

## **ENTERPRISE ZONE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

There was a meeting of the Indian River County (IRC)/City of Vero Beach (COVB) Enterprise Zone Development Agency (EZDA) on Thursday, March 8, 2007 at 8:00 a.m. in the First Floor Conference Room "A" at the County Administration Building, 1840 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Present were Chairman Karl Zimmermann, Local Code Enforcement Appointee; Roland Guilbault, Scott Stradley and Milton Thomas, Member-at-Large Appointees; Penny Chandler, Indian River Chamber of Commerce Appointee; William Shelly, Resident in EZ Appointee; Anne Douglas, Business in Enterprise Zone (EZ) Appointee; Joseph Chiarella, Financial or Insurance Appointee; Richard Lane, Local Law Enforcement Appointee (arrived at 8:15 a.m.).

Absent were members: Vice Chairman Gwenda Thompson, Workforce Development Board Appointee; IRC Commissioner Joseph E. Flescher, and Ken Daige, COVB, non-voting Liaisons (all excused); and Jacqueline Reason, Non-profit Organization in EZ Appointee (unexcused).

Also present were IRC staff: Bill Schutt, Senior Economic Development Planner; Sasan Rohani, Chief Long Range Planning; Roland DeBlois, Environmental and Code Enforcement Chief and Terri Collins-Lister, Staff Assistant IV. Others present were: Helene Caseltine, EZ Coordinator.

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Zimmermann called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

**ON MOTION BY Ms. Chandler, SECONDED BY Mr. Stradley, the members voted unanimously (8-0) to approve the February 8, 2007 meeting minutes as presented.**

### **Expedited Permit Process**

Mr. Bill Schutt, IRC Senior Economic Development Planner, mentioned that staff at the February 8, 2007 EZDA meeting offered to provide some of the data for the Expedited Permit Process, however it was decided by the committee

a letter should be sent to Mr. Stan Boling, IRC Planning Director, requesting information on how effective the process was.

A discussion ensued on the request for the information for the expedited process and Chairman Zimmerman asked Mr. Sasan Rohani, Chief Long Range Planning to get the information to Terri Collins-Lister, Recording Secretary, to distribute to the committee members.

### **Code Enforcement Process**

Mr. Roland DeBlois, IRC Environmental and Code Enforcement Chief, gave a brief presentation on the Code Enforcement Process, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office.

Mr. DeBlois told the committee, Ms. Debbie Clifford, IRC Code Enforcement Officer was designated for the Enterprise Zone (EZ) area. He explained the main thing that the code enforcement officers primarily do was code enforcement and their main focus was responding to complaints. He noted with any new construction or development project, the code officers were involved in the Certificate of Occupancy inspections particularly related to landscape compliance, zoning permit issuance and signed off on alcohol beverage licenses for certain zoning requirements.

Mr. DeBlois indicated there were three main approaches the code enforcement staff could utilize in enforcing regulations and gave an overview of the Code Enforcement Board and the process.

Mr. Lane arrived at 8:15 a.m.

A discussion ensued on the foreclosure aspect of code enforcement and a situation in where there was a piece of property located in the City of Fellsmere that was a junk yard on a residential lot.

Mr. DeBlois stated to be more specific to the EZ; he had researched the activities of the Code Enforcement within the EZ area. He indicated there had been 500 Code Enforcement actions within the EZ in the past five years.

Mr. Shelly inquired if there were enough code enforcement officers to service the area served by the County. Mr. DeBlois felt there was enough staff given the fact that they coordinated with the Indian River Sheriff's Department and Health Department.

Mr. Shelly wondered what the normal time frame was for the steps in the code enforcement process. Mr. DeBlois indicated once there was an initial contact, the code enforcement department would send out a notice of violation to the offender, the individual had any where between a couple of weeks up to a month to voluntarily comply.

A discussion ensued regarding roadside vendors and junk next to right-of-ways.

Mr. Lane opined there were a lot of violations related to hurricane damage in the EZ and wondered if the County had a strategic plan to address some of those code violations. Mr. DeBlois noted there was the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program SHIP program, Habitat for Humanity had assisted individuals with hurricane damage as well as IRC Building Department had recently stepped up their inspections for condemnation and demolition.

Mr. Lane felt the County should consider a long term plan to rejuvenate the EZ. Mr. DeBlois mentioned there may need to be coordination between SHIP, Habitat for Humanity and the IRC Building Department to be more focused and systematic.

Mr. Shelly stated he had been working with Mr. DeBlois and Deputy Teddy Floyd, IRC Sheriff's Department to address a lot of potential violations on the structures and buildings to the Code Enforcement's attention. He wanted a concentrated effort on the commercial cores to help revitalize the business sections of the community. A discussion followed.

Mr. Stradley inquired if the code enforcer assigned to the EZ had any EZ brochures to give to the violator's, information on the EZ program which could help with the cost of building materials and a refund of the sales tax. Ms. Chandler told Mr. DeBlois, Ms. Caseltine could meet with code enforcement to explain the benefits the property owner in the EZ could gain from the program.

### **Meeting Dates Revisited**

Chairman Zimmerman asked whether there was interest in moving the EZDA current meeting time. The majority of the committee members favored moving the time to 8:30 a.m. It was decided to keep the date as the second Thursday of the month. Mr. Guilbault stated he could not meet on the second Thursday of the month. Chairman Zimmerman asked the committee members if they would bring their calendars to the next meeting to see if there was another time frame that would accommodate everyone's schedule.

## Staff Report

Ms. Caseltine indicated at the February 8, 2007 meeting it had been suggested to change the business equipment sales tax refund from the threshold of \$5,000 to \$500 and noted she had visited with the EZ State Coordinator and was told there had been legislation filed by the EZ in St. Petersburg, Florida called House Bill 873. She stated the threshold was reduced to \$2,500 and allowed for multi-purchases; however the time frame to apply for the refund was shortened from 6 months to 90 days.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Thomas, SECONDED BY Mr. Stradley, the members voted unanimously (9-0) to suggest the Enterprise Zone Development Agency send a letter of support to Tallahassee supporting House Bill 873 and request the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of County Commissioners do the same.**

Mr. Stradley asked how the EZDA would communicate the request to the BCC. Ms. Chandler made the recommendation that Ms. Caseltine would contact the EZDA Commissioner Liaison and move it forward under their agenda.

Ms. Caseltine informed the committee copies of the State of Florida's Enterprise Zone Annual Report were now available, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. In summary, there were 3,324 new businesses that located within Enterprise Zones from a period of October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006. She continued there was over \$23 million in state incentives offered, \$9.8 million in local incentives, and businesses located in the EZ received over \$33 million of incentives during the time period.

Ms. Caseltine opined it was interesting with the sales tax refund on business equipment because there were no significant differences in the number of applications or dollar amounts refunded when the change took place from a \$5000 threshold twenty years ago and in the year of 2001 when it was changed to \$500.

Ms. Caseltine concluded the quarterly report for the local EZ was submitted to the Office of Trade, Tourism and Economic Development State Coordinator.

## **Next Meeting**

Chairman Zimmerman mentioned the next EZDA meeting was on April 12, 2007 at 8:30. The concern was raised for a lack of a quorum at the next meeting due to several members being absent. Ms. Chandler inquired if someone had contacted EZDA Committee Member Ms. Reason in regards to the three consecutive unexcused absences. Ms. Caseltine stated she had left a message with Ms. Reason, however there was no response.

Chairman Zimmerman entertained a motion to cancel the April 12, 2007 EZDA Meeting.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Lane, SECONDED BY Mr. Chiarella, the members voted unanimously (9-0) to cancel the April 12, 2007 Enterprise Zone Development Agency Meeting due to attendance constraints on part of the committee members.**

Chairman Zimmerman told the committee schedules would be discussed at the May 10, 2007 meeting and encouraged members to bring their planners to find a meeting date that would be acceptable.

Mr. Lane wanted to address some concerns with regards to the lack of response from Ms. Reason. A discussion followed. Ms. Caseltine clarified and revisited the resolution that established the EZDA which states if any member of the agency fails to attend three consecutive meetings without a satisfactory excuse or if a member was absent from more than one half of the agency's meetings in a given calendar year, the agency shall declare the members seat to be vacant and the vacancy shall be fill by the BCC.

Mr. Chiarella pointed out every member had made a commitment to attend the meetings and each had other obligations. He felt as a committee each member owed it to each other to return a phone call or respond when the request was made if there was an interest on serving on the committee.

**ON MOTION BY Mr. Lane, SECONDED BY Ms. Chandler, the members voted unanimously (9-0) to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners to remove Ms. Jacqueline Reason as a member of the Enterprise Zone Development Agency who has failed to attend the required meetings consistent with the guidelines set forth by Florida Statutes enabling Enterprise Zones to form and be adopted locally.**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:36 a.m.