

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE COMMITTEE (EDZC) MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2019 10:00 A.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, VERO BEACH, FLORIDA**

**PRESENT:** Jessica Hawkins, Chairman; Garry Rooney, Vice Chairman; Members: Joseph Cataldo, Charles “Mike” Williams, Alternate Member #1, Bob DelVecchio, and Alternate Member #2, Linda Moore. Also Present: Jason Jeffries, Planning and Development Director; and Rita Hawkins, Senior Administrative Assistant

**Unexcused Absence:** Terry Torres

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A) February 18, 2019**

**Mr. Cataldo made a motion to approve the February 18, 2019 minutes. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**A) Bike Walk Indian River County – Mr. Hugh Aaron**

Ms. Suzy Feeney said that she would like to introduce a friend from Bike Walk Indian River County. They are an amazing organization and have been in existence for quite a few years. They have an extraordinary relationship with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). What they have established is an amazing amount of ground work for what she started and what Mr. Cataldo and Mr. DelVecchio have been working on with FDOT. He has a wealth of information that can help the Committee.

Mr. Hugh Aaron, President with Bike Walk Indian River County, stated that Bike Walk started in downtown Vero Beach as a recreational bike club called Vero Cycling about six (6) years ago. They currently have about 375 members, which is quite large for a fairly small County. The group decided they wanted to pursue a Bicycle Friendly Community designation for this area. These designations are administered by the League of American Bicyclists, which is a very old national organization. Vero Cycling started holding a series of meetings with Main Street Vero Beach to pursue this award for Indian River County. Ultimately the City of Vero Beach got the award, but the County is

designated as a bronze Bicycle Friendly Community, which is the lowest level. This designation was a 4-year award and it was getting ready to expire, but the County just reapplied for the award. They are trying to change the culture, because historically there has not been much of a cycling or pedestrian culture in Indian River County. They want to get more engaged with the community and he thinks they have come a long way over the past several years. He continued by showing the Committee the Bike Walk's website and explaining their four (4) programs ([www.Bikewalkirc.org](http://www.Bikewalkirc.org)). He said when he moved here he went to the County Public Work's Department to ask about bike paths. He was informed that they had an informal policy of not building bike lanes. He has been working on that for the last five (5) years and now the County will not typically build a road without a bike lane. The County's Assistant Public Work's Director has really been helping them. They are getting a tremendous amount of work accomplished with infrastructure, bike lanes, sidewalks, and sharrows, which are road markings to indicate that the lane is shared by bicycles and automobiles. He said many people in the community, including himself are trained as nationally credentialed Bicycle Training Officers. Bike Walk has a strong partnership with United Against Poverty (UP) and they go there once a month to provide a lot of adult bicycle training. He said if anyone in the community needs a bike, but can't afford one (1) their website tells them how Bike Walk can help. UP has allowed Bike Walk to use a large amount of their warehouse space, so their volunteers have a place to revamp bikes. The community is very good about donating bikes and right now they have about 175. They recently gave away bikes, helmets, and safety lessons to 25 children at the Gifford Youth Achievement Center. They have worked on a program with Crossover Missions, which is a charity that works with children. Their program combines academics and basketball and when the children achieve a certain goal they receive a bicycle. Another program the Bike Walk Board implemented is called "pump it up". They raised money to purchase bike work stations. The work stations have a rack where people can hang their bikes, tools to work on them, and a high quality air pump with a gauge. They cost about \$1,500 each and they raised enough money to purchase and install five (5) of them. They have installed two (2) in Gifford and another one (1) is going to be located behind the Heritage Center near the pickleball courts. This is part of their idea of trying to shift the culture. He said that Mr. Bill Nesper, Vice President of Programs at the League of American Bicyclists, attended Vero Beach High School and he approached the Bike Walk group when they started this process. Mr. Nesper told them that this area could be on a much higher level of a Bicycle Friendly Community. Vero Beach has a large amount of wide green space along the canals that would be great for creating paved bike and walking paths which would allow people to get just about anywhere. They have made almost no progress, because the Indian Rive Farms Water Control District does not want to cooperate. He said unless people are really comfortable riding on the roads with traffic they do not ride, but if they put in trails it would bring more people out. Bike Walk would like to see a pilot project done to pave the path along the main relief canal from US 1 to 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to test this theory. They would like to see more City involvement in this effort. In a perfect world he would love to have a City and Countywide network of wide paved trails. The next best thing that they are focusing on are bike lanes. The County recently repaved 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue from State Route 60 to the north and there is a nice 5-foot-wide bike lane. A lot of people ride bikes on Old Dixie Highway in the south part of the county, but it is an old

road and it would be hard to put in quality bike lanes. They tried the concept of sharrows on Old Dixie Highway from 16<sup>th</sup> street to State Route 60. He explained that this was a pilot project and that sharrows are only approved for roads with speed limits of 35mph or less. Sharrows are designated by pavement markings and a sign stating that bikes can use the entire lane. They are in the process of sending letters to the County and the City listing places where the sharrows programs could be introduced. He said that when the County purchased the old Dodgertown property they almost immediately started talking about adding trails on the property. He would like to see those trails connected to the City and it could be done on the greenway along the main relief canal.

Mrs. Moore asked what are the objections by the Indian River Farms Water Control District. Mr. Aaron said they have a laundry list of stated reasons, but their main issue is that if someone ran off the trail and landed in the canal they would be held liable. Indian River Farms also needs access to the greenways for maintenance of the canals. He said Indian River Farms would have the right to close any part of the trails for maintenance and they could just notify the community. In his opinion it is government property that is underused.

Mr. Williams asked other than Orchid Island Rentals, what other bike shops have stepped up to help financially. Mr. Aaron said that after approaching the four (4) bike shops they did not receive any traction from any of them other than Orchid Island Rentals. He said that Mr. Malcolm Allen, owner of Orchid Island Rentals, is also a Board member of Bike Walk and he has a mission of making this community a great place to live. Mr. Allen was instrumental at getting the bike stations by ordering them, shipping them to his shop, assembling them, and installing them.

Mr. Williams said that it would be beneficial for the other bike shops to get involved, because the more bike trails there are the more bikes they would sell. Mr. Aaron said he would welcome their participation.

Mr. Aaron explained that UP is moving from their current location, so Bike Walk might be losing their large warehouse space. The space they have right now is about 3,000 square feet, but they really only need about 1,000 square feet.

Mr. Cataldo said he agrees whole heartedly with the idea of making Vero Beach a great place to live, except for the lack of a pedestrian friendly downtown. In most cities people like to live close to shops, parks, and restaurants where they can ride their bikes and feel safe. It is a quality of life to be able to ride bikes to go shopping, go to the gym, stop for a beverage, or coffee, or take their children to the Parks. He said he believes the majority of people just don't know what the possibly is for creating bike paths and it is the minority that are raising their voices. If they can accomplish this, it would make it a safer City and the Police would ride their bikes downtown more.

Mrs. Moore asked what is the next step forward and does the Bike Walk Organization hold meetings that they can attend. Mr. Aaron explained that Bike Walk is very organized and they have an email list, which anyone can be a part of by signing up on

their website. They have monthly formal meetings with an agenda and minutes and anyone can attend.

Mr. Aaron said that the Florida Department of Transportation is adding more buffered bike lanes on State roads like what they just did along 17<sup>th</sup> Street and the bridge. He said that Bike Walk is trying to get more buffered bike lanes on County roads.

Mr. Cataldo said that a lot of younger people who grew up here are now coming back because they see the quaintness of this community, but they are the minority when it comes to the older wealthier population.

Mr. Rooney asked Mr. Aaron if he had ever heard of the EDZC before he came to this meeting. Mr. Aaron replied no. Mr. Rooney said this Committee is here for these types of ideas and the 300 plus members of Bike Walk don't know that the EDZC is the mouthpiece to the City Council.

Mr. Cataldo said they just had an election, things are changing, and they have new energy in the Planning and Development office.

Mrs. Hawkins said it would be nice to have those new City Council members here at their meetings. Mr. Rooney said he agrees. They need to hear what their thoughts are.

Mr. Cataldo said that he attended the Complete Street meetings and DOT has plenty of money and they encourage these Complete Street programs. Vero Beach is a prime candidate to get this work done at little cost to the City. The City has a wonderful opportunity to create the bike lanes and create a sense of community. He said he would like to see them push the subject to see who stands up against it. He said that Mr. Larry Reisman writes articles for the newspaper stating there are no problems with crossing State Route 60. Mr. Rooney suggested that they invite Mr. Reisman and any of his supporters to their next meeting to educate the Committee on the negatives of traffic calming.

Mr. Aaron continued going through the Bike Walk website and showing them where to sign up to be on their email list.

Mrs. Hawkins stated that if any of the Committee members want to attend a Bike Walk meeting, please remember that only one (1) member of the EDZC can attend. If more than one (1) member attends there could be Sunshine Law issues and it could create the perception that the members might be discussing things outside of the EDZC meeting.

## **5. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A) Update on the Master Plan**

Mrs. Hawkins said that they were scheduled to receive an update on the Master Plan at today's meeting.

Mr. Jason Jefferies, Planning and Development Director, reported that he was not able to hold a meeting with Florida Power and Light (FPL), so he would like to defer this to next month's meeting. He needs to get more information from FPL regarding the street lights and he needs to meet with the City staff regarding the Complete Streets program.

Mr. Joe Cataldo said that the Complete Street program is not tied to the street repaving and is not part of that plan. He was told that Vero Beach was a prime candidate for the Complete Street, but it will require local support to get it.

Mr. Jefferies said that the Public Work's Department is aware of the Complete Street program and it is his job to have an exact timeline of when it can be implemented. He had some conversations with Mr. Monte Falls, Public Work's Director, about it.

Mr. Williams said they need to understand that Mr. Jeffries just started as the new Planning and Development Director and his main job is not to work for this Board. He is confident that he will get this done.

Mr. Cataldo said that he goes to the City Council meetings and looks at their agendas, but it seems like most of the projects, development, and planning is taking place in the County. The City had a Vision Plan that dealt with a lot of these issues many years ago, but they never got implemented.

Mr. Rooney said they need to design a strategy to find out if there is support or not for their plans for downtown. They discussed sending out a mailer with a survey for the community to fill out and send back. They need to have a strategy other than waiting for a Board meeting.

Mr. Cataldo said he was hoping they would start with getting the City staff stand behind the Complete Street program and then get the City Council to support it, even if it is just one (1) Councilmember. After that, they can put it on the table for the public and see where it goes. They can also start calling on the different groups involved to find out who is against it and why.

Mrs. Hawkins said it would be nice to invite each of the City Councilmembers one (1) at a time to their meetings to ask what their views are on their Economic Development Plan and how they feel about State Route 60. Mr. Rooney said that they need to put it in motion so they know if they have support or not. Mrs. Moore suggested inviting Mr. Robbie Brackett to their next meeting, because he has property downtown and he might be more familiar with the issues there.

Mr. Hawkins stated that the first item on their downtown lighting list was to redo the lighting in the parking lot across from Scotts Sporting Goods. This parking lot has low lighting and the glass globes are fogged over from the weather. There are other light poles just like these along 12<sup>th</sup> Street at Indian River Boulevard and they are very bright. She is not sure if those lights have LED bulbs, or if the glass globes are just different. A quicker fix might be to look at the type of light bulb and/or the glass instead of replacing

the entire light poles. Mr. Jeffries said this would all be part of the discussion he will have with FPL. When FPL comes in it won't just be about where additional lights will be installed, but it will also cover what is being replaced.

Mr. DelVecchio asked if they were supposed to have their election of Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Senior Administrative Assistant replied that it was not put on today's agenda, but it should be on next month's agenda.

Mrs. Moore said that she would like to add "Solar Trees in the Park" to the next agenda. She handed out pictures of the different styles of solar trees (on file in the City Clerk's office). She explained that she was in contact with a Representative from FPL to get some information on these trees. She received a ballpark figure of about \$11,000 each. She stated that these solar light trees provide seating and shade during the day and light at night, which solves their problem of running electric to the Park. She was told by FPL that the Dog Park group is also considering some type of solar structure at the Dog Park, so she will probably get in touch with them to see what they are doing. She will find out who the contact person is with the Dog Park group and invite them to a meeting.

Mr. Rooney asked if they should invite Mr. Reisman to a meeting, so they can find out what his opinions are on downtown and the traffic. He might have some good advice, or maybe he thinks the issues are money based, but if he realizes something is free he might not have the same opinion. The other Committee member agreed it would be a good idea to invite Mr. Reisman to their next meeting. Mrs. Hawkins said that she would reach out to him.

**B) Twin Pairs Calming**

This tem was discussed under 5-A).

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Moore stated that their next meeting will be on April 15, 2018.

Today meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

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