

**MINUTES OF THE
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2008
111 NW 1st Street – 6th Floor
1:30 p.m.**

Members Present

Dr. Antonio Jorge; Dr. Maria Dolores Espino; Dr. Ken Lipner; Dr. German Munoz; Dr. William Atkins; Reinaldo L. Azan, CPA; Dr. Jorge Salazar-Carrillo; Maria I. Mendez (for Dr. Pedro Pellet); Dr. Maria Dolores Espino; Dr. Larry Capp.

Miami-Dade County Staff and Others in Attendance

Dr. Robert Cruz, Chief Economist; Marlene Blanco (MMAP); Bernardo Escobar (BCC – Dist. 10); Dennis Wrinn (OCED), Elsie Douge (OCED), Jorge Fernandez (OSBM), Bob Kirschbaum (OSBM), Amanda Jayska (OSBM), Manny Armada (DPZ), and Bob Schwarzreich (DPZ),

Member Excused Absence

Frank De Varona, Dr. Raul Moncarz; Professor Elisa S. Moncarz; Dr. Leonardo Rodriguez; Dr. Jesus Permuy; Dr. Leonardo Rodriguez, Dr. Gustavo Roig; Dr. Bernadette West, Dr. Willie Williams.

Members Unexcused Absences

Michael Lavin.

Call to Order – Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Jorge called the meeting to order at 1:40pm. The roll was called and a quorum was present. Dr. Jorge asked if the members present had read the minutes of the October 17, 2009 SEDC meeting and then offered a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Dr. Espino, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Dr. Jorge reported that he understood that the SEDC Sunset Review report had been submitted and accepted by the Board of County Commissioners. Copies of the adopted BCC resolution making changes to the original resolution that created the Council in 2001 were distributed. In addition, he asked if the nomination of Dr. Brian Peterson to the Council had been accepted by the Commission. Staff responded that they believed that it had been accepted. Dr. Jorge distributed a copy of the October 27, 2008 memo from the County Manager to department directors regarding attendance and staffing at SEDC meetings.

Dr. Capp reported that the efforts for developing a Social Equity initiative in Miami-Dade were proceeding with the support of many members of the community and elected officials. A BCC resolution creating this initiative in the County had not yet been adopted but was proceeding forward. Dr. Jorge proposed that Dr. Lipner draft a letter of support for this effort on behalf of the SEDC to be presented at the next Council meeting. A spirited discussion followed regarding the meaning of “social equity” and how this concept has different meanings to different individuals. Some members emphasized the need to discover and address the true root causes of social inequality – some of which involve social institutions beyond the reach of governments in a free society.

Dr. Cruz provided an update on the progress being made on the establishment of the Office of Economic Development Coordination, and reported that the organization of the office was underway. The Office will consist of a Director, a Senior Executive Secretary, the Chief Economist, a Senior Economic Analyst, the Agricultural Manager, and an Assistant to the Agricultural Manager. Three positions are filled – the Chief Economist, the Agricultural Manager, and the Senior Secretary (who will be on medical leave for approximately one month). The remaining positions were budgeted and the hiring process was underway.

The OEDC would fall under the responsibility of Senior Advisor Cynthia Curry in the County's Table of Organization, along side other County departments directly engaged in economic development activity.

The OEDC would provide staff support to the SEDC, although staff from OSBM and OCED would continue to provide support during a brief transition period. The Chief Economist will continue to work closely with the SEDC in support of the Council's mission.

Dr. Cruz then provided a brief round-up on the state of the national and local economy. An open discussion of economic conditions and outlook followed the presentation where several SEDC members presented their insights and analysis of future economic conditions. The discussion reflected a general consensus that economic conditions were deteriorating and this trend would likely continue for several months. The short term economic challenges both nationally and locally are serious, and merit close attention by County policymakers.

The meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.