

**CITY OF DELTONA, FLORIDA  
COMMISSIONER DENIZAC TOWN HALL MEETING WITH  
THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2012**

Commissioner Denizac's Town Hall Meeting with the Deltona Economic Development Advisory Board was held on Friday, October 19, 2012, at the Harris M. Saxon Community Center, 2329 California Street, Deltona, Florida.

**1. WELCOME:**

Commissioner Denizac welcomed everyone to the presentation. She said it was a privilege opening the Town Hall meeting to all citizens, not only citizens within her District. It is important that the community is informed at all times of what is going on in the City. Commissioner Denizac thanked everyone for taking the time to attend, despite other events happening in various areas.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF CITY STAFF:**

Commissioner Denizac said she looked back to previous years and all of the development that has been accomplished since then. She said she is proud to be part of that process. She thanked City Manager, Faith Miller, for her support. Commissioner Denizac introduced and thanked the following people: Mr. Chris Bowley, Director of Planning and Development Services; Mr. Jerry Mayes, Economic Development Manager. She said that there was a lot of work going on behind the scenes by staff and thanked the following staff members: Wendi Jackson, Community Information Specialist; Terri Connelly, IT Support Specialist; Steve Moore, Director of Parks and Recreation; and Steve Narvaez, IT Manager.

**3. INTRODUCTION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:**

Commissioner Denizac thanked the members of the Deltona Economic Development Advisory Board, who were introduced by Mr. Mayes: Robert Desmond, Chairperson; Joseph Cerrato, Vice-Chairperson; and Members Karl Brown, Harry Wilkins, Rick Demeter, and Roy Braddy. Member Dustin Oehler is working in New Mexico and sends his apologies. Mr. Mayes said DEDAB is a citizen's forum. The members also serve on the two DEDAB sub-committees.

Commissioner Denizac said the number one question that will be addressed is, "What is the City of Deltona doing for economic development to help the City grow, become economically sustainable, attract businesses, and provide economic opportunities?"

**4. PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. Presentation by Jerry Mayes, Economic Development Manager: Economic Development efforts throughout the City including the Deltona Boulevard Economic Development Zone.**

Mr. Mayes gave the following presentation: The Mackle Brothers built Deltona as a residential community; we could have remained a residential community with barely enough commercial to meet the neighborhood needs. Instead, Deltona decided to compete to bring jobs to the City so residents could stay in the City and not commute outside of Deltona. This is an ongoing project, which takes many years. We assembled resources, such as working with Enterprise Florida, Volusia County, Team Volusia, and the Center for Business Excellence. He thanked Commissioner Denizac for hosting a very successful Job Fair that helped residents connect with potential employers. Over 1,200 people attended.

Projects were promised at the last Town Hall meeting in 2010, and those promises have been met. Deltona has a new Epic Theater and residentially-serving retail. There has been much renovation of existing buildings--such as Larry Kent's Burger King. Deltona led Volusia County in commercial building permits pulled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2010, for the first time. Five commercial (5) permits were pulled in that one quarter. In 2011, Deltona focused on business in-filling. In 2011, there were 22 new businesses. In 2012, year-to-date, there have been 25 new businesses. There are 9 businesses in the inspection process, which will be opening soon. Deltona focused on job creation. There were 133 new jobs in 2011 and 140 new jobs in 2012. In-filling creates jobs, which is our number one priority.

This year, Deltona's focus was on redevelopment with the effort to create a Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), the creation of the Deltona Blvd. Economic Development Zone, and administrative Comp Plan Amendments to assist in the process. With the help of the Commission, senior management, and Planning & Development Services, the Deltona CRA is under way. The CRA includes Saxon Blvd., to Normandy Blvd., and intersecting Deltona Blvd. south to DeBary/Dirksen/Doyle Road. The CRA is mostly commercial; we are trying to get this area to come back to life. Mr. Mayes said Mr. Bowley wrote the assessment of needs and did an excellent job. The next step is to finalize the process and go to the County to start negotiations for their approval. Our CRA is based on infrastructure improvements. Deltona is deficient in streets that are wide enough for commercial traffic--normally a 4-lane road, water lines for commercial fire hydrants and commercial sewer. This CRA was created in order to get incentives from the State to create jobs; right now we are looking to attract large companies like call centers, which could possibly create 500 jobs in the old Deltona shopping center.

Deltona is looking into getting medical development into the City. There are three hospitals that are looking at Deltona; one of them is extremely serious. Mr. Mayes said there are five new businesses that will start development in Deltona in this final quarter of the year: a RaceTrac Gas Station, a Dunkin Donuts, a Dollar General Store on Howland Blvd., a McDonald's, and another Dollar General Store on Stratford Commons off of Deltona Blvd.

Comp Plan Amendments are being created to bring land use changes to major intersections where there is commercial development to see if it is feasible to expand those areas to commercial to bring in businesses in the future.

**B. Presentation by Chris Bowley, Planning & Development Services Director: Planning issues facing Deltona and Deltona's planned Community Redevelopment area.**

Mr. Bowley said staff has made a concentrated effort to get economic development into the City. Staff worked on improving the process internally. We have different components in the City that review plans. When someone comes in with a plan set we make a concentrated effort of getting them through in the most time efficient and cost saving effort. This includes the Fire Department, Building Department, Permitting, Planning & Development, Zoning, Public Works, Engineering, and Code Enforcement reviews. The co-location of that review, and the time savings that it gives to an applicant is recognized by the number of commercial starts, the number of building permits that are pulled, and the increase in speed and timing in getting applications through. Also evident are the numerous simultaneous construction starts, which have not happened in Deltona in recent years.

Existing regulations were looked at to retool the process to simplify and to make it easier for businesses to develop within the City. A streamlined development review process was created that is designed to minimize the number of Development Review Committee (DRC) meetings. Planning & Development Services, thanks to City Manager Faith Miller, was able to hire a senior management team, which allows us to expedite the development review process. So, we reduced the amount of time and expense to process a development review application. This includes three impact fee moratoriums. Developers do not pay the sometimes hefty sum to develop, especially if it is raw land. The good news about the moratorium is that it has made an appreciable difference in bringing in applications. The Land Development Code was reorganized to make it more user-friendly, and is also being amended for maximum efficiency and internal consistency. We are modernizing the Code, specific to Deltona, so that it makes sense; it is a document developers can use as they come forward.

Minor non-substantial plan amendments are being approved through administrative review. This is important because, in the past, a lot of delays were not major changes to plans; they were minor. Those minor changes to plans had the same amount of weight in terms of time that a major change incurred. Now, when the Development Review Committee receives an application with minor changes, instead of restarting at the beginning, the application is routed by e-mail, the plan-set is submitted both by hard copy and electronically, the comments come back electronically, we vote electronically, and this speeds up the clock.

We are thinking in strategic planning terms by focusing on redevelopment and use of existing utilities. We are thinking long-range by positioning property that minimizes potential impacts that may affect land values. We think in terms of land value enhancement and in terms of enhancing quality-of-life for the community. The result has been growth and development, even during an economic downturn.

## **5. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:**

Commissioner Denizac lauded Mr. Mayes and Mr. Bowley for their excellent work and for taking Deltona to its next level. She said it was exciting to hear what Mr. Mayes said about a hospital being interested in coming to Deltona. She stated that the current Commission and staff are very business friendly. She said the Commission has made economic development the number one priority. We can no longer keep financing our City on the backs of the homeowners. We need to diversify our tax base, and that is why all of us work collectively together.

Mr. Bowley introduced John Kaiser, Volusia County Department of Economic Development, and thanked him for attending the Town Hall meeting.

Commissioner Denizac read the questions from attending citizens. A citizen asked--in addition to the moratorium on impact fees, what other incentives are you looking to provide to new and existing businesses? Commission Denizac said besides the impact fees, Mr. Bowley talked about streamlining the permitting process. It used to be frustrating to go through the application process. Now it is almost like we are taking you by the hand, walking you through, and making sure you are successful. Mr. Bowley said we try to get the applications down to one Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting. Attending only one meeting saves the applicant a lot of time and money.

Mr. Mayes said he would like to commend the Commission on giving the Economic Development office a set aside account from reserved funds in order to compete with other cities on incentives. Other cities find ways to "buy jobs" by offering companies different tax incentives, etc. Part of this is the Deltona Economic Development Zone, a Brownfield Area, where the State provides tax incentive funds per job; the jobs have to be in place over a period of four years before receiving full funding from the State. Businesses are getting paid for what they have done, not what they promised to do. The State will pay up to \$2,000 per job; the City has the option of paying \$500 per job. The City Commission set aside one million dollars toward that type of job creation. Mr. Mayes said we also have CDBG funds, which is a grant program from the federal government. There is money set aside for economic development and façade improvements to help existing businesses.

Commissioner Denizac said one of her questions was answered regarding what the City does for existing businesses. We also unofficially promote our Deltona businesses. She asked the citizens to contact Mr. Mayes or Mr. Bowley to find out what help is available to them.

Mr. Bowley said the City is applying for other grants. One of them is a Brownfield Area Grant, which would allow the City to hire a consultant to come up with a development plan for that area.

Mr. Mayes said the City has recently developed a Business Assistance Center. The City has provided a classroom for small business development. Business owners will be shown how to fill out forms, how to write a business plan, and training on how to grow and expand their business.

Commissioner Denizac read a question written in Spanish regarding what types of incentives are available through the City for business owners. She answered in Spanish and then translated

explaining what had previously been stated regarding eliminating the impact fees, streamlining the permitting process, revising the Land Development Code, etc.

Mr. Bowley read a question asking why not have a shopping center to bring retail to Deltona. Commissioner Denizac said if somebody tells you that government creates jobs they are lying to you. Government cannot create jobs. We can only do what we have been telling you about--streamlining the permitting process, making sure you don't have to come to many DRC meetings, making sure that with only a couple of meetings we can get you through your development. Making sure we are concise and precise and making a good faith effort so you can open your business. Those are things the City can do. We cannot dictate exactly what type of business; we can only make the process easier. Yes, we will welcome any shopping centers, a mall--anything that will help us to diversify our tax base. As Mr. Mayes contacts people to recruit economic development, he could possibly contact people who could bring in a shopping center or a mall.

Commissioner Denizac said before she leaves office she will hold another Town Hall meeting. She said she cannot wait to share the good things that are coming our way because of the work of two dedicated individuals who are part of our administrative staff and the Commission as a whole. We want to be successful in terms of economic development. Mr. Mayes said regarding a shopping center--we have to have retailers that are willing to build. We cannot dictate the price that homeowners sell their places for or how much they would charge for leasing a building; that is not government's place. We can only make it as easy as possible for developers to come to Deltona. There are only a certain limited number of areas retailers are willing to go into. One of the best commercial clusters is on Elkcam and Howland Blvd. However, it is mainly residential with people living in these houses. Dupont Lakes Park has been rezoned to commercial. The Commission is willing to build new softball fields someplace else. Deltona is desperate to build office buildings, medical buildings, stores, etc. Mr. Bowley said to keep in mind the 800 plus acres that are available in the Activity Center. We would like to have a smaller shopping center where parking is close to the stores.

Commissioner Denizac read the next question-- what about eminent domain when businesses want to come in? She said this is a tough question and she personally will not support eminent domain in order to build a business. She would only support eminent domain if it is for a greater benefit for the entire community. Mr. Bowley said eminent domain is a public process for capital projects and for the public's benefit and use. It is not for private business gain. Mr. Mayes said Florida's constitution forbids eminent domain to take someone's home or property for private gain.

Commissioner Denizac said someone asked if the grants mentioned here are federally funded. Mr. Bowley said the CDBG grant is federally funded through HUD. The CDBG grant has a wide range of uses, such as for public works projects (i.e. stormwater improvements, pump stations, ponds), parks and recreational projects. Discussion ensued regarding the types of grants being offered and their uses. Also, the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is federally funded and is used to buy blighted homes to rehabilitate. Mr. Mayes said we pay taxes and grants are a way of getting some of that money back for Deltona.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Denizac concluded the meeting and thanked staff and everyone who attended. She said she would continue to lead with integrity and honesty. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

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**Joseph R. Cerrato, CHAIRMAN**

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**Jerry Mayes, RECORDING SECRETARY**