

MINUTES

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING

Friday, March 20, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

111 NW 1st Street, 6th Floor, Miami, Fl.33128

Members Present

Dr. Antonio Jorge; Dr. Brian Peterson; Elisa Moncarz; Dr. Pedro Pellet; Dr. Leonardo Rodriguez; Dr. Bernadette West; Jesus Permuy; Dr. Ken Lipner; Dr. Jorge Salazar-Carrillo; Reinaldo Azan; Dr. German Munoz; Dr. Maria Espino; Dr. Larry Capp; Dr. Raul Moncarz;

Member Excused Absences

Dr. Francisco De Varona; Dr. Michael Lavin, Dr. Willie Williams

Absent

Dr. Gustavo Roig

Miami-Dade County Staff

Dr. Robert Cruz (OEDC); Robert Hesler (OEDC); Hardai "Dai" Junor (OEDC); Manuel Armada (DP&Z); Bob Schwarzreich (DP&Z).

Guest:

Maria Mendez

Call to Order – Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Jorge, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m. and a quorum was present.

The members of the Council and guests introduced themselves. Dr. Cruz introduced OEDC new staff members Robert Hesler and Hardai "Dai"Junor, and thanked Denis Wrinn and Elsie Douge of OCED for their assistance in the past. Dr. Jorge, on behalf of the Council, also expressed his gratitude to Denis for his undivided support throughout the years.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Jorge called for the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Dr. Cruz said the minutes of the February 20th meeting has not yet been prepared as the audio tapes were inaudible; however, he will try to put together the minutes from his notes.

Dr. Pellett moved a motion to approve the minutes of January 20th meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Permuy. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Dr. Cruz announced in the hand-out package there are two documents: 1) a copy of the letter dated February 12, 2009 from Dr. Jorge to the Chairman and Members of the

BCC, and Mayor Alvarez; and 2) an updated copy of the Resolution creating the Council. (Article XCIX. Social and Economic Development Council).

New Member: Dr. Cruz informed the Council that the names of the two (2) new approved members Pedro Diaz-Mendez and Javier I. Marquez have been submitted for the BCC approval and will be on the following BCC Agenda.

Chairperson's Report

Dr. Jorge stated that there was not much to report at this time, as he is awaiting word from the Chairman's office regarding the nature of the Council's relationship with his office and the BCC at large. He reiterated that Chairman Moss was very enthusiastic about the role of the SEDC and wanted this Council to meet with a number of other County Boards and Groups.

Dr. Jorge introduced a distinction of how the SEDC could collaborate with the County and the official way is through Dr. Cruz, Chief Economist. However, the Council's collaboration with Dr. Cruz will focus more on technical economic and social issues. The other avenue is to work directly with the BCC on issues which are more of a conceptual nature e.g. its view of where the county should allocate its resources, its priorities, goals and objectives of policy making.

Dr. Jorge asked that members read the Resolution that originally created the SEDC. He added that the duties and functions of this Council have a very broad mission and practically covers every aspect of economic and social policy making of the County. He read into the record the Duties and Functions as stipulated in Sec 2-144. of the Resolution.

Dr. Cruz reported that since the last meeting a directive has been issued calling for a presentation by the Council to the BCC on a monthly basis. He suggested that the Council discuss how they would like to make the presentation, and promised to notify them of the date of the next meeting.

Dr. Maria Espino suggested the Council, as a group, should have a work plan to present to the BCC; adopting the ideas and recommendations from the Sub Committees and submitting them as a work in progress.

Resignation: Dr. Jorge said Dr. William Atkins has sent in his letter resigning from the SEDC. He had an opportunity to speak with him and also sent him a memo indicating the fact that because he is no longer associated with the county does not mean he had to resign his position. He pointed out that members of the council are appointed as individuals and not as a representative of any institution or organization. He also indicated the Council valued very much Dr. Atkins work, his collaboration in the past and his commitment to the kind of social issues that he has expressed interest in addressing. Dr. Atkins said at the moment it was better for him not to continue as a member of the Council. Dr. Jorge regrettably accepted his resignation.

Dr. Jorge said Dr. Larry Capp is the other member of the Council who has the direct expertise on the kind of social issues that this Council is interested in, and is urging him

to take a more active role in the Council. In the meantime he is looking for a replacement for Dr. Atkins.

Report on Social Equity Efforts:

Dr. Lipner said he was out of town when the meeting took place and refers to Mr. Braynon, who reported that Dr. Capp said the Chairman's office has agreed to proffer the Social Equity Resolution; however a time was not given.

Dr. Capp arrived at 2:30 pm. He said he was at an ASPA (American Association of Public Administration) conference in Miami, and one of the sessions will be on Social Equity. He informed the Council that he is working with the Attorney to prepare the Resolution, and also asked the Council for its support. (He passed out an article on a model Seattle Social Equity).

Education Sub Committee Report:

Dr. Peterson reported that the Committee had two recommendations - Recommendation 1: Miami-Dade County should sponsor several small, charter middle and high schools in association with various aspects of county government and in low-income neighborhoods in need of more educational choices. Recommendation 2: County government should cooperate closely with Miami-Dade County Public Schools in establishing more joint-use facilities at existing and new schools.

Discussion: Dr. Lipner recommended placing adult education programs in public housing facilities and suggested pursuing the option to meet with the public housing authority. He stressed the need for innovative education delivery methods to reach the student population most likely to drop out of school. Dr. Muñoz suggested that proposals to solve education problems be addressed not to the school system, but instead to the County government because a poor education system adversely affects economic development and contributes to other social problems. Dr. Jorge said a cover letter to the BCC should state this recommendation was put forward as part of the mission of this Council.

Dr. Maria Espino motioned to accept the Education Sub Committee's two recommendations and forward them to the appropriate individuals. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Dr. Cruz offered to work with Dr. Brian in drafting a document showing statistical evidence why this issue is important. He said a full draft report will have to come back to this Council, and indicated by that time the Committee would have an appropriate title for its report.

Sub Committee SEDC Work plan Report:

Dr. Maria Espino reported that the Committee met once but there was some confusion as to the task of the Committee and did not get much done. However, she would like

some clear mandate of its function. Her idea was to explore how best to communicate with the BCC.

Dr. Jorge recommended they work with Dr. Cruz, and the matter of the mechanics of the interaction between this Council and the BCC be clarified and officially approved.

Dr. Capp suggested the Sub Committees highlight a few significant issues and their recommendations for the Council's action. A case in point is the Marlin Stadium which is almost a done deal; but there is the Port tunnel issue. He mentioned the idea of a bridge which might be more cost effective; and suggesting the County sponsors a global competition for the design of an iconic bridge.

Dr. Jorge stated for the record, he is not taking a position on the matter, but would like to see more analytical data on the matter rather than intuitive. The kind of specific criteria to be used in measuring the opportunity cost. He said the approach of taking one project at a time does not make sense in terms of an overall strategy. Analyzed in isolation, one project may appear meritorious, but it may look differently in comparison to alternate uses of public resources.

Dr. Rodriguez referred to the importance of opportunity cost and the need to ask questions like "which of the alternatives would generate a greater amount of employment." He suggested it may be necessary to have some type of legislation requiring the collective expression of the public's preferences through a vote. Dr. Espino said the county needs to be involved in the evaluation of projects, taking into account different projects, and placing them within the limitation of the budget.

Dr. Jorge said the budget is a financial restriction but you need to have a vision:

- Vision of where are we going
- Strategy on how to implement the vision
- Choose projects as functions of the strategy and vision, then evaluate and integrate them.

Dr. Espino proposed in addition to the task assigned to the Work Plan Sub Committee, they should look at the criteria of how the sub committees should be structured.

Dr. Jorge said that Chairman Moss was very interested in the Council, and that he was fully committed to the Council helping the Commission formulate its vision, and developmental strategies. The function with the BCC is more conceptual but it does not mean that the Council cannot express its views on discrimination, income disparity, social equity, etc. He also pointed out that the Council does not have the means to do the research to support its views; however, they can offer their expertise and experience. He also stated it was great to have Dr. Cruz as the Chief Economist; however, he has some concerns of overburdening Dr. Cruz with tasks from the Council.

New Appointment

Dr. Jorge asked members to consider inviting Mr. Rosendo J.Castillo (résumé provided) to be a member of this council. He said Mr. Castillo has a lot of experience and would bring a new dimension to this Council, and that he highly recommends having him as a council member.

Dr. Rodriguez motioned to accept Mr. Rosendo Castillo as member of the Council. Seconded by Dr. Pellet. All in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Stimulus Package

Dr. Cruz is to arrange for a representative of the Stimulus Team to speak to the Council, keeping them abreast on the stimulus package.

Agenda Topic for next Meeting:

Dr. Jorge suggested having a permanent discussion item on the Agenda: A conceptual discussion regarding our presentations before the BCC in regards to the future of the county.

Dr. Peterson suggested the next big opportunity for in Florida is the expansion of gambling industries which could be a resource for public education.

Adjournment:

Dr. Moncarz motioned for an adjournment. Seconded by Dr. Leonardo Rodriguez. Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.