

**Minutes of the
Treasure Coast Economic Development District
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee Meeting**

Thursday, July 19, 2007

Paul Skyers, Acting Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

The following members and staff were present:

Martin County	Barbara Essenwine Tammy Simoneau Judson Epperly
Palm Beach County	Paul Skyers Richard Staudinger Kathryn Schmidt
St. Lucie County	Brieon Marais (for Larry Daum) Candace Walker Gwenda Thompson
Indian River County	Helene Caseltine (phone)
Visitors	Maggie Smith Pam Nolan Ronald Bunch Bill Schutt
Staff	Greg Vaday Penny Myszkowski

Staff announced a quorum was present.

AGENDA

Staff amended the agenda by attaching a revised Goals & Strategies for the CEDS Plan Rewrite under Item 3, Minutes. Gwenda Thompson made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Candace Walker seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

MINUTES

Candace Walker made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 10, 2007 and the June 21, 2007 meetings. Helene Caseltine seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

CEDS PLAN REWRITE

Greg Vaday thanked the committee for their feedback on the Goals & Strategies. With respect to Goal 5, Gwenda Thompson commented that Indian River Community College applied to be a banner center for alternative energy. She explained this involves assessing the need for workforce training related to alternative energy and developing a curriculum for training programs throughout the community college system statewide. Ms. Thompson will forward information to Staff.

Paul Skyers noted the objectives should have a time frame.

Richard Staudinger noted that under Goal 2 the objective is to develop a marketing plan for the Research Coast, but the Goal references the Treasure Coast as opposed to the Research Coast. Staff stated this was because Palm Beach County has not officially opted into the Florida Research Coast, which is a separate initiative that brings together Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee Counties. Kevin Johns said he would be willing to speak to Palm Beach County about participation in the Research Coast initiative, which is being led by Larry Pelton.

Kevin Johns provided an update on the Palm Beach County marketing strategy. He stated that there is a team that includes the Film and Television Commission, the Business Development Board, the League of Cities, the Palm Beach Advertising Association, and the Florida Advertising Association, which will be meeting to develop a unified strategy. The strategy will include a voluntary audit of marketing agencies, the consideration of an integrated electronic media campaign, as well as marketing and economic strategies to increase tourism in Palm Beach County.

Helene Caseltine said that there is a memorandum of understanding between the Research Coast participants and she suggested that Palm Beach County be invited to participate. Ms. Caseltine will send a copy of the memo to Staff.

Richard Staudinger made a motion to accept the amended goals. Gwenda Thompson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Motion

2007 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PLAN REWRITE – PROGRESS UPDATE

Greg Vaday distributed the new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2007 Project List that will be sent to Atlanta in September. The Economic Development Administration has two sets of projects, Suggested and Vital. Staff presented these projects to the committee to determine which projects submitted into the revised CEDS. It was determined that eight new projects will be included in the CEDS. When the CEDS is adopted, Staff will send letters to local governments and elected officials inviting them to submit any new projects to the CEDS.

Richard Staudinger noted the three projects listed for Palm Beach County are underway and can be removed from the list. Helene Caseltine stated that the Indian River Park of Commerce is underway. It was noted the Martin County Community Redevelopment Agency Infrastructure has already been funded. More information will be sought on the Vought Rail Spur project and the Indiantown Regional Business Park. Tammy Simoneau stated the Indiantown Business Incubator is critical to regional business development. It was suggested that the Indiantown Business Incubator project be recommended for possible USDA funding. The following was determined; the St. Lucie County Research and Education Park project will continue on the CEDS; the Indian River County Corporate Research Park project will be changed to Fellsmere Corporate Research Park and remain in the CEDS; and the Indian River Park of Commerce will be removed from the list. It was determined that Ron Bunch will get back to Staff with updated information on the two Martin County projects, the Vought Rail Spur and Indiantown Industrial Park.

The Committee was provided with a list of 12 investments greater than \$100,000 (totaling \$10,288,995) that the Economic Development Administration announced during June 25-29, 2007. These investments are part of projects totaling \$22,909,345, creating 2,587 new jobs and generating more than \$227.8 million in private investment.

Staff provided a list of the proposed projects submitted by Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties for the new CEDS. Helene Caseltine stated that Indian River County might have a project for Piper Aircraft. She noted that they will not have a referendum and will be meeting with the company officials to determine how the County can work with the company for potential funding. Staff suggested this project could be classified as enhancing the aerospace cluster.

The issue of energy conservation was mentioned. Staff said the CEDS wants to foster the enhancement of alternative energy (Goal 5). The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council is getting involved in climate change and alternative energy and working with FPL in this area.

Candy Walker asked if a regional wireless initiative was included in EDA funding. Staff said this could be possible if shown how it would affect jobs in the region. Kevin Johns said that Palm Beach County's new Strategic Economic Development Plan includes a county wide WIFI program. The County's OEDP Committee found that there were options for funding WIFI, one private and one public. The public option is based on the Boston Massachusetts model where Boston paid for it. The Silicon Valley model was bid out (private sector funding) and it cost less. Palm Beach County will use the Silicon Valley model and bid out the project. It was discussed that WIFI is less expensive than fiber optics. Staff said that EDA could possibly fund a pilot project.

There are 14 suggested projects (8 new), including Piper and the WIFI project, for the 2007 CEDS project list. Two of the projects will be researched further to determine if they will remain on the list. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is looking into funding for the Vought Rail Spur.

Staff asked Kevin Johns and Brieon Marais to describe their county's proposed CEDS projects. Kevin Johns described the three Palm Beach County projects that are in progress. The first is the proposed inland port with five (5) site locations. The locations would serve all the ports of South Florida in cargo shipping. The Virginian inland port model has developed \$650 million in taxes every year. There will be a tax base for any county that buys into the inland port. An economic analysis is being done on these figures and Mr. Johns will send a copy to Staff. Rail connections would work in conjunction with the port and that would relieve some of the congestion on I-95. It would also double as an evacuation and emergency management staging area for South Florida. For example, a thousand helicopters could be stored there. The site will also include industrial distribution areas. Infrastructure for the inland port may possibly be included in a CEDS project. The inland port will be called the South Florida Regional Intermodal Waterway.

The second Palm Beach project came from the Strategic Economic Development Plan. Different models of cities close to major metro areas on the water were looked at, including Venice in proximity to Milan, Monaco and its proximity to Granoble, and Capetown and Santa Barbara. They found that these cities used their intercoastals in a different way. Our intercoastals area is fragmented by wealthy and poor areas. The Thames River Valley plan in London has developed an intercoastal waterway system that has a regional ferry serving the whole coast, using a hovercraft that can travel inland. It was completed with private and public sector funds in the amount of \$5 billion to upgrade the entire area. Underperforming areas were regenerated. Palm Beach County would like to ask EDA for funds to link the Treasure Coast intercoastal waterway master plan to the entire east coast and certain Caribbean cities. A \$200,000 study is underway to implement this project.

The third Palm Beach County project is an analysis that will determine the use of the four major canals in South Florida for inland marinas. Kevin Johns said there is not enough land left on the waterfront, publicly or privately owned, to accommodate the growth of the marine industry. They hope to do a few pilot projects on the canals that would have inlets off the canals with perhaps a hundred boat slips, a boardwalk, some shops, and perhaps some assisted housing. The present canals are not navigable because the routes have all been built across in flat instead of arched structure. This could possibly be done in the Glades cities and coastal cities. Over a period of time, the canals could be restored for ecotourism. They spoke with South Florida Water Management who has agreed to landscape one side of the canals. A team of Palm Beach people will be going to see what has been done in the New York canal system in the old barge cities.

Maggie Smith stated that the Urban Redevelopment Area Plan for areas of the central, eastern part of Palm Beach County proposes for the development of regional storm water retention and other improvements. This will be a long-term project.

Brieon Marais described the build-out of the Port of Fort Pierce Project. She said the Port of Fort Pierce has a master plan for about 80 acres for retail and hotel development

in the port area. Currently the port is being used, but not in the manner they are satisfied with. This CEDS project will augment the area and also provide infrastructure. The second project, sponsored by Indian River Community College, envisions the creation of a Homeland Security Training Center. The Center will provide training for EMT and First Responders as well as DNA Forensics. Staff said that this could be the beginning of a new industry cluster development in the area. Maggie Smith asked that this information be coordinated with Palm Beach Emergency Management.

Pam Nolan asked if the balance of monies (\$26 million) needed to complete a water facility in the Glades area might be a project that could be considered. Some of the monies can be provided by the State and some through bonding or grants. Staff said that the impact on the surrounding region would have to be shown.

Barbara Essenwine made a motion to amend the project list and include the new projects in the CEDS Rewrite. Candace Walker seconded the motion. Kathryn Schmidt motioned to amend the previous motion by including Piper Manufacturing, WIFI, and the regional water treatment facility to the list of projects. Candace Walker seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Motion

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.