

**Minutes of the
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Committee Meeting
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
421 SW Camden Avenue, Stuart, Florida 34994**

Thursday, April 9, 2009

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

The following members and staff were present:

Martin County

Tammy Simoneau
Cindy Pingolt
Ron Bunch
John McAuliffe
Judson Epperly
Pauline Becker
Jeff Oris

Palm Beach County

Paul Skyers
Richard Staudinger
Gary Hines
Lawrence Davenport
Seabron Smith

St. Lucie County

Gwenda Thompson

Indian River County

Helene Caseltine
Randy Riley

Staff

Greg Vaday
Penny Myszkowski

Visitors

Donna Brosemer
Pam Nolan
Candy Walker

Roll Call

Staff called the roll and announced that a quorum was present. Staff welcomed Pam Nolan, Palm Beach County Economic Development Office, and Donna Brosemer, a consultant with Special Teams, LLC, in Lake Worth.

Motion was made by Richard Staudinger and seconded by Helene Caseltine to approve the Minutes of the last CEDS Committee meeting on February 19, 2009. Motion was approved unanimously.

Motion

Staff reviewed two sources of funding that are available through EDA. The first is the Disaster Supplemental of \$400 million nationwide. Some of the CEDS projects will fall under this program. The second is a special appropriation of \$150 million under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Both of these supplemental programs are over and above normal EDA funds available. Some projects can be funded under public works, some under economic adjustment and some under technical assistance. Projects are submitted to staff with a description of the project, total funding need, private sector investment, and the economic impact toward job creation and the region. Each region in Florida will be submitting projects to EDA. There is no fixed deadline.

Pam Nolan added that each project must involve private sector jobs and have private sector funding.

Membership Appointments

Greg Vaday welcomed Laurence Davenport with the Business Loan Fund of Palm Beach County, and Seabron Smith, with the Center for Technology Enterprise and Development, Inc. (TED Center).

Federal Economic Stimulus Package

Greg Vaday invited county representatives to present their respective potential CEDS projects.

Pam Nolan, Palm Beach County Economic Development Office, presented information on the Palm Beach County projects. The first project is the Belle Glade City Hall/Incubator. \$362,500 has been committed into this project and \$1.7 million is needed to complete it.

The Glades Utilities Authority is the second project. \$6 million is needed to get the project up and running for one year. The project involves the repair and replacement of wastewater infrastructure in Belle Glade.

Ms. Nolan introduced the third project as the Lake Worth Park of Commerce Infrastructure Study. This is a \$500,000 study to assess the infrastructure needs of the 393 acre industrial area of the city. The area needs infrastructure, including city roads. Donna Brosemer added that the Lake Worth Park of Commerce has taken considerable time to develop to its full potential because of the annexation process and overwhelming infrastructure needs. It is one of the last remaining industrial parks along the I-95 corridor with immediate access to I-95. Most of the property is privately owned, with the city owning a small portion of it plus the infrastructure. Utilities are provided by the City of Lake Worth. Staff said that the city is asking for \$250,000 from EDA and they have

secured the \$250,000 local private match for the study. An upgrade is needed for the electrical systems in the park. The entire area has been designated as a brownfields area.

Pam Nolan addressed the Public Market project. This would be a regional retail market run by the community. They are seeking a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the amount of \$2.5 million. They would like to make it a pilot project for the state.

The fourth project Pam Nolan presented was the Seed Capital fund. The concept of this Equity Fund would seek to invest in high tech firms including small business firms of five or less employees. The program funds would be structured as recoverable grants of up to \$100,000 per company.

Jeff Oris discussed the Martin County projects. The first is the Dredging of Manatee Pocket. Maritime businesses are presently hemmed in by low water levels. Job creation would increase with the ability to bring in larger boats. This is a shovel ready \$4 million project. Martin County has some state money and is asking EDA for \$2.5 million.

The second project is the Indian River State College (IRSC) Technology and Life Sciences Hub, a medically related technical facility.

The third and fourth projects have been combined as the Indiantown Permit Ready Industrial Parks. There are two parks but they do not have the upgraded infrastructure of roads, water and sewers. Total cost is about \$5.3 million.

The fifth project is the Martin County Fiber Optic Network that would provide service to institutional, government, and commercial users. The network would be extended for an additional 75 miles of underground fiber optic cable throughout the county. The present system services schools, hospitals, and county facilities. Total cost is anticipated at about \$9.4 million. This project can be done in phases and will provide jobs. Staff said that a few years ago EDA funded a \$125,000 fiber optic line that came out of the airport.

The sixth project is the Martin Regional Research and Development Campus. The site is an old decommissioned wastewater utility site along the turnpike and Kanner Highway. The county would like to convert it to an industrial park.

The seventh project is the North Martin Research Development Education Park. This is a 600 acre site at the north end of the county. It is privately held land at this time. The county will attempt to acquire this land.

The eighth project is the Witham Field Area Business Development Improvement project to add infrastructure improvements at the airport. There is roadway work, work on some of the existing buildings, and acquisition of more land needed at this time.

Candy Walker discussed the St. Lucie County project, the Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute. People are now being hired for this facility. It is the last research institute that the State Innovations Bond funded at \$60 million. They are going to sell bonds to raise

\$30 million to build a building and they are seeking \$5 million from EDA. The building can be done in phases.

Motion was made by Paul Skyers to adopt all the projects into the CEDS. Motion was seconded by Candy Walker and was approved unanimously.

Motion

U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Discussion by Conference Call: Disaster Supplemental and Economic Stimulus Funding Priorities, Philip T. Trader, EDA Representative

Philip Trader spoke to the committee about the EDA supplementals and funding opportunities that are available. He said the projects that would be eligible for EDA assistance should include private sector jobs and private capital investment. Under the Stimulus Bill, Congress appropriated the funds into existing grant programs. In 2008, forty five Florida counties became eligible to receive funds under the Disaster Supplemental Fund after Tropical Storm Faye. Palm Beach, Martin, and St. Lucie County are eligible for this disaster funding. The stimulus funds will be available for projects that are “shovel ready,” meaning projects that will be underway in 120 days after the grant award and that create jobs. Some projects will be able to be funded through the Federal Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Mr. Trader said that he is working with the Indian River State College to obtain funds for the training complex and it may be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Mr. Trader is in discussion with the City of Port St. Lucie regarding the flood mitigation project, for which the application should be forthcoming. Mr. Trader said that EDA is very interested in projects involving job retraining for workers who have lost their jobs. Businesses such as FPL are submitting letters of commitment to EDA to create jobs and training opportunities in their region. He answered a number of questions from committee members. He said that if a municipality already owns an industrial park and there was an opportunity for job creation, EDA could assist with needed infrastructure to make it functional. EDA does not have funds for disaster loans, but they can set up revolving loan funds through the regional planning councils. In the counties eligible for disaster funding, the Recovery Act funding could be up to 75% of the total project costs. The local match money could be from funds from other sources such as state, county, city, private sector, or money from loans.

Mr. Trader said he can be called directly to discuss potential projects. His number is 404-730-3017.

Project Priorities for 2009

Mr. Ron Bunch asked how much money has been obtained from EDA in the last five years. Staff said that about \$7 million will be requested for the two newest Martin County projects. \$1.5 million was obtained for the St. Lucie County Airport. Martin County got \$125,000 for the fiber optic network after Hurricane Wilma and received a small disaster mitigation grant for \$50,000. Other funds were obtained for planning in the last ten years.

Staff reviewed the existing CEDS priority project list:

1. Canal Restoration for Marine Industry Development, Palm Beach County:
This is in the Glades area has been discussed with Palm Beach County. It is not shovel ready.
2. The Homeland Security Training Center, Indian River County:
This project is completed.
3. Max Planck Florida Institute, Palm Beach County:
This has been discussed with the Palm Beach Business Development Board.
4. The Lake Region Water Treatment Plant and Water Transmission, Palm Beach County:
This has evolved into the Glades Utility Authority project because most of the funding has been appropriated. Additional resources must be found.
5. Pahokee Skills Accelerator, City of Pahokee:
Staff is working with the City of Pahokee to finish the environmental study. The ground water and soil water tests are completed.
6. Pilot Project for Sea Going Public Ferry System, Palm Beach County:
This project is still in the conceptual stage.
7. Piper Jet Manufacturing Facility, Indian River County:
This project is completed.
8. Regional Inland Port, Palm Beach County:
This project needs more study analysis.
9. Regional Storm Water Drainage Project, Palm Beach County:
Land acquisition is still needed.
10. Port of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County:
There is private land ownership that has not been resolved.
11. St. Lucie Research and Education Park, St. Lucie County:
This project is ongoing.
12. Fellsmere Corporate Research Park, City of Fellsmere:
This project is still in the planning stage.
13. Regional Aviation Park, City of Sebastian:
This project is shovel ready.

In summary: projects that remain open are #3, 5, 11, 13.

Status and discussion of the additional project list:

Palm Beach County:

1. Belle Glade City Hall/Incubator:
Phase I currently under construction.
2. Glades Utility Authority:
Shovel ready, planning ready.
3. Lake Worth Park of Commerce:
Planning ready.
4. Public Market
Conceptual.
5. Seed Capital Fund:
In the planning stage.

Martin County:

1. Dredging of Manatee Pocket:
Shovel ready.
2. IRSC Technical & Life Sciences Hub:
Conceptual.
3. Indiantown Airport and Community Waterfront:
In planning.
4. Indiantown Industrial Parks:
Infrastructure in planning.
5. Martin County Fiber Optic Network:
Planning ready. Has a master plan.
6. Martin Regional Research and Development Campus:
Conceptual.
7. North Martin Research, Development, and Education Park:
Conceptual.
8. Whitham Field Area Business Development Improvement:
Planning/shovel ready.

St. Lucie County:

1. City of Port St. Lucie Flood Mitigation:
Underway.
2. Indian River State College Training Complex:
Underway.
3. Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute:
Shovel ready.

In summary: projects that remain open are - Palm Beach County #1, 2, 3, and 5; St. Lucie County #1; Martin County #1, 4, 5, 8.

Motion was made by Richard Staudinger to keep the eleven open projects on the CEDS 2009 list of projects. Motion was seconded by Ron Bunch and was approved by majority.

Motion

Public Comment

None.

CEDS Committee Comments

None.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.