

INDEX TO MINUTES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUMMIT, PUBLIC WORKSHOP

HELD AT THE SEBASTIAN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS,

1225 MAIN STREET, SEBASTIAN, FLORIDA

ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009 AT 9:00 A.M.

1.	CALL TO ORDER.....	1
2.	PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.....	1
3.	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT	2
	<i>COMMISSIONER BOB SOLARI.....</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>A. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND PUBLIC INPUT.....</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>I. INTRODUCTION “THE PROBLEM” - CHARLIE WILSON.....</i>	<i>2</i>
	<i>“THE SOLUTION” - WESLEY DAVIS</i>	<i>3</i>
II.	PRESENTATIONS	4
	<i>A. COUNTY.....</i>	<i>4</i>
	<i>“PIPER AND BALLFIELDS” - JOE BAIRD.....</i>	<i>4</i>
	<i>“BUDGET” JASON BROWN</i>	<i>5</i>
	<i>“TAX ABATEMENT” - PETER O’BRYAN</i>	<i>5</i>
	<i>B. INDIAN RIVER COUNTY CHAMBER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</i>	<i>7</i>
	<i>“ATTITUDE, TIME COST AND COMMITMENT” - HELENE CASELTINE.....</i>	<i>7</i>
	<i>C. INEOS NEW PLANET ENERGY.....</i>	<i>8</i>

	<i>“BACK TO THE FUTURE” - RAY CRABBS</i>	8
D.	<i>SEBASTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</i>	9
	<i>“OUR HOME, THEIR DESTINATION” - BETH MITCHELL</i>	9
E.	<i>TRADE AND INDUSTRY</i>	10
	<i>“CYCLE OF DEVELOPMENT: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES” - ANDREW KENNEDY AND BRUCE BARKETT</i>	10
F.	<i>WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS</i>	11
	<i>“FROM THE JOBSEEKER TO THE EMPLOYER” - JOE COAKLEY</i>	11
G.	<i>INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE</i>	12
	<i>“CREATING THE FUTURE TODAY” - DR. DAVID SULLIVAN</i>	12
III.	PUBLIC COMMENTS	13
IV.	WRAP-UP AND PATH FORWARD	17
4.	ADJOURNMENT	17

February 5, 2009

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

The Board of County Commissioners of Indian River County, Florida, met in a Public Workshop at the Sebastian City Council Chambers, 1225 Main Street, Sebastian, Florida, on Thursday, February 5, 2009, to discuss economic development within the County. Present were County Board Chairman Wesley S. Davis, Vice Chairman Joseph E. Flescher, and Commissioners Peter D. O'Bryan and Bob Solari. Commissioner Gary C. Wheeler was absent. Also present were County Attorney William G. Collins II, County Administrator Joe Baird and Deputy Clerk Athena Adams.

Also in attendance were Community Development Director Bob Keating, Planning Director Stan Boling, Public Works Director James Davis, Budget Director Jason Brown, and Traffic Engineer Chris Mora.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Bob Solari called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Joseph E. Flescher led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

COMMISSIONER BOB SOLARI

A. PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND PUBLIC INPUT

Commissioner Solari welcomed everyone, and thanked the City of Sebastian for the use of their facility and for helping with preparations for the Summit.

I. INTRODUCTION

“The Problem” - Charlie Wilson

Charlie Wilson, President of Media Arts Group, outlined the current problems facing the County and how long they would last. He reported that unemployment rates are up 9.6% - 9.7%, compared to 5.8% at the end of 2007, with the highest being 10.1% in 2008. He reported that historically, in our County, the highest unemployment rates are usually in August and September, therefore it was safe to assume or expect that in August this year, the County’s unemployment rates could reach about 15%, a total of 5,500 people unemployed.

Mr. Wilson, explaining that this has happened before, related that back in January 1990 unemployment was at 5.1% and by August had soared to 16.1%, then crested at 18.5% by August of 1992. He said double digit unemployment persisted in the community for five years, until 1995, and if the same cycle were to happen in the County today, the County could not expect significant recovery until 2012 or 2013, unless we do something, starting today.

Mr. Wilson provided a synopsis of the County’s population, and its unemployment rate, in comparison to other counties in the State, noting that this County is one of the highest

unemployed counties, and that the loss of major industries could affect rates. He explained the demographics of where we are; addressed the issues of healthcare; problems in the construction and commerce industries; and said every decision we make has a consequence.

“The Solution” - Wesley Davis

Commissioner Davis delivering “the good news,” urged everyone to take the problems seriously. Presenting his five-point proposal for bringing immediate relief to local businesses and getting families back to work, he said we need to do the “RIGHT” thing for Indian River County. That “RIGHT” thing entails **R**egulation Reform, **I**mpact Fee Credits for job creation, **G**row Existing Businesses, **H**igh Priority for targeting new businesses and industry, and **T**ax Abatement for new business and incentives for existing businesses.

Commissioner Davis expressed the need for flexibility in our Codes or for a Board that would be able to analyze situations. He emphasized the need for us to change our focus and to support local businesses. He envisioned the creation of a Variance Board to help remove unnecessary roadblocks to progress; proposed to task the Board of Zoning Adjustments with the authority to grant temporary waivers; proposed impact fee credits for companies that create jobs; and proposed a moratorium on commercial impact fees and a reduction on residential fees.

Commissioner Davis encouraged everyone to buy local, and suggested we outsource when necessary, and to offer incentives for expansion using the model we already have in place with the Enterprise Zone. He said new businesses with immediate returns should be targeted, and we could consider anything from micro loans to the Enterprise Zone, and impact fees, to tax abatement, and have systems in place that says Indian River County would like to change its image and to say that we are open for business.

Commissioner Davis reiterated the need to do something to bring back industries that are down, like construction, tourism, and small businesses, in Indian River County. He believed we could, if we simply do what is right for the County and make decisions that are going to create economic development not just for businesses, but for families here in the County.

II. PRESENTATIONS

A. COUNTY

“Piper and Ballfields” - Joe Baird

County Administrator Joe Baird first presented a status report on Piper Aircraft, stating that the County participated with the State in keeping Piper in Florida, and in this County. He said there has been a lot of repeated discussion on this issue, but that people should remember that we only have 2,500 manufacturing jobs in this community and Piper was 50% of that. He discussed the criteria for the County giving Piper \$12 million over a three-year period, and said unfortunately, due to the global economy, they had to make adjustments and were not able to meet the requirements. He discussed the economic benefits Piper has brought to the community in the way of employment, among other things. Administrator Baird believed retaining Piper was one of the best decisions this community has made, and it shows we can attract and keep industry if we all work together.

Administrator Baird next gave a status report on the Dodger-deal including negotiations and the deal falling through. He reported that the Dodgers did not meet the deadline given by the County to accept or deny the County’s offer, and he explained why these negotiations are so secretive, stating that it was not necessarily the County’s preference. On the matter of the Orioles, he said contacts were made with them, but from an economic standpoint, it did not

work, because we could not afford them. He announced that staff was working hard to retain another team, and he asked for the public's trust in the no-disclosure requirement while negotiations are underway.

"Budget" Jason Brown

Budget Director Jason Brown presented an update on the County's budget, explaining what the Board has done to adjust the budget in response to the current economic conditions. He disclosed that based on legislative requirement for a 5% cut-back last year, 125 full-time positions have been eliminated over the last two years; Ad Valorem property tax declined last year; and we are currently experiencing a major revenue decrease in several areas. There is a hiring freeze in place; and there are currently 35 full-time positions that are vacant, which will generate some savings. He said our goal is to try and keep the tax rate low, and he explained how staff is making adjustments in levels of service to keep it that way.

"Tax Abatement" - Peter O'Bryan

Commissioner O'Bryan clarified that tax abatement was strictly an individual idea he was promoting, and that the Board of County Commissioners has not approved nor voted on it. He explained that Tax Abatement programs are allowed under the Florida Statutes; a referendum is required to approve the Plan; and they have a ten-year life, so every ten years another referendum would be required to continue or eliminate the program.

Commissioner O'Bryan said the program is used as an incentive for new businesses moving to the community or to help existing businesses expand their business operations. Explaining what the program would do for Indian River County, he said it would help put the County in a more competitive position with surrounding communities; and it would help

improve our perception as being more business friendly and put us on more equal footing with St. Lucie County, Palm Bay, and Brevard County that already have a tax abatement program.

In explaining how tax abatement works, Commissioner O'Bryan said it does not give away any tax dollars, just capping it or freezing it at that level; it does not waive or eliminate payment of impact fees; it does not waive or eliminate infrastructure requirements under the County's Land Development Regulations; and it does not reduce or eliminate current taxes on real property. Further, tax abatement applies only to county taxes, and not schools, cities, special districts, or bonds. He thereafter presented the new business criteria proposal to create ten (10) or more full-time jobs in manufacturing or industrial businesses.

In conclusion, Commissioner O'Bryan declared that it was his intention to get community support for this tax abatement idea. He had presented the idea to the Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA) and to the Sebastian Property Owners Association, and has received endorsement letters from them. He intends to approach the Realtors, the Home Builders, Common Ground, and the Taxpayers Association, to spread the message and gather support. Thereafter, he hoped to bring his idea before the Board of County Commissioners to solicit approval to put it on a referendum/ballot in November.

[The balance of this page intentionally left blank]

B. INDIAN RIVER COUNTY CHAMBER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Attitude, Time Cost and Commitment” - Helene Caseltine

Helene Caseltine, Director of Economic Development, Indian River Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Chamber is the designated primary agency for economic development on behalf of the County, and is recognized as such by Enterprise Florida, our Statewide Economic Development Agency.

Ms. Caseltine believed we need to improve the quality of our economy through the creation of higher wage, and year-round jobs with benefits, which would be through “contributory businesses,” that export their goods and services outside the local market area, and imports those revenues back into the local economy. She presented a list of targeted industries, noting that businesses in those industries are contributory businesses and typically do pay higher than average wages for their employees.

Ms. Caseltine believed, that at the end of the day, it is all about attitude (of local businesses and residents to embrace new businesses); it is about time (how much time it takes to get site plan approvals); it’s about cost (are there impact fees?); and it is about commitment (long term, by local government, businesses and residents). She also believed collaboration is the key to bring about positive economic development, with Piper being a great example of how collaboration works, keeping those jobs in this County.

Ms. Caseltine covered the areas of our assets and liabilities, workforce availability, transportation, and cultural activities, and explained the ways of making economic development work. She addressed the topics of what we have to offer these businesses, and what our clients are looking for. She also outlined the challenges we face in terms of competition.

Ms. Caseltine stated that ideas and recommendations were solicited from community leaders during a December 2008 Summit, as to what could be done right here, right now, to get our economy back on its footing, and their three top recommendations were: *adequate funding, enhanced incentives, and re-branding our community's image*. After explaining the funding advantages for the Council, she concluded by reiterating that in Economic Development, in the big picture, it is all about attitude, time, cost and long term commitments.

C. INEOS NEW PLANET ENERGY

“Back to the Future” - Ray Crabbs

Ray Crabbs presented his “groundbreaking technology” on renewable energy, and explained how carbon molecules are converted into Ethanol. He said corn was not needed, and carbon materials consist of household garbage, used auto tires, railroad ties, sewage sludge, and anything that is organic or of a carbon-base compound, which includes landfill gas.

Mr. Crabbs displayed a flowchart Diagram of the New Planet BioEnergy Process, and explained how ethanol and electricity is produced from carbon through the ingestion of synthesis gas (gasified waste). He described how oxygen is piped through a Gasifier, not an incinerator; how synthesis gas is created; and what happens in the fermentation, cell filtration, and distillation stages, resulting in the end product, Ethanol. He compared Corn Ethanol to their New Planet

Energy (Carbon usage), and said everything that is carbon-base is converted to synthesis gas, unlike corn ethanol.

Mr. Crabbs talked about the environment and said their passion is not just to create ethanol, but to create a dispersed system of producing ethanol; so we do not have to pay the sixteen to eighteen cents a gallon it takes to move it to Florida from the mid-west. He said it was their passion to do it in communities where the economic engine that is created by that system would be the most advantageous. They would also want to have stakeholders in the community where they are involved.

D. SEBASTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

“Our Home, Their Destination” - Beth Mitchell

Beth Mitchell, Executive Director of the Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce, in her mission to remind us why we live here and of some of the awesome resources that we have to offer, aired a short video of the many leisure and cultural activities to be experienced in the Sebastian River area, “Jewel of the Treasure Coast.” Such activities include sailing/boating, kayaking, fishing, skydiving, and surfing. Other places of interest include Wildlife and Preserves, Indian River Lagoon, Blue Cypress Lake, as well as, its Inns and Lodges, Resorts, entertainment, and restaurants. She handed out copies of a list of ten reasons to shop local, which the Chamber hopes to present to the community in the near future.

E. TRADE AND INDUSTRY

“Cycle of Development: Unintended Consequences” - Andrew Kennedy and Bruce Barkett

Andrew Kennedy said Commissioner O’Bryan had asked for a group to be formed to come up with ideas on how to speed up and/or streamline the permitting process, and that said Group covered the issues of what exists currently, how things are done and what could be changed. They also talked about allowing staff more flexibility in decision-making processes that affect development timeframes, turnaround time, and departmental interaction. He said it really evolved into how we do things, which seemed to be based on forecasting. He said we need to be more flexible to immediate change.

Bruce Barkett, Esquire, said the Group operated in stages and the first stage was to come up with ways of how to expedite the permitting process, which has been completed and recommendations sent to County staff. The second stage was to make the process more business-realistic, for which they have five specific recommendations:

- (1) Amend the Section of the Ordinance that requires a developer to post security guaranteeing road and drainage improvements; 25% is much too high and unrealistic.
- (2) Amend the Ordinance which requires the developer of a subdivision to post security for construction of sidewalks. The Ordinance is completely unnecessary and should be repealed in its entirety.
- (3) Add two years to all existing site plans, preliminary plats and planned development approvals.

(4) Increase the length of time for which a site plan is valid: a suggestion of two years from when a site plan is approved.

(5) When an applicant requests an extension for site plan or preliminary plat approval, he should not have to modify the plan to bring it up to current Code standards. The Group thinks that is unreasonable.

Jeff Thompson, Small Business owner, described how they are affected by the road and maintenance bond issues. He said after having a letter of credit in place for two years, they were informed by their bank that they would not renew it because it was tied to land development. He said lines of credit are not available to people and they do not have \$71,000 to secure the last 12 months of their Maintenance Bonds, and he was not sure what would happen to them if the County could not provide some relief for them. He reiterated the need to spend money locally; to hire locally; and for the municipalities to set precedent to hire certain percentages of local people and to buy a certain percentage of their products, locally.

F. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

“From the Jobseeker to the Employer” - Joe Coakley

Joe Coakley introduced his Branch Manager, Rhonda Blakely, and thanked Commissioners Solari, O’Bryan and Wheeler for the Workshop opportunity.

Rhonda Blakely, PHR Branch Manager, applauded Commissioner Davis for reaching out to small businesses. Explaining why Workforce Solution is different and better, she said they are not government-run; they are a non-profit that is funded by government grants; and they

take those monies and funnel it to businesses and job seekers in the County at no cost to the employers or the job seekers. She gave the reasons for the name change of the organization; described the nature of services provided to job seekers and employers, as well as, specialized services offered to professionals, among which are: proactive action plans, networking strategies, advanced resume writing, individual career coaching, interviewing and negotiating techniques.

Ms. Blakely felt that their expertise in recruitment and strategic business management has given them the understanding of what business is all about, and they want “to offer a robust assistance to keep local businesses viable.”

Members of the Indian River County Business Services Team are: PHR-Branch Manager Rhonda Blakely, PHR-Business Services Consultant Marcello Dossantos, and Recruiter Joe Coakley.

G. INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

“Creating the Future Today” - Dr. David Sullivan

Dr. Sullivan, representing Dr. Ed Massey, President of the College, gave an update of how the College has been transitioning this past year; what they are doing now, and the trends and directions they will be taking over the next five to ten years. They believe, as a partner in economic development, education is the cornerstone of a sustainable economy.

Through a PowerPoint presentation, Dr. Sullivan gave a brief history of the existence of the College, its changes and advancements through the years, as well as, the composition, number of campuses, contributions to the economy, and the variety of programs offered by the

College, including the recent addition of Bachelor's Degrees in certain arts and science programs.

Commissioner Solari called a break at 11:00 a.m., and reconvened the Workshop at 11:15 a.m.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Solari invited public comments.

Don Wright of 700 N. Fischer Circle, Sebastian, and working with the Incentives Program, believed modifying said Program, thus eliminating stringent requirements, would be easier than a voter referendum. He had the following suggestions for making the Incentives Program work:

- 1) Change the 100% requirement to 75% or 80% (currently the qualifying jobs have to equal or exceed 100% of the County's average wage).
- 2) Change the incentive amount to a meaningful amount (\$3,000.00).
- 3) The payment of grants could be reduced to three years to make it more effective, instead of spreading it over five years.
- 4) Revise the formula for bonus for people who come in and create jobs: these should be restricted to two, (a) provide a 10% bonus on top of the \$3,000.00 if the location is in the Enterprise Zone; and (b) a 10% bonus if you are 150% of the average annual salary.
- 5) To solve the impact fee problem: provide 0% financing and have those impact fee monies paid out of ad valorem taxes on a direct dollar-for-dollar basis.

Mr. Wright did not think we need a referendum, but immediate action. He said other ideas that could be looked at are the development of industrial revenue bonds program, and the use of CRA Districts.

John Higgs, Chairman of the Indian River Neighborhood Association (IRNA), Indian River Shores, referenced certain ideas brought forward by Commissioner Davis, that we must work together for the good of our County, and that residential construction alone is not, and cannot, by definition, be the basis of a long-term sustainable economy. Another suggestion by Commissioner Davis was that we address impact fees on construction of commercial properties and Mr. Higgs elaborated on why he thinks lowering impact fees on commercial properties requires careful attention.

Mr. Higgs believed having a moratorium is wrong, and we should instead have a well thought out program, not a give-away. He felt there should be criteria; have people meet these standards and then give them the break that they need. On the idea of expanding the Enterprise Zone, the IRNA thinks it is a good idea, and expanding it elsewhere in the County should also be considered. The IRNA strongly supports the idea of the Tax Abatement program and suggested careful thought be given to that. Mr. Higgs felt not enough attention has been given to doing what we can to get the life sciences employers who are moving south, to move up here, and he highlighted the need for more to be done to get them here.

Susan Grandpierre, Cultural Council Board Member, Ocracoke Square, referenced earlier comments about how to diversify our economy, and said the Cultural Council would be sponsoring a community cultural plan for the entire County, beginning this spring, and it would go on for a year. She believed long-range cultural planning is the key to attracting business and development, and better jobs. She pointed out that surveys of corporations and residents have shown that the most important factors in community livability is the arts and culture. She

announced that the Council would be gathering information to show what the economic impacts of the cultural organizations are in this County, and hoped everyone would participate.

Cindy Falco, Business Owner, Sebastian, commenting on the incentive package, hoped the ideas expressed today could be implemented. She expressed the frustration of small business owners not obtaining grant money because it was not available anymore, and of not being able to get permits on time.

Joe Martorana, Indian River Shores, liked the ideas of tax abatement, and felt that incentives for businesses are a must. He believed that an equal element attractive to industry is the environment, such as the style of living, cultural aspects of the community, and training provided. He said we must tell the people who want to move here for industry that we offer a good lifestyle.

Spencer Simmons, Simmons Construction, 118 43rd Avenue, to prove that impact fees do create a burden on small businesses, gave a scenario of how much it cost him in impact fees just to build a lift station. The Urban Service Line (USL) was another concern of his. He referred to prior comments about bringing in new businesses, and stated that there was no place inside the USL for expansion that requires 50 acres or more.

Charlie Wilson applauded Commissioner Davis on his comments about regulation reforms and the Board of Zoning Adjustment, and pointed out that that Board has not met in two years. He sought clarity on whether the suggestion was to reconstitute the Board of Adjustment, and allow that Board to offer waivers and to act as a safety valve. He also wanted to know if an ordinance would be brought forward to enable this Board.

Commissioner Davis, in answer to Mr. Wilson, said he was looking to create some kind of a Board that is not made up of elected officials, but for “someone to sprinkle some common sense into the process.”

Damien Gilliams, 1623 US Highway 1, Sebastian, said he was frustrated, because we have had an economic development program since 2007, yet here we are, still talking. He believed that if we change our tax codes it could create jobs.

Fred Mensing of Roseland said: (1) we need to partner with the Florida East Coast Railroad and Amtrak to help our tourist industry; (2) we are going to be getting various dollars that come from stimulus packages from out-of-town, and we need to see that these programs are spent to create the most jobs and the most money that sticks in this County; and (3) we need to write our bid specifications to encourage Indian River County businesses to engage in work.

Debra Fromang, Vero Beach Councilmember, had an idea of a company that she thought ought to start right here in Indian River County, and that is a “Red-light Camera Violation Company.” She suggested that an entrepreneur start a business and get a contract in to the City of Vero Beach immediately, because they would make a lot of money.

Gary Noel, 69th Street, wanted to see the permit process included in regulation reforms, because jobs are being held up when a building permit takes 18 months to be issued.

Chris Morehart, Fort Pierce, believed we need more public\private relationships to accomplish our goals. He said small businesses need help, and if we could team up with the resources like Workforce Solutions, Indian River State College, and the Small Business Development Center to offer all the resources, he believed we could accomplish a lot. He emphasized the need to invest in our small businesses, making them stronger and more competitive.

IV. WRAP-UP AND PATH FORWARD

Commissioner Solari thanked everyone for coming and acknowledged and appreciated the time the business community had taken out of their busy schedules to attend this Summit. He charged them to not consider their jobs done, today, because as difficult as it is for them to take part in the political process, their continued participation was extremely important.

Commissioner Solari concluded that if they want to achieve their goals and objectives, the business community need to incorporate politics or the political process into their business plan; and only with continued pressure on their political leaders, would they see their political leaders lead them in the right direction.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Solari declared the Workshop adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

ATTEST:

Jeffrey K. Barton, Clerk

Wesley S. Davis, Chairman

Minutes Approved: _____

INDEX TO MINUTES OF
GOALS FOR 2009 AND FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC VISION
PUBLIC WORKSHOP

HELD AT THE SEBASTIAN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1225 MAIN STREET, SEBASTIAN, FLORIDA

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009 AT 1:30 P.M.

1.	CALL TO ORDER	1
2.	GOALS FOR 2009	1
	2.A. COMMISSIONER PETER D. O'BRYAN	1
	2.B. COMMISSIONER BOB SOLARI.....	8
	2.C. COMMISSIONER JOSEPH E. FLESCHER.....	10
3.	PUBLIC COMMENT.....	12
	3.A. DISCUSSION AND INPUT	12
4.	FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC VISION – COMMISSIONER O'BRYAN	17

5. WRAP-UP.....17

6. ADJOURNMENT18

February 5, 2009

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
GOALS FOR 2009 AND FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC VISION

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

The Board of County Commissioners of Indian River County, Florida, met in a Public Workshop at the Sebastian City Council Chambers, 1225 Main Street, Sebastian, Florida, on Thursday, February 5, 2009 to discuss goals for 2009 and a five-year strategic vision.

Present were County Board Chairman Wesley S. Davis, Vice Chairman Joseph E. Flescher, and Commissioners Peter D. O'Bryan, and Bob Solari. Commissioner Gary C. Wheeler was absent. Also present were County Administrator Joseph Baird, County Attorney William G. Collins II, Community Development Director Bob Keating, Planning Director Stan Boling, Public Works Director Jim Davis, Utilities Director Erik Olson, Assistant Public Works Director Chris Mora, and Deputy Clerk Leona Adair Allen.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Peter D. O'Bryan called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

2. GOALS FOR 2009

2.A. COMMISSIONER PETER D. O'BRYAN

Commissioner O'Bryan announced that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the goals for 2009, and a vision as to where the County would like to be in 20 to 30 years. He

explained how this relates to economic development, and expressed concern over there being no medium or short term objectives/goals. Today he wanted the Board to discuss common goals, come to a consensus, add them to the Agenda, and move forward.

Commissioner O'Bryan presented his short term goals as follows (copy on file):

ONE YEAR GOALS:

- Achieve initial certification as a local green government
- Sign a new contract for new tenants at Dodgertown
- Complete two restoration projects (Spoonbill Marsh and Egret Marsh)
- Sign a contract for a “trash to energy” project at the landfill

NEW GOALS FOR 2009:

(1) Implement Planning for Reorganization of County Government

Commissioner O'Bryan felt the need to implement planning and/or review a reorganization of the County Government structure to make it more efficient, more customer friendly, and to ensure better planning decisions when moving forward.

Commissioner Solari felt that revisiting how our government works, the goals of efficient customer service, and better government, were all worthy goals.

Commissioner Davis believed the County should work with the Legislative Delegation to access each branch of Government and identify where they overlap. He supported the restructuring of relationships with State, County, and City governments.

Commissioner Flescher did not think reorganizing was necessary, but believed there should be a reduction in the duplication of effort. He voiced concern over the levels of service and the service given to constituents.

(2) Adopt Expedited Permitting Changes

Commissioner O'Bryan gave a brief update on the status of the proposed Land Development Regulation (LDR) changes.

Commissioner Davis felt that some of the LDR changes could be eliminated, and he supported impact fee relief.

Commissioner Flescher wanted to see the implementation of a three-year payment schedule for impact fees.

Commissioner Solari favored the points that Attorney Barkett had spoken about in the morning meeting, and he wanted financial details before making a decision on impact fees.

Administrator Baird pointed out that eight Letters of Credit (LOC), and four 3-year Maintenance Bonds for roads were due within the month, and that they would have to move quickly to accommodate the people (if the banks do not), which would require a pending or emergency ordinance.

(3) Undertake a Customer Service Training Program for all County Employees

Commissioner O'Bryan indicated that he wanted all County employees to participate in a customer service training program, starting with the Utilities Division and Building Department, since they have the majority of public interaction.

Administrator Baird acknowledged that Indian River State College (IRSC) is scheduled to start the training program next month.

Commissioner Solari believed the training would be most appropriate for front-line customer service employees. He suggested identifying the cost per employee, and depending on the cost, to prioritize or limit the attendees.

Administrator Baird informed Commissioner Solari that it would cost \$900.00 per day, for a class of 50 employees.

Commissioner Flescher did not feel the necessity of sending all the employees to the customer service training.

Administrator Baird stated that the employees who deal with the public on a daily basis, approximately 100 people, would be the first to attend the classes.

(4) Voter Approval of a Tax Abatement Program

Commissioner O'Bryan said he had to get voter approval for the Tax Abatement Program and that it would be coming to the Board for a vote.

Commissioner Davis favored the Tax Abatement Program, and believed it would attract new employers to the community. He wanted immediate gratification for small businesses, and believed that a policy stating that we will give impact fee credits for individuals bringing specific jobs into the community is extremely important.

Commissioner Solari supported the program, and is curious to see what the citizens have to say in the November election.

Commissioner Flescher felt this would be a valuable tool with long term benefits; however, he did not want to see existing businesses carry the burden of incoming businesses.

(5) Find a Source for Increased Funding for Economic Development

Commissioner O'Bryan said that the Economic Development Council (EDC) is run through the Chamber of Commerce, and noted that many Counties now have a stand alone EDC, which is a non-profit or separate entity, in and above itself. He questioned whether one model would be better than the others, and expressed the desire to review them to see whether they would provide a better funding source, other than our ad valorem tax base.

Commissioner Flescher wanted to revisit our marketing strategy with the EDC. Due to budget constraints, he felt it necessary to encourage, support, and embrace any efforts to provide them with as many tools as possible.

Commissioner Solari expressed the need to prioritize the priorities. He supported the increase in funding for the EDC, more than exploring the alternative model.

(6) Continue Work with the Private Sector to Improve Relationships with the County

There was a consensus among the Commissioners that negativity needs to be eliminated.

Commissioner Flescher expressed that he would like to see a user-friendly tracking system (computer), be installed in the Building Department so customers could track the status of their permitting process.

Administrator Baird acknowledged that a tracking system had already been instituted, but said it needed to be made more user-friendly. Likewise, staff has been looking at installing different software in the Utility Department, so payments can be processed on line.

Commissioner Davis acknowledged that most of the complaints he had heard dealt with the building and permitting process, probably because of the ordinances that staff is required to follow, as well as the lack of understanding the process.

Community Development Director Bob Keating informed Commissioner Flescher that an online tracking system for building permits had been in place for over six months. He told the Board how the Expedited Permitting Committee had identified and resolved a number of issues that will make the process more streamlined and customer friendly.

Commissioner Flescher recommended the terminal tracking system be marketed better.

Director Keating responded to questions and comments from the Board regarding re-submittals and stricter timelines.

(7) Identify a Sponsoring Organization and Funding Source to Implement a “Buy Local, Think Local, Be Local” Marketing Plan

Commissioner O’Bryan emphasized that supporting local suppliers, manufacturers, and local resources (such as engineering and architectural firms), would be the fastest way to create jobs in the community, and it would also keep the money “in-house.”

Commissioner Flescher supported the “buy local” concept, and suggested the County consider a “buy local” purchasing policy. He believed the County should lead by example, and invest in the small businesses of our community. He also felt that stimulating the local commerce should be accomplished immediately.

Commissioner Davis recalled a recent \$15,000 local engineering project that kept local people in business, and emphasized that these projects keep people on staff. He wanted to see future local projects allocated not only to the Utility Department, but also to other departments.

Commissioner Solari believed that the “buy local” marketing plan and funding source should be left to the private sector. He felt that the local Chamber of Commerce would be the most appropriate vehicle, not the local government. He also mentioned that if this moves forward, there should be a financial impact portion to see how much it would cost.

(8) Achieve a Positive Working Relationship with the Press

Commissioner O’Bryan expressed that the reporting of newspaper articles should not hide anything, but be more balanced in the reporting, not only to reflect the bad but the good as well. He believed that Indian River County, being such a great, great place to work and live, should reflect in a positive light.

Commissioner Solari echoed Commissioner O’Bryan and conveyed that if the Press spent more time looking for optimistic things, they would find more optimistic things.

Commissioner Flescher believed the goal of a positive relationship with the Press could be accomplished if the facilitation of information is truthful and at its best. He suggested someone within staff be designated as the point of contact to ensure the correct information is released to the media.

(9) Conduct a Comprehensive Survey of Citizens to Evaluate Priorities for Spending Levels

Commissioner O’Bryan announced that with the upcoming budget struggles, he would like to receive more feedback from the public, regarding spending priorities. He spoke about Charlotte County’s visioning process and their citizen surveys regarding spending. Although he indicated that he did not want a formal survey conducted, he would prefer more formal input from the community regarding where they think the County should spend the money, and the services they consider most important. He felt it would be beneficial to add more Budget Workshops earlier in the budget process.

Commissioner Davis believed Commissioner O’Bryan was right on point, and thought that most of the citizen’s consensus would probably be health, safety and welfare issues.

2.B. COMMISSIONER BOB SOLARI

Commissioner Solari presented his short term goals for 2009 as follows (copy on file):

(1) Saving the Indian River Lagoon by reversing (in whole or part) the flow of polluted waters, which presently flow into the Lagoon via the three relief canals, and sending the waters into one or more reservoirs to the west. Short term: By the end of this year, begin the planning process for saving the lagoon.

(2) Greenways. Short term: Complete the Greenway Plan to the South County area and build at least one segment of the Central or North County plan.

(3) Regionalize Waste Water Treatment Facilities by partnering with the City of Vero Beach for regionalization of water and sewer for the efficiency and economy of government operations and the reduction of budgets. Short Term: Plan for the water and sewer consolidation.

The Commissioners briefly discussed stormwater treatment and the western reservoir plan.

(4) Financial Impact. Add a requirement that whenever a new ordinance or regulation is proposed that a financial impact study accompany it, which at a minimum includes existing and additional costs of the proposal and a cost benefit analysis.

Discussion ensued regarding the financial impact study and the impact/cost to perform one.

(5) Economic Development. Short Term: (a) Work to make Indian River County in perception and reality, a business friendly community; (b) Examine the County process and remove or revise any regulations, which add expense to a project, but do not add value to the community as a whole; (c) Begin a substantial partnership with Indian River State College to

bring more educational facilities to the Mueller Campus, especially facilities which will help to train students in emerging technologies such as medical instrumentation, advanced medical health services, biotech nanotechnology and other appropriate emerging technologies and services; and (d) Begin planning for a Park of Commerce to the west of the populated area of town, which will allow for the expedition of permitting.

Director Keating updated the Board on the status of the two industrial parks located on SR60, west of I-95.

Commissioner Solari stressed that if the County is serious about bringing in emerging technology and industries for the long term, then the planning needs to start immediately for where they would be located; and he believed a campus-type setting would be best.

2.C. COMMISSIONER JOSEPH E. FLESCHER

Commissioner Flescher presented his 2009 goals as follows:

(1) Incentives for Going Green. Implement incentives for individuals using green construction. Reducing impact fees could encourage more folks to go green, thus saving the government and taxpayers money by not further burdening the infrastructure.

Commissioner Solari thought some of this may require revisiting how we price certain resources.

(2) Implement a Summit to include Advisory Committee Chairmen who would review common issues, examine goals and achievements, and see if there are collateral concerns. He felt this would allow for cross-talk and accelerate their effectiveness.

Commissioner Davis felt it would be advantageous to consolidate some of the committees.

There was a brief discussion to the consideration of a Summit, the consolidation of committees, and possibly duplication of services.

(3) Create Enterprise Zone. To create another Enterprise Zone on the western corridor of SR60.

County Attorney Will Collins described the limitations and state criteria.

Helene Caseltine, Director of Economic Development Council, spoke about expanding the Enterprise Zone, state criteria, and thresholds.

Discussion ensued regarding the Enterprise Zone, and how it could be expanded.

(4) Purchase a Scoreboard for the North County Pool. Upgrading the North County Aquatic Center Pool with a scoreboard for competitions could draw about 400 to 500 competitors, plus their families, and coaching staff. He felt the investment would attract more visiting swim teams to hold meets and other events which would consequently promote local businesses.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Special Olympics event; the income it generates; possible funding sources; developing the shooting range; and upgrading the Fairgrounds Master Plan for utilization.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.A. DISCUSSION AND INPUT

Richard Jones, small business owner, applauded the Board for recommending the County buy locally. He wanted the Board to consider the value of each employee (in every business) in the County.

Scott Carson, Carolina Circle, Vero Beach, provided statistical data regarding government transfers, job growth, growth of small businesses, ranking of wages, unemployment, goods and services produced and sold outside the County, and the overall standard of living within Indian River County. He wanted the County to create 200 primary industry jobs at 120% or more of the average wages, for five years; and he pointed out numerous arrangements that could bring businesses into the County.

Cindy Falco, Sebastian, believed that improving Customer Service was imperative for the community, and asked if the goal included the City of Sebastian. She suggested the Economic Development Department be separated from the Chamber of Commerce; and that the Vero Beach and Sebastian computer systems talk to each other to cut down on the frustration process of obtaining permit information.

Commissioner O'Bryan clarified that the Customer Service Training program would be for County employees, not Municipal employees. He suggested she send a letter to Mayor Gillmor, suggesting they dovetail from our program, so they will not have to duplicate their efforts.

Fred Mensing of Roseland, addressed the negative impact that fresh water has on the Lagoon, supported the “buy local” challenge, and thereafter made the following suggestions: (1) establish a 150-foot wide corridor, for both a road and railroad, around 80th Street, going west toward the County line; (2) an area west of I-95 be designated as a future industrial development and have it accessible for rail service; (3) a high-speed rail run along the turnpike; and (4) developing an international airport in the western part of the County. He asked the Board to consider his suggestions now, while the land is still available, and to not wait 30 years.

Josh Frank, Indian River County resident and business consultant, said he has been in the business of “fixing businesses,” and suggested the Board “follow the money.” He predicted that turning the economy around would take “sharp effort,” and he commended the Board for putting this meeting in place. He encouraged the Board to start working on the highest priority items immediately, purchase the scoreboard for the North County pool, develop the gun range, and do something with Dodgertown, so they can start generating money. Mr. Frank also expressed the need for the abatement program, and the desire to focus on what we can do today to start fixing things tomorrow.

Graham Cox, 1213 George Street, Sebastian, told the Board about a Quality of Life Survey that he and the Pelican Island Audubon Society were preparing to initiate. He felt the survey would help contribute to the Board’s short and long term goals. He stressed community buy-in, and asked for volunteers to assist with gathering the information that could be useful during long term planning.

(Clerk’s Note: Commissioner Davis departed the meeting at 3:30 p.m.)

John Higgs, Indian River Shores, supported buying local; wanted to see the government promote this without it being a legal requirement; and advised the Board to continue seeking information before making decisions.

Scott Barlow, Vero Beach, and swim coach at the North County pool, supported the recommendation of Commissioner Flescher regarding the purchase of a scoreboard at the pool. He said that from a professional view, the scoreboard would be the “icing on the cake” for the pool facility. He emphasized how the scoreboard would bring in hundreds of families and thousands of dollars of revenue in one weekend. Mr. Barlow felt it would give the County the opportunity to host more and grander meets throughout the year.

Ken Grudens, Executive Director of the Indian River Land Trust in Vero Beach and resident of Sebastian, said he and the Land Trust were excited about the Greenway projects. He spoke about a current Lagoon Greenway project, and indicated that the Land Trust should partner in these types of projects so the non-profit can help facilitate and coordinate, at little or no cost to the County. He spoke about the Conservation Infrastructure Map and emphasized the need to protect and enhance resources as the County continues to grow.

Richard Baker, Pelican Island Audubon Society, provided suggestions and conveyed how the clean-up of the relief canals would significantly help the Lagoon. He informed the Board that Cynthia Barnett, an award winning author, will speak about her book, Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S., on February 16, 2009, 7:30 p.m., at the Vero Beach Community Center.

Charles E. Smith, retired Circuit Judge and native of Indian River County, voiced his ideas of a five year plan. He recalled how there were passenger rail services in the County until the 1960’s and felt that since there was still room for another track, that the Board consider

adding the services of Amtrak. He believed that many of the Midwest and Northeast residents, students, workers, and visitors coming to this area would use a train service, especially with the gas prices continuing to rise. Mr. Smith felt that joining with Stuart to Saint Augustine, along I-95, would bring political power to our cities within five years. He also suggested implementing commuter airline services from Vero Beach/Sebastian to major hubs, believing it would increase businesses and tourists.

Richard Oujevolk, 1871 Sand Dollar Lane, Sebastian, spoke about short-term concurrency projects, and long range economic development in the areas of transportation. He wanted the Board to consider more effective transportation improvements to reflect the nature of the Comprehensive Plan. He stressed compliance when dealing with the economic expansion package, and provided long range economic development suggestions.

Bill Curtis, 3410 Buckinghammock Trail, felt the most important long term goals were to: (1) plan for a larger part of commerce; (2) fund the construction of warehouse facilities; (3) regionalize water and sewer systems; and (4) connect to reservoirs in the west end of the County. His short-term suggestions were to: (1) fund Economic Development and empower the Chamber to do the job of Economic Development; (2) implement Economic Development incentives as presented by Andrew Kennedy and Bruce Barkett at the Economic Summit during the morning session; and (3) bring New Planet Energy into the County.

Richard Bialosky, commented on ideas that were mentioned earlier, and emphasized how there was still a role for real estate development in the County. He felt there was a call for rail services, local self-sufficiency, and more walkable, compact, and sustainable communities. He said we all know what we do not want to be, but we have not yet articulated what we do want to be, and he suggested bringing in the Country's best planners for direction.

Penny Chandler, President of the Indian River Chamber of Commerce, told the Board that the Community Leaders Group had met last December, and out of that meeting came three Task Forces. She conveyed the group plans to meet at Pointe West on February 27th, to bring back specific recommendations, many of which work hand-in-hand with the Board's short term goals, and that some of the items coming forth would be brought before the Board for formal action. She pointed out the free business counseling services available by retired business executives in both Sebastian and Vero Beach. She commented on the suggested rail service, promoted the Go-Line bus service, and suggested using non-profit capabilities for conducting the surveys.

Damien Gilliams, 1623 US 1, Sebastian, suggested the Board contact the Space Coast Research and Development Program (to the north), an association of high corporate executives that collaborate to create jobs and bring investment into the communities; and also Bio Science (to the south), and their expertise with the growth of industry. He said these organizations, both at our doorstep, know how to create jobs, and using their services would keep the County from re-inventing the wheel.

Charlie Wilson, President of Media Arts Group, felt the Board of Zoning Adjustments should be included in the goals. He said "there is no magic bullet," and suggested: (1) striking the impact fees to encourage commercial construction; (2) approving the concrete plant which will open 50 jobs; (3) starting mining operations for 50 jobs; (4) redirecting tourism to sponsor events that the media will see; and (4) moving up the projects that we know we can accomplish.

4. FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC VISION – COMMISSIONER O’BRYAN

Commissioner O’Bryan noted that there would be a change in the schedule. He suggested the Board schedule another day to look at the 5 and 20-year strategic visions, and there was consensus.

5. WRAP-UP

Commissioner Flescher thanked everyone for attending the meeting; summarized his thoughts regarding the immediate needs; assured the audience that the ideas would be examined and brought forward; and said he wanted to see the items on the one-year plan put into motion within the next few months.

Commissioner Solari thanked the attendees, the City of Sebastian for providing the facility, and the people behind the scenes. He felt that if the Board continues to work hard, and if they meet next year, they will see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Commissioner O’Bryan thanked the City of Sebastian, Audio Visual expert, Barbara Brooke-Reese, and Commissioner Assistants Beth Casano, and Terri Collins-Lister. He said his outlook on the County is that it is “half-full and getting fuller by the minute,” despite the bleak economy. He believed that the quality assets, people, social capital, business people, staff, and the social capital can be utilized to make this a great community. He felt that this, and like meetings would help to make this a better County.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner O’Bryan declared the Workshop adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

ATTEST:

Jeffrey K. Barton, Clerk

Commissioner Wesley S. Davis, Chairman

Minutes Approved: _____

Goals for 2009 & Five Year Strategic Vision//LAA/2009