

Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council

Meeting Minutes: September 19, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Chairman Dr. Moncarz** at 1:18 p.m. Quorum was established with the following members present:

- Dr. Raul Moncarz (Chairman)
- Beatriz Baldan
- Retha Boone-Fye
- Jose Diaz
- Santiago Leon
- Jorge Zumaeta
- Leyanis Diaz
- Marcos Kerbel

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the August 22, 2025 minutes was made by **Marcos Kerbel** and seconded by **Beatriz Baldan**. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Discussion Items

1. Immigration and Agriculture

- Concern expressed about loss of agricultural workers, rising costs of produce, and risk of strawberries becoming a “luxury item.”
- Members agreed immigration enforcement negatively affects both agriculture and tourism.

2. Tourism and Budget Hearing

- Review of county budget discussions, including reliance on tourism taxes and challenges of meeting Marlins Park debt obligations.
- Concern about balloon payments due in 2029–2030 and risks of declining tourism revenue.

3. Small Business Challenges

- Reports of revenue declines among restaurants and small businesses.
- Discussion of barriers to accessing capital and reduced nonprofit support.

4. Data on Ethnic Businesses

- Request for data on Cuban, Honduran, Haitian, and Puerto Rican-owned businesses.
- Potential sources: Beacon Council, CAMACOL, and Miami-Dade Regulatory and Economic Resources.
- Suggestion to invite Beacon Council or county staff to present.

5. Climate and Resilience

- Concerns about lack of progress on Biscayne Bay protection plans and impractical resilience proposals.
- Emphasis on need for realistic infrastructure investment.

6. **Strategic Role of Council**

- Agreement to narrow focus to four priorities: immigration, cost of living, employment, and transportation.
- Proposal to secure special presentations before commission committees.

IV. Bylaws Review

1. **Term Limits**

- Discussion clarified that statutory term limits tied to commissioner appointments do not apply directly to the Council.
- Consensus to allow extensions by majority vote.

2. **Attendance**

- Revised requirement: members must attend at least four meetings per fiscal year.
- Consecutive absence rule removed.

3. **Officers**

- Discussion on the need for succession if both Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable.
- Suggestion to add a Second Vice Chair or interim chair procedure. Deferred for later discussion.

4. **Next Steps**

- Staff to circulate revised bylaws draft with feedback due by end of month.
- Anticipated vote at November meeting.

V. Trust Fund Update

- Staff reported ordinance language for an SEDC trust fund is in drafting. Once passed, the fund will support council initiatives.

VI. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m. was made by **Marcos Kerbel** and seconded by **Beatriz Baldan**. The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.