

MINUTES

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING

FRIDAY, February 20, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

111 NW 1st Street, 6th Floor, Miami

[Note: The audio tape system used to prepare the minutes did not work properly at this meeting – the tapes were inaudible. The minutes of this meeting were prepared from notes taken by Dr. Cruz.]

Members Present

Dr. Antonio Jorge, Elisa S. Moncarz, Dr. German Munoz, Dr. Bernadette West, Dr. Pedro Pellet, Dr. Maria Dolores Espino; Dr. Raul Moncarz, Dr. Jesus Permuy, Dr. Brian Peterson, Dr. Jorge Salazar-Carrillo, Frank de Varona, Reinaldo L. Azan.

Member Excused Absence

Dr. Ken Lipner, Dr. Leonardo Rodriguez, Dr. Willie Williams and Mr. Mike Lavin.

Members Unexcused Absences

Dr. William Atkins; Dr. Larry Capp.

Miami-Dade County Staff and Others in Attendance

Dr. Robert Cruz, Chief Economist; Dennis Wrinn (OCED), Elsie Douge (OCED), Bob Kirschbaum (OSBM), Bernardo Escobar (BCC – Dist. 10)

Call to Order – Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Dr. Jorge called the meeting to order.

Dr. Jorge introduced Commissioner Souto to the members of the SEDC and others in attendance and thanked the Commissioner for his longstanding and strong support of the work of the SEDC. Dr. Jorge asked the Senator to say a few words about the Sunshine Meeting that was held earlier that day with the Chairman of the County Commission, the Honorable Dennis Moss. Commissioner Souto shared his view of the importance of the SEDC in helping shape an economic vision for the County. The Commissioner said Chairman Moss also shared that view and that the Chairman wanted to be sure that the Board meetings not only moved the agenda forward, but also set aside time to discuss the larger issues related to the vision of where the County should be heading in the future. Commissioner Souto indicated that he agreed with the Chairman that the SEDC and other similar community organizations would play an important role in that process. The Senator said the SEDC's views would be important in helping guide the county economy for the good of all residents

and achieve the highest quality of life possible. Senator Souto emphasized the importance of the County using its resources for the good of everyone, and the SEDC can help guide the process for the betterment of all groups.

Commissioner Souto expressed his view that Miami-Dade County had a lot to share with the rest of the world, and that for many in Latin America Miami-Dade County is a shining example and beacon of opportunity. Dr. Jorge again thanked the Commissioner for arranging the Sunshine Meeting and for his much appreciated support.

The Council meeting continued with a very informative presentation of the Strategic Plan update that is currently underway by Mr. Paul Mauriello from OSBM. Mr. Mauriello provided an overview of the entire strategic planning process, the community planning team meetings that had been occurring for the past few months and shared some of the interesting results of the latest resident satisfaction survey conducted by an outside party. Mr. Mauriello also shared examples of goals and strategies that had been proposed by the economic development community planning team. The SEDC has one of its members on this community planning team. One of the key themes in the current revision of the Strategic Plan was to make the document more readable and user friendly so that as departments build their business plans they will have a clearer understanding of what the County wishes to achieve through its strategic plan. A question and answer period of approximately 20 to 30 minutes followed the presentation, resulting in additional details and clarifications.

Dr. Jorge and the SEDC members thanked Mr. Mauriello for his fine presentation, and asked him to come back in the future to keep the Council abreast of the Strategic Plan's development was proceeding.

A spirited discussion of the importance of the local public educational system to economic development ensued, noting the poor state of the public system and the limited ability of County government to influence school board policy or bring additional resources to bear on this important determinant of long term growth. A subcommittee of the SEDC to draft recommended actions for the County to explore in bringing about improvements in the performance of the local public school system was constituted. The subcommittee would be chaired by Dr. Brian Peterson, and consist of two additional Council members – Mr. Frank DeVarona and Dr. German Muñoz .

Dr. Cruz made a presentation of economic and educational differences between African Americans, Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites, based on Census Bureau data from 2002 and 2007.

Dr. Jorge noted that Dr. Adkins had not been attending the meetings since he left the County's employ. Dr. Jorge has tried to reach him by phone without success. He was going to continue to try to reach him, but if not successful a letter would need to be drafted and sent to him.

The résumés of two potential new members were circulated. A motion to approve two new members – Dr. Pedro Diaz (as a regular member) and Mr. Jaime Marquez (as an ex-officio member) – was made and seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm.