

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MARCH 22, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Robert Cahill, Wanda Clegg, Donald O'Brien, Barbara Revels, Jim Ulsamer, Frank Zedar

Members Absent: Greg Federline, Mike Gill, Joseph Marotti

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:** February 22, 2017 minutes
Meeting minutes adopted with a change to remove Nate McLaughlin as present.
4. **Partner Presentations**

Jason DeLorenzo, Government Affairs Director, Flagler Home Builders Association

Mr. DeLorenzo made a presentation to the council which included:

- Permitting – showing year-over-year numbers with a 35% increase from 2015 to 2016.
- Economic impact – the local construction industry generated \$84.5M in local revenue in 2016. In 2017 the year-over-year numbers reflect a 28% increase from the same period thus far.
- Jobs – currently there is a workforce shortage in the construction industry. This is beginning to increase construction times by as much as six months to break ground. Mr. DeLorenzo talked about the Construction Sciences Academy at Flagler Palm Coast High School and invited the members and public to come to the ribbon cutting of the academy on April 12th.
- Historical data
- Community impact

Discussion reflected the shortage and need for multi-family housing, the transportation impact fee study, workers compensation rates and how it affects the construction industry and the State Housing Initiative Program.

Margaret Sheehan- Jones, Broker/Associate, Parkside Realty

Ms. Sheehan – Jones presented her bi-annual commercial real estate report addressing:

- Hospitality - The club at Hammock Beach is having their best 3 months in history. Reservation rates per room are up 3% nationally and Flagler County is reflective of the national statistics. Hospitality product is being added to the south but we are not seeing any new building in Flagler County at this time. Discussion reflected the lack of zoning for this product and high land prices.
- Industrial – Rents are up 8.2%. Volume for 2016 was in the record numbers. The 3rd quarter showed a down turn nationally but not locally. Industrial space is being repurposed to different commercial uses locally. Even 5,000 to 10,000 sq. ft. spaces are difficult to find.
- Multi-family – Ms. Sheehan – Jones complimented Mr. DeLorenzo on his coverage of the topic and stated rent rates did go up a little but not compared to the large jump in 2015.
- Office space - The vacancy rate is 13%. The absorption rate has decreased since 2015. Companies don't have as many large corporate buildings and corporate parks don't exist the

way they used to because many companies' employees are telecommuting.

- Retail – Food center retail has grown from 2015 to 2016. State Road 100 illustrates this.

Michael Sznajstajler, Attorney, Cobb Cole

Mr. Sznajstajler addressed the council in their role as the Brownfields Advisory Board for Flagler County. He represents the former Lees Impound site that was part of the county brownfields program.

Mr. Sznajstajler presented the following in the form of a PowerPoint:

- Overview of the Florida Brownfields Redevelopment Program
- Statutory requirements of the advisory board
- Redevelopment of the Former Lees Impoundment – including the environmental issues, the redevelopment plan and the site rehabilitation agreement.

5. Executive Director Report

Ms. van Eckert reported on the following:

- The Chamber Business Expo – The Flagler County Chamber of Commerce held the event on March 1st at Whitney Labs. Astronaut Nicole Stott presented at the event sharing her experiences at the space station and her art that was inspired as a result of those experiences.
- 2017 Flagler County Job Fair – Held at Daytona State College on March 3rd, the event had over 300 job seekers attend, 56 businesses attended with over 800 jobs available from entry level jobs to jobs paying upwards of \$80k annually. Coastal Cloud placed two people into training that day. This year we had an associated app that was a pilot that CareerSource tested on this event.
- Florida High Tech Career Expo – Held on March 6th, The Corridor hosted this event bringing career counselors from major colleges and universities together with businesses and economic development agencies looking to tap into the impending college graduate market to bolster their workforce. Ms. van Eckert stated she was able to go from table to table to discuss with the businesses their employment needs and also talk to the career counselors about Flagler County and what it has to offer. She was able to make contact with the people that could communicate with the students about Flagler County when considering where they want to go after college. Coastal Cloud and Flagler County Schools took advantage of the departments' sponsorship by attending the event. We will continue to keep in touch with the universities as part of our workforce recruitment campaign.
- Regional Partner Forum – On March 10th. The state Chamber of Commerce presented a program, "Is Florida Ready for the Future" that showed some of the same findings as the US 1 Corridor Study.
- Resolutions supporting Enterprise Florida – The Board of County Commissioners have passed resolutions in support of Enterprise Florida and the state incentive programs.
- Project update – Project Bags is still in process. Project Pony has reignited. Project Pepper is a new lead from Enterprise Florida the department recently proposed on. Project Call Me was negotiating to move into the Flagler Plaza Food Lion building but the property owner and business could not agree to terms. The company required costly upgrades that the term of the lease did not support.

6. Council Comments

Mr. Ulsamer updated the council on the events in Tallahassee during the Senate Bill #188 hearing regarding home rule. The vote was 5 to 3 to pass the bill along to the next committee.

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Mr. Cahill stated that he attended the job fair and was not only impressed by the quality of the businesses but the business representatives in attendance. In some cases the company owner came personally.

Ms. van Eckert said the businesses have experienced such good results in the past that they keep coming back.

7. Public Comments - None

8. Next Meeting: The next meeting of the EOAC will be Wednesday, April 26, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in Board Chambers.

9. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m. upon motion, seconded, and unanimously carried.