

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

Vanessa Hernandez- Chair-P
Gene Davis- Vice Chair-P
Dottie Conerly-P
Jim See -P

Donald Samuels-P
John O'Neal-P
Michael Prescott-P
Diana Youmans-A

Doug Jensen-A
Monica Reas-P
Lory Durrance-P

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

Visiting: Robert Cole, Rhonda Cole, Randy Dey, Melissa Hayes, Benny Albritton, Charlie Cox, Horst Witschonke, Frank Kirkland, Pam Belflower, Autumn Blum, Casey Dickson, Abel Hernandez, Denise Hamilton, Dustin Jurman, Tip Fowler and Mark Vignovic.

County Attorney: Ken Evers

County Commissioners: Mike Thompson, Colon Lambert and Sue Birge

Press: Michael Kelly

Staff: Bill Lambert, Sarah Pelham and Kristi Schierling

Agenda: Director Lambert added JDC Phosphates and Rapid Systems to the Project Updates tab. Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by John O'Neal to approve the agenda with the additions. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: John O'Neal made a motion and was seconded by Mike Prescott to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Re-Election of Officers

Attorney Evers opened the floor for nominations of Chair and Vice Chair to remain the same. This would leave Vanessa Hernandez as the Chair and Gene Davis as the Vice Chair.

Jim See motioned to accept with a second from Lory Durrance for Vanessa Hernandez and Gene Davis to remain in their current positions. Motion passed unanimously.

Adoption of Meeting schedule

A schedule for the upcoming meetings was included in the packet. November 2014- December 2015. Once approved, an ad will be run containing these dates.

Mike Prescott made a motion and was seconded by Dottie Conerly to approve the meeting dates. Motion passed unanimously.

Site Tracker Analytics

Kristi Schierling reviewed the activity for the last 6 months that had been gathered by the site tracker analytics. With this report, you are able to review how many times our webpage is viewed, how our website was found, popular pages on our website and where some of the visitors was from. Also reviewed was a spreadsheet that Marketing Alliance had put together that showed who viewed our webpage, how many times and all of their contact information. Director Lambert let the Board know

that he thought it would be a good idea to keep this going for another 6 months so staff can start reviewing the report and work on possible leads from this.

Donald Samuels made a motion and was seconded by Jim See to continue for 6 more months. Motion passed unanimously.

EDA Grant Award approvals

The EDC and IDA received EDA grant awards for this cycle. The EDC received one in the amount of \$150,000. We have been working on the project descriptions for the grant awards. Once those are finalized, the Chair can sign the agreements. The IDA received grants for the Incubator, Florikan project, the water/sewer corridor, and the pretreatment facility.

A motion was made by Monica Reas and seconded by John O'Neal to give authorization to the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreements. Donald Samuels voted no. Motion passed unanimously.

Project Updates

Incubator-Sarah Pelham gave a presentation to the Board. It was an overview of what the Incubator/Accelerator will offer the tenants. The staffing and current advisors were also reviewed. Sarah Pelham also went over the program guidelines for the Incubator/Accelerator. A copy of the presentation is on file at the EDC office. The policies and procedures and the proposed first amendment were not gone over today. Will do so at a later time.

Delcom- Still in communications with them and they are still discussing which space they would like to utilize.

Commerce Park Expansion- Remains on hold until the lawsuit is resolved.

Florikan- Slab is expected to be poured by Thanksgiving and the structure should be up by Christmas/January.

Continuum Labs- Vanessa Hernandez read a press release that just came out from Continuum Labs, Inc. It stated that Continuum has completed its first external round of private funding for \$4.25 million. This funding will provide for 20 new positions in Tech River. These positions are hoped to be filled by the end of the year. Director Lambert said that the examination should be presented sometime between now and the November meeting. Director Lambert may ask the Board to extend their contract depending on the outcome of the examination as an administrative function.

Fort Green LNG- Still meet on a regular basis with them. This is a very large project.

PfMan- Continuing to move forward. They have put the PRECO bill in their name now and we will be receiving a check shortly.

Auditor General- Still answering questions for them.

Financial Audit- Due June 30th of next year. Working on this.

Water/Sewer- Just agreed to have additional surveying done on Florida Avenue and engineering with the City of Wauchula. We have signed the agreement with Chastain Skillman to complete this. We are in the process of developing the parameters for the surveying in conjunction with the City of Wauchula.

Once that is done we will utilize a piggy back contract with the County for a surveying firm to do the survey and the same with the engineer.

JDC Phosphates- Tip Fowler was here before the Board today with a presentation. He reviewed his business with the Board and what they do. They have a demonstration plant in Fort Meade currently. We had defunded them last year to clean up the budget and asked him to come back and do another presentation for the board to consider funding them again. Their request is for \$200,000. We will do a budget amendment for this at next month's meeting.

Rapid Systems- Denise Hamilton was here to give an update on the lawsuit that they are currently in as well as the \$127k that was loaned to them for shared costs. A copy of her presentation is on file at the EDC office. Denise Hamilton gave a brief history of how Rapid Systems and FRBA were to work together in Hardee County and how the \$127k was come about. They are still in litigation with FRBA. They had received a very, very small settlement was agreed to for the 2 boards and individuals to be removed from the case. They are only in litigation with FRBA, LLC, Gigabit Squared and 2 individuals.

Chair Hernandez wanted to tentatively set a date to review the Continuum Labs examination and to discuss the Incubator. It is tentatively set for October 28th. We will confirm this date with the Board and then sent out a notice.

Financial Report

Sarah Pelham reviewed the EDC and IDA financials from the previous month.

A motion was made by Gene Davis and seconded by Monica Reas to approve the EDC and the IDA financials. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements/Other Business/Public Comment

Director Lambert showed the exterior stone that will be used to wrap the columns at the Incubator.

*Meeting was adjourned at 11:32 am by a motion from Jim See and a second from John O'Neal. Motion passed unanimously.