



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2018– 6:30 P.M -9: 30 P.M.**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>May 2018 – April 2019</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Austin Scott, Chair	P	2	0
Dr. Allen Zeman, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Robert Audet	P	1	1
Linda Barnett (new)	P	1	0
Jessica Basi	A	0	2
Maureen S. Dinnen	A	1	1
Amy Ellowitz (new)	P	1	0
Thomas Harrison	A	0	2
Deniece Jones	P	2	0
Terry Large	P	2	0
Jennifer Lovell	P	2	0
Dr. Heather Munns	A	1	1
Sarah Owen DelNegri (new)	A	0	1
Lincoln Pastuer (new)	A	0	1
Dr. Maureen Persi	A	1	1
Christopher Relyea	A	1	1
Betty Shelley	P	1	1
Lillian Small	A	0	2
Michele Verdi Knapp (new)	P	1	0

**Staff/Guests**

Heather Moraitis, Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner  
Rufus James, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport Manager  
Carlton Harrison, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport Assistant Manager  
Jeri Pryor, BPM, MS (for Junia Robinson, Staff Liaison)  
Brigitte Chiappetta, Prototype, Inc.

**I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Austin Scott**

**II. Attendance by Roll Call – Chair, Austin Scott**

As of this date, June 21, 2018, there are 19 appointed members to the board, which means 10 would constitute a quorum. A quorum was declared later in the meeting.

**Communications to City Commission**

**Motion** made by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Vice Chair Zeman, that the EAB encourages

the City Commission and Staff efforts at researching and planning a potential public charter school. We greatly appreciate Commissioner Moraitis' visit, along with Rufus James and Carlton Harrison, and we would like to continue to be included in these efforts. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

### **III. Approve Minutes (May 17, 2018)**

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Zeman, seconded by Mr. Large, to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2018, meeting with the following corrections:

- That the minutes reflect meeting was from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.;
- On page 6, no one was noted as having commented about Code Red being in the schools since 2014, Dr. Zeman offered Dr. Persi identified as speaker;
- Highlight on Terry Large's name on Page 9 be stricken.

No vote was taken as a quorum was not present. (see below)

### **IV. New Member Introduction – removed to later in the meeting**

Sarah Owen DelNegri, Amy Ellowitz, Michele Verdi Knapp, Linda Barnett, Lincoln Pastuer

### **V. Guest Introduction: City Commissioner Heather Moraitis**

Ms. Moraitis thanked the new and existing Board Members for serving. Discussed at the last conference meeting with the Commission two weeks previously charging the City Manager to explore the option of building an Aviation High School at the Executive Airport. Ms. Moraitis and Heather Brinkworth hosted an aviation career night for students of the four large high schools in District 1. Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, whose mission is to attract corporate headquarters and new jobs, commissioned a study a year ago to address the workforce skills gap in the area; aviation was one of them. One solution to remedy the gap is to get younger kids interested in aviation. A high school at the airport, in addition to all the high-tech businesses there, should have an IT component. Envision Uptown, a non-profit group of business owners in the area, are interested in partnering in the high school, along with Broward College to award an A.A. and/or certification upon graduating from high school. The public school would be open to students county-wide, not just the City. Ms. Moraitis is touring an aviation high school that is opening in August in Kissimmee. Looking to Palm Beach County's example of a penny tax which has provided \$43 million to help the schools, and may add 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> onto some of the current elementaries to encourage families to stay.

Ms. Verdi Knapp noted that is the way it used to be, parents are begging for it, but are told there is not enough space; what about second stories. Ms. Moraitis agreed second stories to existing or plans for new buildings could be investigated.

Ms. Moraitis noted that the School Board is getting ready to propose a penny increase in August; it won't go to capital, but to security and teacher raises. If the Delray plans go well, that model should be considered for Ft. Lauderdale. There are some options, for

instance, charter schools. Six facilities in Pembroke Pines were toured, all were city-owned charters (built on city-owned land, are public to receive funding, more flexibility and autonomy working outside county school systems). Ms. Moraitis is seeking this Board's input.

Vice Chair Zeman asked about the aviation tech school, if that would be a public charter school. Public charter schools are not operated by the Broward County Public Schools, but by a separate charter company who the Commission would work with.

Mr. Large introduced himself as IT Director at Hop A Jet at Ft. Lauderdale Airport, and offered to help out.

Rufus James, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport Manager, began by stating he has been thinking about a school at the airport for about four years. Mr. James proceeded to give a presentation on the History of FLEA, its role during WWII, resurrection after a decade of vacancy, attracting businesses to the airport, and his involvement over the past 19 years. Busiest customs in the country, economic impact \$839 million (2013 FDOT study). No more land left to develop, yet interest continues. Can be considered the Gateway to the City.

Vice Chair Zeman asked specifically about the school, noting that when a City considers going with a charter school two of the biggest considerations are land and a building. Mr. Rufus said that what has helped the airport be successful is they do not build any improvements: they lease the dirt, improvements are made by business, then it reverts to the airport when the lease is done. There are no buildings to give; however, there are four vacant parcels on north side of airport getting ready to market. Referencing a brochure on another school in central Florida since 2008, Mr. Rufus noted the three-story building was developed through private funding.

Chair Scott wondered if there is any chance the City government may someday claim that land for traditional aviation uses. Mr. Rufus did not think so as two-thirds of the revenue currently comes from non-aviation tenants, noting it is not a case of generating revenue to support the airport. Typically, non-aviation rate structure is 10% fair market value for annual rent, aviation is a lot less. Therefore, reduced rent for the land for the school because it would be for aviation-related activities.

Vice Chair Zeman noted the discounted rate for the land but considered where the City would come up with funds to build the school. City writes the charter, can hire a charter school, land would be cheaper, but still will have to spend some City dollars on this. Ms. Moraitis noted that City Manager Lee Feldman is looking into this, but so far has no details; it is possible because other cities have done it. Mr. Rufus said in Lakeland, for instance, it was done through philanthropy (\$6 million donation). Some discussion followed on various understandings of how other charter schools were created, and how a charter aviation school that would educate for aviation and tech jobs differs from public schools in Broward County not only in funding but administration.

Mr. Audet the shortage of pilots, a career that could excite high school students to get into that industry.

Discussion continued on the four parcels available; what FAU Campus had previously been there; Broward College had a good aviation facility and Ms. Moraitis plans to talk to them about offering dual enrolment options so high school students can graduate with an A.A. Degree. City is leaning towards that model.

Ms. Jones stated the Board entertains this idea for a charter school every year and appreciates Ms. Moraitis bringing this idea back for a City of Fort Lauderdale charter school to encourage families to stay for opportunities for older children. Mr. Rufus said the curriculum will be STEM-focused (science, technology, engineering, math) in addition to the aviation component. Ms. Jones stressed more attention be given to promoting STEM so the public will not think this will be all aviation-related.

Ms. Barnett wondered if there are test scores because of STEM, or is just a desire to follow this industry. Vice Chair Zeman said the school would be charter by municipality. Some discussion followed on the criteria for this; testing, funding, outcome measures are the same for charter as for public. One of the goals of this Board is to define where there is a gap in education system that can be filled by a new school, public or public charter.

Ms. Jones asked if the school board has been approached about doing a magnet. Mr. Rufus said that Miramar High has nine students enter each year as freshmen. This established program is being observed for a model for the new school. Examples of how the skills to be taught could prepare a student for various careers followed, from mechanic to air traffic controller ready for certification, even to becoming a pilot. No school debt for initial S.S. degree is a huge bonus. Mr. Rufus also gave an overview of the Flying Classroom to stimulate interest in younger students which recently had 600 participants.

In closing the presentation, Chair Scott stated no action for the Board is seen as yet, but would like to stay involved as the City Manager develops ideas. Ms. Moraitis would like to come to the Board at least once a quarter; will get input from Mr. Feldman and report back. Chair Scott suggested that this project not just be high school but middle school as well because that's where the surveys have shown a drop off for when people start moving away.

Mr. Large suggested one or two volunteers from the EAB to work with the project. Ms. Moraitis replied that perhaps a Communication to the Commission is in order to pursue this project as a Commission.

### **III. Approve Minutes (May 17, 2018)**

A quorum now being present, the Board returned to the Motion:

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Zeman, seconded by Ms. Jones, to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2018, as discussed earlier. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

## **VI. Updates on EAB Action Items:**

Vice Chair Zeman addressed three tasks/goals, after commenting that when Commissioners got together at very first meeting, laying out their agendas, why they were elected to the City Commission, etc., Ms. Moraitis *only* talked about education. This is a huge challenge for City people because the County owns all the money and get to set all the policies in Florida. Suggested this Board commend her whenever possible, strongly encouraged new members to join a task group, and focus on what matters the most.

### **A. Guidance counselor and social workers in schools**

These two are parts of the school that don't get to do their jobs, instead end up doing lunch duty, testing, substitutes on short notice; there needs to be more attention on the plights of guidance counselors and social workers in public schools. Mr. Large spoke of an original idea to use public schools as a community health model. It was noted Mr. Large is the task leader on this item.

### **B. Volunteer program**

A cultural adjustment to living in Fort Lauderdale for the underemployed or those with free time. Structural gap between having a volunteer program versus schools having to oversee volunteers that come into the schools. There is no clear signal to the schools to the benefits of having volunteers.

### **C. Identify gap in education system provided by County.**

No charter schools for new members in Fort Lauderdale, a couple of vocational schools that are very small (less than 50 students in each). Figure out where kids are going, where the drop off spots are (K-8). Ms. Verdi said the struggle is real and related personal experience in researching options for her own child after leaving VSY. Vice Chair Zeman asked for an update on her personal experiences going forward. General discussion followed about the vacuum that was created during last economic crash and private schools became unaffordable, and some of the changes since, including better teachers coming to stay in the public schools.

Chair Scott spoke of the purview of this Board, not being limited to talk about private and parochial schools, but also charter schools. Job creation and retaining the work force is dramatically impacted by the schools. When looking at numbers for private and parochial schools, all have waiting lists. Reputation is definitely an issue.

Vice Chair Zeman is fascinated by the idea of a vacuum being created in a school, that once more and more are brought in, it makes the school better and creates more and

more vacuum every year. Statistics shared about Fort Lauderdale: Went to County with a binder of data because the headquarters are located in Fort Lauderdale and most of the staff lives and works in Fort Lauderdale, also very defensive about the amount of money pushed into the schools and don't get back in equal proportion. How do the schools serve Fort Lauderdale residents:

- Free or reduced lunch very different between east or west Fort Lauderdale.
- Different economic structure in City of Fort Lauderdale.
- Concerned that Dr. Zeman (Board) did not know there was that half of Fort Lauderdale; then told he had grown up across from Carter Park.
- Concerned about capacity. County law states a new school be opened if there is a lack of capacity. Examples of birth booms and/or reverse trend from private to public were given, showing over- and occasionally undersubscribing at different locales. Stranahan, a school of 2000 students had a cafeteria for 150. There is a lack of capacity at middle schools.

Chair Scott told Ms. Verdi that the Board had previously recommended demolishing as many portables as possible because it benefits the formula that prevents new construction at schools. Vice Chair Zeman explained the state formula for capacity as relates to portables versus cinderblock buildings.

Vice Chair Zeman continued that the study is about 50% done, suggesting incorporation of STEM into this part of the task force. Next step is taking data for Fort Lauderdale residents going to a Broward County School and start showing flow among the schools and identifying gaps. One demographic not mentioned by Ms. Moraitis is the whole uptown redevelopment going in where there used to be industrial areas, which is putting a huge burden on those schools. Goal is to identify where there will be a shortage ahead of time. There will soon be a time to push decisions and recommendations forward on analysis of quality of schools (perhaps next year). At the moment, only addressing capacity gap in order to recommend a location and type of schools needed.

Chair Scott noted he is personally for assigning under the same goal category and add anyone in the Committee who wants to be on it. Vice Chair Zeman said that would be more efficient, and this will end a recommendation from the task force coming back to the Board and then City Commission. However, if a public school is recommended, Dr. Zeman will commit all the time put into this as wasted energy, because there is no way Broward County will build Fort Lauderdale a school. There are not enough numbers and the County has bigger capacity problems elsewhere. What will happen is the boundaries will be redrawn so the capacity is moot, and examples of such calculations were shown. Discussion followed about quality, quantity, the realities of public school attendance within certain districts, and the concept of donor communities within the County.

Vice Chair Zeman noted his two people on this task force have left the Board, so he is recruiting for volunteers. The study should be done by the October meeting, if a public charter is recommended it has to be through the Commission by February 1<sup>st</sup>. If the

STEM/aviation school is to be recommended, it must be done by the October meeting. Mr. Audet and Ms. Lovell volunteered for this task force.

Mr. Audet noted there seems to be a gap in the North Fort Lauderdale area and wondered if there can be a middle school and a high school. Discussion followed about magnet programs in Broward County; however, if a school receives a D or F three years in a row it will be closed and forced to be either a charter school, or shut down and completely retasked as something else. This has happened to three or four schools in the last few years; must totally fail in order for that to happen.

Vice Chair Zeman continued with reorganizing the task groups:

- Social workers into community in homes and schools. Mr. Large said there are one or two people left in the group, would appreciate more, but noted it is difficult to get together (maybe lunch time?) and that he is working with Sunrise to be the pilot. Ms. Elowitz volunteered.
- Volunteer group received no new volunteers at this time.
- Identifying gap in education system lost two and then gained two new volunteers, in addition Ms. Verdi and Ms. Barnett joined in.

An explanation of Sunshine Rules, Dr. Zeman noted there are no restrictions how many times the task force groups can meet outside this Board if the Board votes to do so.

Vice Chair noted the two remaining meetings this summer, July and August, and how difficult it is to get attendance, particularly in August. Discussion followed on who among them could attend.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Zeman, seconded by Ms. Barnett, to not meet in August, but do meet in July and September. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

## **VII. Motions for coordinated actions in support of EAB goals**

Chair Scott opened discussion for the Communication to Commission on the public charter school; but first Vice Chair Zeman registered an opposition to even making a motion explaining that if looking at the gap in Fort Lauderdale to justify innovations in education (including public charters), the strategy as a Board had been to get the analysis together in order to do so. By making a quick motion, might the Board be undercutting the previous strategy to be thoughtful?

Chair Scott continued with a proposed Communication: The EAB encourages City Commission and Staff's efforts at researching and planning a potential charter school at FXE. EAB supports all creative efforts to bring key families in Fort Lauderdale. This may bring jobs and train young residents for a good job that is exciting. The EAB appreciates Commission Moraitis and Rufus James's visit, and would like to continue to be included in these efforts.

Chair Scott's reasoning for the motion would be while Commissioner Moraitis has been very receptive on an individual level and to the group, this history of this Board is that they do not need to be advised on anything. That Ms. Moraitis made a specific comment that a message that all of the five Commissioners see, including the mayor, that says the EAB is totally behind this. The language is not that EAB is behind this, rather it is behind their research. More backing is needed in the Commission that the whole EAB Board is behind research and allocation of personnel time.

Ms. Jones did not think a motion is necessary at this time, it is too soon. Should wait until Ms. Moraitis comes back a couple more times with additional information, noting that Mr. Feldman has to make a decision as well.

Ms. Shelley noted that this is a completely new organization and Ms. Moraitis needs EAB's support with the other Commissioners. Just by putting this forward, they will read it. Dr. Zeman said that when EAB writes and submits a recommendation, while exciting and interesting, it needs to be justified. Chair Scott is concerned that, in theory, at a future Commission meeting when there are other things that seem more important, Ms. Moraitis feels this could be a priority given early support. Ms. Lovell noted that there are number of new Commissioners who may not be aware of the situation; would be nice to have another option considering how much is paid in taxes and the resulting quality of the schools.

Mr. Large thought the language is fine, that it is important this advisory board promotes educational initiatives in the City; not that the Commission has to do it, but that they are aware. Chair said it would be all right to drop some specific lines and be more vague, noting he cannot make motions, but can be involved in drafting them. Ms. Lovell thought being more brief until there are more facts would be a good idea. Chair Scott proposed revised language and a motion for Communication to City Commission was made:

**Motion** made by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Vice Chair Zeman, that the EAB encourages the City Commission and Staff efforts at researching and planning a potential public charter school. We greatly appreciate Commissioner Moraitis' visit, along with Rufus James and Carlton Harrison, and we would like to continue to be included in these efforts. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

## **VIII. New Business**

## **IX. Closing**

On other matters, Vice Chair Zeman noted all Fort Lauderdale police will attend active shooter training on the first five days of school. It appears increasingly optimistic that all of the high schools that have not had active shooter training will get it at that time. The elementary and middle schools have had it in the past few years, so it is less urgent as

well as lower risk for the kind of situation such as at Parkland and other places. Sustained efforts to speak up at public hearings whenever possible pushed the City to push the County, Dr. Zeman wanted to recognize that was a revolution in local politics. Some credit should go to new Police Chief in getting this done. Mr. Large suggested sending a communique to the City when this is done.

Ms. Barnett wondered what is meant by saying elementary schools are at lower risk. Vice Chair Zeman explained that the shooter at Sandy Hook came in because his mother had been a teacher there. While there are terrible incidents to cite, the preponderance of them are high school students coming back to their own high schools. Ms. Barnett noted that the last training was a few years ago and that there were some gaps in training received, the training is different now. Dr. Zeman noted the curriculum has been updated, is far more substantive. The critical fact was that the elementary and middle schools had done some training, but the high schools had done none due to a bureaucratic morass.

Ms. Barnett referred back to the Volunteer Program task group and would like to change positions to work there; Amy Ellowitz also volunteered.

Chair Scott wondered if there was any conclusive good news about the School Resource Officer disagreement between the School Board and --. Vice Chair Zeman stated the County is obligated to provide School Resource Officers in every school in Florida and so far, has put no programs on the table to do that. In all likelihood, no SRO will be there on the first day of school, and the City of Fort Lauderdale does not have sufficient staff to take that over for the City schools, nor are they legally obligated to do so.

Ms. Lovell clarified that as much as Chief Hutchinson and some of the School Board Members said at the last meeting about a training on May 25<sup>th</sup>, right after the meeting they were made aware that would not be possible. They are still working on the curriculum and there are no promises made that there will actually be training in the fall. In reference to the contract, there still has not been an offer from the School Board to the City what contract is wanted. There is currently a discussion about guardians because there will not be SROs in time, but there is not even a job description for guardians and who would hire them.

Chair Scott noted that, individually, any EAB member is allowed to speak to anyone on the School Board and Commission and Staff, and to not be scared off by the wording of the Sunshine Law.

In the remaining time, introductions of the new Board Members were made.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Attachments: