



**BUSINESS CLIMATE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
July 18, 2011**

**Committee Members in attendance – alphabetically:**

Jim Bos	Marc Mansfield
Mireya Eavey	Jeff Maultsby
John Fain	Rob Morris
Bob Girard	Jim Paulmann
Ben Hatcher	Michael Ritter
Kevin Hicks	Jamie Stone
David Kramer	John Stump
Allan Lane	Daisy Vulovich

**Committee Members not in attendance – alphabetically:**

Jon Bednerik	Steve Padgett
Mike Bryant	Chris Pfahler
Kathleen Cornett	Mary Slapp
Ted Ehrlichman	Paul Smith
David Greenberg	Leroy Sullivan
Steve Hall	Tom Wells
Teri Hansen	Michael Schulz
Stephanie Kempton	Sue Wolverton
George McGonagill	

**Invited Guests:**

Rob Lewis

**Staff**

Lee Kotwicki	Kyle Stevens
Joan McGill	

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Co-chair, Kevin Hicks, called the meeting of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County (EDC) Business Climate Committee to order at 4:05 p.m. Introductions were made.

2. **NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Presentation: Institute for the Ages (Tim Dutton)**

Tim provided a brief history on the Institute for the Ages and why Sarasota County is the perfect location for this endeavor. By 2012, aging potentially could be a \$20 billion business. On July 27<sup>th</sup>, SCOPE is asking the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for \$1.2 million over a three-year period. The goal is to raise a total of \$3 million. RTI performed an economic impact study and estimated the Institute will create 750 to 800 new jobs. Sarasota Memorial Hospital has offered four years of free office space for the Institute to get started. There is also the opportunity to export some of the Institute's research to other communities.

**b. Introduction of Mark Huey and Comments (Joan McGill)**

Joan introduced Mark to the committee and he provided a quick summary of his background. Mark has experience in the private, public and non-profit sectors. He is excited to be a part of the team and is looking forward to making a difference. He thanked the members of the committee for their time and work on the committee.

**c. FPL Program for Entrepreneurs (Joan McGill)**

FPL has filed a petition with the Florida Public Service Commission to help support start-up, expanding, and relocating businesses. Support would be in the form of a discount in electric services and also targets the reuse of property that has been vacant for more than six months. Joan asked the committee if this is something they would like to support. Mike Ritter made the motion to approve a letter of support with the provision that the discount pertain to 25% of FPL's business customers and Marc Mansfield seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The letter will first go to the EDC Board of Directors for approval.

3. **OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Update on Business Climate Survey (Daisy Vulovich)**

Daisy reported that the task group recommends that the survey be tabled until early next year. Reasons include: new EDC leadership who should have the opportunity to provide input, possibility of adding community partners to support

the survey, and budget constraints that will not allow the desired increase in sample size. The task group submitted a list of recommendations for consideration when the task group is reinstated. The recommendations are attached.

#### **b. County Update (Rob Lewis)**

Rob Lewis provided an update on the Planning and Permitting Department of the County:

- He stated the County has partnered with some high profile companies, such as ASO, Costco, Lowes, Kohls, Home Depot, and the rezoning of Pelican Plaza.
- Their office is preparing a spreadsheet of codes that need to be re-examined by the BOCC
- The relocation to the BOB building has expedited procedures and built a network in the community. Last month they performed 51 inspections and only 7 were late (one day after the deadline is considered late).
- Staffing at the County will remain the same

#### **4. OPEN DISCUSSION**

Joan stated that the judging for the Hall of Fame is taking place this week and announced that the Industry Tour is scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County Business Climate Committee adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

The next meeting may be cancelled; however, if not it will be held on **August 15<sup>th</sup>** from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the EDC offices.

## **Recommendations from Business Climate Survey Subcommittee:**

With new leadership taking place and the possibility of adding new partners to the survey, we recommend that the survey be tabled until new staff is in place,

Recommendations as we move forward on the survey:

### 1- Email addresses:

Subcommittee members agreed that it was a wise investment to utilize email addresses for survey distribution and supplement it with phone calls as some sectors don't appear to have adequate email addresses.

Make it a business practice to obtain email addresses and periodically update. This will provide opportunities for the EDC to utilize such a database on a regular basis.

Use of an electronic survey can allow us to distribute to a far greater audience however we must couple that with an aggressive marketing campaign to insure that the survey is completed (and is directed to the 'right' person within the organization—therefore some prep time is important.)

### 2- Look at geography

Recognizing that there are restraints on the budget, we would still recommend that there is a significant need to look at geographical differences. Geopolitical boundaries are important and to the extent that the business climate survey can sort geographically, this would be a wise investment and may provide opportunities for other partners to get involved in helping offset the finances behind the survey.

### 3-Questions to think about:

-Are there particular items that we want to drill down into....more targeted/focused information

-Do we want to be a regional survey?

- Who are our partners in all directions?

-Does it become too difficult to sort if we partner?

*We don't have answers but these are questions to consider.*

### 4- Partners for the survey

*Possible Partners to consider for survey (some have already expressed an interest):*

Suncoast Workforce

CareerEdge

SRQ International Airport