately it will be the Legislature that makes the decisions about what programs will remain and what the funding will be for those programs.

He continued by stating there is uncertainty at the federal level as well. The current administration is considering tariffs that would affect US companies to buy and sell goods internationally.

Mr. Mallot closed by saying we still have a very sound environment to do economic development work in. We have an excellent workforce, a very reasonable cost of doing business and an outstanding quality of life. All of those exist in Flagler County. If there were no incentives being offered anywhere else nationally or internationally we would be strong but we have to face that is not the case.

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## February 22, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Marotti asked what the process is to decide who gets to propose on a project.

Mr. Mallott responded it is based on what the company communicates their needs are. There is a vetting process including a lot of questions relative to availability of workforce, buildings and logistical needs. That determines a lot.

Mr. Zedar commented the Dow doesn't seem to be reflecting any uncertainty. He further said that although he doesn't see it at the county level, he has seen a lot of waste at the state and federal level and thinks that the Governor and Enterprise Florida should offer to trim some of the fat.

Mr. Mallot addressed both statements. He acknowledged the stock market is at an all time high. He expressed his belief that the projection that there will be a different tax policy on income that will reduce the corporate income tax will create more value in companies. He also believed that the President's indication he would allow a one-time repatriation of profits around the world back into this country and the reduction of regulations are the reasons the stock market is doing so well.

Mr. Mallot said that a third party was hired by Governor Scott to evaluate the way Enterprise Florida does business in 2016. As a result, per diems and travel were reduced, positions were eliminated and operating costs were reduced.

### **Heather Shubirg, Vice President, Competitive Intelligence & Research at Enterprise Florida, Inc**

Ms. Shubirg shared a PowerPoint presentation with the EOAC. Subjects covered were:

- Organizational structure, the mission of EFlorida
- Benefits to choosing Florida as a place to do business
- Marketing plan
- International trade and development objectives
- Business development
- Process of economic development
- Confidentiality
- The role of incentives in Economic Development
- Department of Economic Opportunity partnership
- Targeted Industries
- Types of incentives and grants

Mr. O'Brien asked Ms. Shubirg which incentive program is used the most. She responded that the Qualified Targeted Industry (QTI) incentive is the most. Approximately 200 applications are received annually and about 100 are approved. The other programs have an extra threshold and are not used as frequently.

Ms. van Eckert stated that because of our rural designation, we receive twice the dollar amount and are exempt the twenty-percent match.

## **5. Executive Director Report**

Ms. van Eckert reported that the Common Ground breakfast was the following morning and county staff would be presenting there.

She stated the job fair was coming up on March 3 with 465 jobs currently available.

# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

## February 22, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. O'Brien stated finding qualified employees is the number one concern of our local businesses.

Ms. van Eckert noted a new lead was acquired as a result of the Career Real Estate Women's presentation she did in Jacksonville.

Rebecca DeLorenzo, President of the Flagler County Chamber of Commerce spoke about the upcoming Thrive Business Summit.

**6. Council Comments - None**

**7. Public Comments**

Andy Barr asked questions regarding what the public can do to express their opposition to the bill proposing the disbanding of Enterprise Florida.

Mr. Mallot addressed her question saying the public needs to let their voice be heard by contacting representatives.

**8. Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the EOAC will be Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in Board Chambers.

**9. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m. upon motion, seconded, and unanimously carried.