

**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN OF LADY LAKE
SPECIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
LADY LAKE, FLORIDA
May 28, 2014**

The Economic Development Advisory Committee members met at the Lady Lake Town Hall, 409 Fennell Blvd., Lady Lake, Florida, and the meeting/tour convened and embarked at 8:12 a.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark DuShane, Betty Salas, Joe Quinn, Sue Nord, and Thad Carroll

MEMBERS ABSENT: David Carnecchia

STAFF PRESENT: Kris Kollgaard, Town Manager/Town Clerk; and Nancy Slaton, Deputy Town Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Mayor Ruth Kussard, Commissioner Jim Richards, and Commissioner Dan Vincent

Note: There was more than one Commissioner was present; no Town business was discussed between them during the tour/meeting.

1. Commencement of a Mobile Tour from Town Hall to the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce (to embark at 8:15 a.m. and return by 11:30 a.m.)

Background summary: The Economic Development Advisory Committee traveled to the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce to view their facilities and to learn more about their economic development strategies. Those wanting to familiarize themselves with the organization in advance were invited to visit their website at www.eustischamber.org. This mobile tour was considered a special meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee. There was a quorum present although no items were voted on.

Member Joe Quinn stated he had several general questions during the ride to the Lake Eustis Chamber of Commerce. He asked if the street in front of the old post office by the Shell Station was the Town's responsibility.

Town Manager Kris Kollgaard replied that it was part of The Villages.

Member Quinn asked if a three way stop sign would be installed at the intersection of Griffin Road and Rolling Acres Road.

Commissioner Richards replied that it is not planned and traffic counts would have to support it.

Member Quinn asked what happened to the planned Taste of Lady Lake.

Ms. Kollgaard replied that it was postponed as some of the vendors were having difficulty with meeting the insurance requirements, and the Town was trying to get something worked out with our insurance company. She stated that it will hopefully be rescheduled in the fall.

Member Quinn asked if anyone could rent the area around the log cabin for a picnic, where the farmer's market is held.

Ms. Kollgaard replied that the gazebo at Heritage Park near the log cabin could be rented, and that the property the Town purchased recently may be made into a passive park. She explained that the log cabin is leased to the Chamber of Commerce and they hold the farmer's market.

The van arrived at the Lake Eustis Chamber of Commerce at 8:55 a.m.

Chairperson Mark DuShane introduced those present to Christie Bobbitt, Executive Director of the Lake Eustis Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Bobbitt stated this is a fairly new location for them, and explained that the City of Eustis purchased the previous small building where the Chamber was located on the lake, which then allowed them to purchase this larger building in a more central location on U.S. 19. She stated this also allowed them room to partner with the City and Lake County's business incubator program, the Business Opportunity Center. Ms. Bobbitt introduced Nancy Mueunzmay, the Director of the Business Opportunity Center.

Ms. Mueunzmay stated the County has a good partnership with the City in assisting with economic development through the start-up of small businesses utilizing the Business Opportunity Center to help with business plans, insurance information, etc. She stated they are changing the concept of the business incubator program in that those in the program can use an office for an hour or a week, or utilize office equipment as necessary, rather than as a static office for an extended period of time such as six months to two years. Ms. Mueunzmay stated they are evolving the program to meet service needs as they are noted. She reported that there are three business opportunity centers in the County; in Clermont in South Lake County, in Eustis, and in Leesburg.

Member Quinn asked what the population is in Eustis.

Ms. Bobbitt stated that it is approximately 29,000 and that Eustis is the third largest city in Lake County behind Clermont and Leesburg. She stated that most of the classes offered by the Business Opportunity Center are free, and that the Chamber passes that information on to members. She stated Chamber members are given a discount on office and conference room rentals, equipment usage, as well as limited administrative help for an hour or two a week at \$8.00 per hour.

Commissioner Richards asked about the financing of the new Chamber building.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that the building was purchased by the Chamber and has a mortgage. She stated that a capital campaign is underway to help pay off the mortgage.

Ms. Mueunzmay stated that the County pays for the classes and business analysts through the Business Opportunity Centers to help spur economic development.

Mayor Kussard asked if there is a limit to how long an office could be rented by a business.

Ms. Bobbitt and Ms. Muenzmay both stated there is no limit, and even those who do not meet the criteria to enter the business incubator program can lease an office for up to six months.

Ms. Muenzmay stated those in the incubator program have a 30 day out-clause also.

Member Salas asked if those leasing an office can come in even when the Chamber is closed.

Ms. Bobbitt stated they have 24 hour access as their security systems allows her to program and assign codes, even for a temporary rental for an hour. She stated the codes can be activated or deactivated remotely, and the system gives a user readout which allows her to check on who accessed the building at any time. Ms. Bobbitt stated that all persons renting the offices are vetted. She stated the copier also allows for assigning codes to track usage.

Ms. Muenzmay stated that every office has its own lock and key, although Chamber staff has a master key for the cleaning service, etc., as needed.

Member Quinn asked where the general funding comes from for salaries, utilities, supplies, etc. for the Chamber building.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that the most of the funding comes from Chamber memberships and significant events such as George Fest. She stated the Chamber has a contract with the County which pays for their usage. She stated the Chamber has partnered with the art museum, and is working with the historical society, and has partnered with the City of Eustis on events such as First Fridays and others. Ms. Bobbitt stated the Chamber dues will be increased next year for the first time in ten years.

Ms. Muenzmay clarified that the County's Economic Development Department increased their budget when they moved into this larger building, and the County pays for the usage of its four offices, their portion of the common spaces, power, insurance, etc. She stated the County provides all utilities except a phone for the client when they rent office space here.

Member Quinn asked how many Chamber employees there are.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that the Chamber has three full-time employees.

Mayor Kussard asked who supplies the insurance for events.

Ms. Muenzmay replied that the Chamber supplies the insurance for the Chamber events. She stated that the Business Opportunity Center is staffed by herself as Director of the Business Incubator Program through Lake-Sumter College, but funded by the County; and four other people on the SBDC team funded through the University of Central Florida through the County. Ms. Muenzmay stated the five of them rotate throughout the County in South Lake, Leesburg, and Eustis.

Ms. Bobbitt explained that the Lake Eustis Chamber has a unique partnership with the County and with the City of Eustis; better than most other Chambers that she is aware of.

Ms. Muenzmay agreed, stating it is the collaborative effort between the Chamber, the City and the County that makes this happen.

Chairperson DuShane commented on the map of Lake County, stating that a BOC needs to be located in Lady Lake.

Ms. Muenzmay stated that the caveat to that is to understand the space needed and how it will be used as not a lot of offices are going to be needed for a static office, and that the north area of the County is now served by the Leesburg office. She stated space and use planning for provision of needed services is key for a BOC.

Member Nord asked how many of the start-up businesses involved with the BOC have been successful.

Ms. Muenzmay reported that three businesses just graduated this last January and include Evergreen Construction, Hometown Health TV, and Dennis McGee, Handyman. She stated they have had five or six total, and have a retired anesthesiologist currently working on launching a surgical use product.

Ms. Bobbitt pointed out that most of the classes offered through the business incubator program are free and are mostly booked to capacity, and they do not have to have a business in the incubator to attend the classes.

Ms. Muenzmay reported on a business for Greenlight Firebag that has been launched through the BOC, stating it does not need a static office. It was the result of an idea a couple had for throwing kindling and fire-starting materials in a paper bag for ease of fire starting for camping, etc. They were assisted with business planning by the BOC; and a 501c3 charitable organization called Building Blocks Ministries in South Lake does the packaging of the product, and it is marketed through the KOA campgrounds and will be sold at the Wal-Mart in Clermont.

Ms. Bobbitt gave a tour of the facility, pointing out the large reception area, the offices available for rent, staff offices, kitchen and storage areas, and the two conference rooms. The tour ended at the large conference room where refreshments were provided and those present were invited to sit. She continued with her presentation, stating that they are poised to do some great things.

Member Quinn asked for clarification on what Lake-Sumter College's role is regarding the Director of the BOC.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that the County funds the position, but the college vets the position and hires the candidate because of the class work involved in the program; making sure the class room instruction is relevant for those attending.

Mayor Kussard asked for more information on the George Fest, and whether it is a fundraiser for the Chamber.

Ms. Bobbitt replied it is an annual celebration held in February/March to celebrate George Washington, and that it has been held for the last 113 years in Eustis in some form or other. She stated that the City used to plan the event, but now the Chamber has taken over with assistance from volunteers from the Chamber and the community, and business and community sponsorships of \$500 to \$1,000 each, including a nice sponsorship from the City. Ms. Bobbitt

stated it is a significant fundraiser for the Chamber, although it costs them as well for staff time, entertainment and fireworks. She stated that it has been held in Ferran Park and downtown, and that next year's theme is "From Sea to Shining Sea". She stated it includes parades, food vendors, arts and crafts, dance groups, school groups, entertainers, fireworks, and continues to grow. Ms. Bobbitt stated that the Chamber receives approximately \$27,000 from sponsorships and receives in-kind services, as well, such as police and fire protection at no charge.

Ms. Muenzmay pointed out that the City's sponsorship of \$20,000 insures that the entertainment and fireworks, the biggest draws for George Fest, will be taken care of.

Ms. Bobbitt agreed, stating that the entertainment costs increased over the past few years from \$1,700, to \$4,400, and then to approximately \$9,000 this past year; and fireworks cost \$10,000.

Chairperson DuShane asked Ms. Muenzmay to talk about her Eustis involvement.

Ms. Muenzmay stated that her husband is a Eustis City Commissioner, that they have had a business in Eustis for the past 20 years, and that she was a past president and previous director of the Eustis Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Kussard asked who provides the fireworks for the events.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that Pyrotechnico provided the fireworks two years ago, but that Zambelli provided them this past year and will next year, as well. She stated that Zambelli gave them a reduced price with the promise of them providing this year's and next year's contract.

Ms. Bobbitt stated that the Chamber provides special insurance coverage for the event at a cost of approximately \$3,200, which includes the fireworks.

Ms. Muenzmay clarified that Zambelli also provides their own liability insurance certificate.

Ms. Bobbitt states that the food vendors also provide their own liability insurance certificates naming the Chamber and the City as additionally insured. She stated that if all the Chambers could collaborate with each other on their vendor lists, many more people could be attracted to the events. Ms. Bobbitt also stated that the Chamber has started selling their own beer, at an additional cost of only \$92.00 on their insurance, and makes a good profit on it. She stated they provide many activities to the public at no cost for the 4th of July event such as the entertainment, fireworks, bounce houses, face painting, etc., that draws in people as well.

Chairperson DuShane asked what the vendors are charged for the event.

Ms. Bobbitt stated the vendors for 4th of July are going to be charged \$100.00 each; food vendors for George Fest will be charged \$275 for the three day event.

Mayor Kussard asked for clarification on the Chamber's event insurance coverage.

Ms. Bobbitt stated they have blanket insurance, but food vendors must provide additional liability insurance with the Chamber and City named as additional insured. She stated that the City pays for the event insurance for First Fridays and the 4th of July, and the Chamber pays for the event insurance for their events such as George Fest. Ms. Bobbitt stated they are collaborating with the Tavares Chamber on a new event, the Taste of the Golden Triangle, which

is a combination of a business expo and a taste event. She stated the businesses will be placed in between the food vendors, as usually the food vendors are the draw. The Chambers will not be charging the food vendors, but the businesses will pay a space rental and the public will be charged a flat ticket fee of \$20.00. Ms. Bobbitt stated they have decided on a location for this between Tavares and Eustis – the Eustis Elk’s Club, which has a Eustis address, but is actually in Tavares.

Chairperson DuShane asked Ms. Bobbitt to expound on how the Chamber acts as a Welcome Center.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that snowbirds or new residents tend to come to the Chamber for maps, to learn what to do in the area, and to find out how to get there, and information about it. She stated they also have information on the theme parks and commented that Lake County is a good location to make a day trip to surrounding attractions. Ms. Bobbitt stated the County provides tourism information and the City provides brochures, as well. She stated they provide relocation information upon request, information on the Business Opportunity Centers, and customer service where they try to answer, or find out the answers, to any questions that arise. Ms. Bobbitt stated she tries to recommend Chamber members when appropriate, or if she is courting someone, she will ask the customer to let the business know the Chamber recommended them.

Chairperson DuShane asked Ms. Bobbitt if she tracks the number of people who come in to the Chamber.

Ms. Bobbitt replied that they log in visitors to the Chamber, and also log in the number of telephone calls that come in the day, separated by morning and afternoon, which allows them to forecast slow times where staffing time may be reduced.

Ms. Bobbitt recommended a class that she took a couple of years ago called Leadership Lake which started out in Leesburg. She stated it was informative, but was also wonderful for networking, and she credits that class for her attaining the position she has today as Director of the Lake Eustis Chamber. Ms. Bobbitt stated that this Chamber has been selected to administer the leadership program this year and that they already have 29 applications turned in, and they are not due until the end of June. She stated they will accept up to 35 applicants. Ms. Bobbitt stated they are being paid \$10,000 to administer the program, and estimate the net income will be \$7,000.

Ms. Muenzmay agreed that the Leadership Lake program is very beneficial and allows for partnerships to form and to match resources.

Ms. Bobbitt stated collaboration is a great tool for all Chambers, the County and municipalities.

Chairperson DuShane asked Ms. Muenzmay to talk about her campaign to run for the School Board.

Ms. Muenzmay stated she is running for a position on the School Board. She talked about her background and stated she is running for the slot being vacated by Kiley Fischer, and that Stephanie Luke is also running for this position. Ms. Muenzmay stated that she would be happy to talk about her candidacy at any gathering if invited.

Chairperson DuShane commented that in a survey put out by the Lady Lake Economic Development Committee, the community replied that the availability of quality people to hire was lacking.

Ms. Muenzmay stated that the County's high schools have a lot of career and technical programs with a pathway to Lake Tech and Lake-Sumter College, and this message needs to get out.

At 10:30 a.m., visiting representatives from Lady Lake thanked Ms. Bobbitt and Ms. Muenzmay for the tour, information, and refreshments, and boarded the van for the return trip to Lady Lake.

The Economic Development Advisory Committee mobile tour/meeting ended at 11:25 a.m. when the shuttle van returned to Lady Lake Town Hall and those present disembarked.

Nancy Slaton, Deputy Town Clerk

Mark DuShane, Chairperson

Note: The tour/meeting was recorded on a hand-held recorder and a portion of the tour conversations were not picked up.

Minutes transcribed by Nancy Slaton, Deputy Town Clerk