

BUSINESS CLIMATE WORK GROUP MINUTES
Friday, September 8, 2006
Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice

Welcome and introductions by Co-Chairs Teri Hansen and Tim Miller. Diane Andrews gave the EDC update and spoke about the International Design Summit that will be held at the Ritz on October 9–11, 2006. Teri Hansen urged attendance saying this is going to be a special event that every business will benefit from. The roster of speakers is very impressive and to register go to their web site is www.sarasotadesignsummit.com. The expansion and relocation projects continue to be strong in the County.

The speaker was Jerry Sparkman from TOTeMS Architecture and his topic was: *New Urbanism is Good for Business*. He started by talking about the New Urbanism (NU) Principles which state that neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use. Daily activities should occur within walking distance and interconnected streets should encourage walking, reduce automobile trips and conserve energy. NU also provides a broad range of housing types and price levels. It also integrates a range of parks, village greens and community gardens. The civic, institutional and commercial activities are concentrated within neighborhoods and districts. The New Urban street design has narrow streets, small curb radius returns and slow design speeds. Jerry gave examples of NU communities i.e. Haile Plantation and Celebration in Florida and Harbor Town in Memphis Tennessee. A lively question and answer session followed the presentation.

Sub Group Reports:

Diversity: The four focus groups from Sarasota County business community have met and MCC will be generating a report for the committee that will then be presented to the EDC Board of Directors. This will be the most up to date information on attracting and retaining our diverse workforce.

Workforce Housing: The funding proposal for \$5,000 was granted at the EDC Board meeting on August 24, 2006. The funding is for research to be conducted concerning how to assist workers in the rental market. Are there best practices from other Florida communities concerning rental subsidies and incentives that Sarasota County can adopt?

The next meeting is December 7, 2006. Place TBD.