

Hardee County Economic Development Council/Industrial Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2014
Hardee County BOCC

Vanessa Hernandez- Chair-P
Russ Melendy- Vice Chair-P
Dottie Conerly-A
Jim See -P
Monica Reas-P

Donald Samuels-P
John O'Neal-P
Michael Prescott-P
Gene Davis-P

Doug Jensen-A
Horst Witschonke-P
Lory Durrance-P
Diana Youmans-P

The meeting was called to order at 8:30am.

Visiting: Travis Bond, Robert Cole, Rhonda Cole, Denise Hamilton, Charlie Cox, Pam Belflower, Bob Belflower, Stan Pelham, Benny Albritton, Randy Dey, Henry Kuhlman, Aaron Nadaskay, Steven Southwell, Brian Samuels, Ernie Iznaga, Larry Davis, Michael Flowers, Charlie Cox, Carl Weis, Johnny Terrell, Trey Flemer, David Noel, Nancy Craft, Frank Kirkland, Trisha Floyd, Timothy Jenkel, Travis Bond and Joe Smith.

County Attorney: Ken Evers

County Commissioners: Mike Thompson, Grady Johnson and Sue Birge

Press: Michael Kelly

Staff: Bill Lambert, Sarah Pelham, Kristi Schierling, Krystin Chapman and Casey Dickson (Chamber of Commerce Executive Director)

Agenda: Gene Davis made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of an open discussion on evaluations of Board members. Donald Samuels seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: A motion was made by Gene Davis and seconded by Russ Melendy to approve the minutes. Horst Witschonke and Donald Samuels voted no. Motion passed.

Presentation of Draft Financial Audit for FY 2012-2013

Trisha Floyd and Timothy Jenkel, both from CliftonLarsonAllen, were here to present the DRAFT version of the financial audit. This is the first year that the Economic Development Council was included. It is included as a blended component unit. The final presentation and any findings will be presented at next month's board meeting.

Incubator/Accelerator

The building has been closed on and the closing documents were included in the agenda packet. The building was purchased for \$493k. Building layouts were also included in the agenda packet. The fill line and the retro-fitting of the NE corner will be done first.

Trey Flemer, owner of Peace River Paddle and Kuleana Adventures, was here to give an update of how his business has been doing. He has purchased most of his supplies and his rental business is doing well. Trey is able to rent to 35-40 people a day and began renting in December. The website and logo are developed and he is beginning to market outside of our local area. Trey plans to go to market by the May-June timeframe and he has established 3 jobs.

IDA Commerce Park Expansion Zoning

Director Lambert presented a new proposed plan for the expansion. This plan included an alternate route for the roads. The original plan has Mott Rd extended from Rainey through Commerce Court and out to 62. Another road would come off Commerce Court and tie over to Old Bradenton. The new plan has Mott Rd. and Old Bradenton not being connected in.

A motion was made by Donald Samuels and seconded by Lory Durrance to include the alternate route for the BoCC to consider. Horst Witschonke voted no. Motion passed.

Continuum Labs

Casey Dickson updated the Board regarding the search for consultants related to the marketing for Tech River and the Incubator. She and other staff have been working on this and plan to bring more information to next month's board meeting.

Travis Bond was here to give his monthly update. He has 1 MOU with an international client. Five companies are in the proposal stage. There is partnership with USF College of Pharmacy. Travis and his team are advancing with firms, negotiating bridge financing, piggybacking from other firms and are continuing to look for other companies to locate to TechRiver. Discussions are still being had with VC's.

Project Updates

Bionitrogen had its representatives here for a request from the Board. Ernie Iznaga gave a brief update on where they are in their project. A copy of the presentation is on file at the EDO. Bionitrogen is here today to request the IDA to consider modifying the agreement it has with the IDA and release the \$2MM now instead of it being released with the Bond disbursements. The intended use of the funds will be to pay firms for mitigation, engineering, design, etc. Mr. Iznaga also advised the Board that it has been discovered that soil conditions at their intended location are not ideal as well as power not being available. The Board was told that it will cost \$2MM for a substation and that PRECO will not finance it. Steven Southwell, Bionitrogen's attorney, stated that Bionitrogen has also received higher tax abatement from other Counties compared to what was received here in Hardee County.

Bionitrogen will have to leave the County if we do not change our agreement with them.

The EDC/IDA Board will consider other alternatives. Director Lambert and staff will work out other options to bring back before the Board for consideration. Vetting may be required if we move forward since there is more risk to be considered than there was before.

Any changes to the agreement will need to go before the EDA since \$1MM is EDA money.

Evaluation of Board members

Gene Davis asked that this item be added to the agenda. He feels that the BOCC should review the newest Board members to the EDC/IDA. Gene stated that there may be some EDC/IDA members that are blocking economic development. Another member felt that if the BOCC was going to evaluate members, then all should be evaluated as well.

A motion was made by Gene Davis and seconded by Jim See to request the BOCC to review and evaluate all members of the EDC/IDA Board. Motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Charlie Cox, EDC/IDA Accountant, was here to present budget amendments for the General and Special Revenue funds.

A motion was made by Lory Durrance and seconded by Jim See to approve the General Fund amendments. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Jim See and seconded by Monica Reas to approve the Special Revenue Fund amendments. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pelham reviewed the EDC financials from the previous month.

A motion was made by Donald Samuels and seconded by Diana Youmans to approve the EDC financials.

Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pelham also reviewed the IDA financials from the previous month.

A motion was made by Mike Prescott and seconded by Monica Reas to approve the IDA financials.

Motion passed unanimously.

*Meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm by a motion from John O'Neal and a second from Monica Reas.

Motion passed unanimously.