

PORT ST. JOE, FLORIDA

MAY 19, 2008

WORKSHOP

The Gulf County Board of County Commissioners met this date in workshop session with the following members present: Chairman Billy E. Traylor, Commissioners Nathan Peters Jr, and Bill Williams.

Others present were: County Attorney Tim McFarland, Clerk of Circuit Court Rebecca L. Norris, Deputy Clerk Kayla Duke, Chief Administrator Don Butler, Deputy Administrator Lynn Lanier, Human Resources Director Denise Manuel, Grant Writer Towan Kopinsky, Assistant Planner Sarah White, Superintendent of Schools Tim Wilder, Chamber of Commerce Director Sandra Chafin, Gulf County Health Department Administrator Doug Kent, GAC Contractor Andrew Rowell, Economic Summit Workshop members, David Warriner, Jim Garth, Tom Graney, Steve Norris, Eric Davidson, and Gail Alsobrook.

Chairman Traylor called the meeting to order at 10:01 p.m., E.T.

Jim Garth appeared before the Board and stated that the purpose of this workshop was to address and resolve specific economic issues. Chairman Traylor stated that he would have attended an Economic Summit meeting that was held on May 3, 2008 if he had been aware of it, and further stated that he and Chief Administrator Butler would like to address some items that were found on an Economic Summit brochure that has been made available to the public. Chairman Traylor stated that he and Butler had found several errors in the brochure, and he was concerned that all of the cities in Gulf County were not included in it. Chairman Traylor read, from his notes, concerns he had regarding the brochure containing false statistics about the population of Gulf County. Butler explained that the brochure stated that the County had decreased to the 1995 population level, when in fact, it has increased over the past 13 years. Chairman Traylor and Mr. Butler discussed a portion of the brochure, stating that there needed to be a consistent political presence in the County. Butler stated that the brochure's negativity might prevent tourists from coming to Gulf County. Chairman Traylor stated that the brochure implies corruption in the government of the County, and claims that local people receive preferential treatment over non-locals. Chairman Traylor stated that they should be giving the locals the first opportunity for business. Butler discussed items in the brochure concerning an escalating budget for the Board. Chairman Traylor then discussed that the brochure stated the Board should not be the only review members for plans for new businesses or housing. Commissioner Peters stated that there are a lot of good things happening in Gulf County, but no one wants to talk about them. Peters discussed the EMS program in Gulf County and its progress. Upon Commissioner Peter's request, Economic Summit member, Jim Garth stated the sections that he and Tom Graney wrote. Chairman Traylor stated that the document talks

about prices, taxes, etc. going up, and discussed that it is inevitable that prices go up. Chairman Traylor stated that it is negative propaganda that keeps people from coming to Gulf County. Commissioner Williams discussed that the County is in crisis right now economically, and there is a difference in personal feelings and publishing false statements to the public. Williams stated that if there is something that needs to be dealt with then they can work with the County, rather than against the County because it is harmful to the Community. Chairman Traylor agreed with Commissioner Williams, stating that this meeting could have been a positive meeting, instead of a meeting to point out false information in the brochure. Garth discussed that the intent of the document was not to attack the Commissioners, and stated that they worked hard to get correct information. Chairman Traylor then called for public comment. Economic Summit member Gail Alsobrook approached the Board, and pointed out that the brochure is a "living document," that can be worked on and improved. Commissioner Williams stated that the brochure is seen by a lot of people, and it affects whether or not new businesses want to come here. Ms. Alsobrook stated that the County is in a crisis, and these concerns need to be addressed. Chairman Traylor stated that the pamphlet is not beneficial to the EDC and is negative about the County. Ms. Alsobrook expressed the need to sit down and compare their statistics with the conflicting statistics Mr. Traylor had. After discussion, the conclusion was reached that everyone should sit down and work on the document until an agreement on statistics and semantics could be made. At this point Economic Summit member David Warriner addressed the Board. Mr. Warriner stated that the brochure was never intended to attack anyone, and the construction of it began before the EDC, and should not be connected with it. Mr. Warriner further discussed that he is glad that the EDC is addressing issues concerning economic growth, and he does not wish to jeopardize the possibility of new businesses coming to our County. Mr. Warriner stated that they are not the press, and they do not want to be perceived as the press, and though they are passionate about the issues brought up in the brochure, they did not have ulterior motives. Commissioner Williams stated that the document does address important issues, and they need the support of everyone involved. Eric Davidson requested a copy of Chairman Traylor's notes on the brochure, stating that they would correct any false information. He further stated that the document was intended to expose issues, and discussed the need to attract Tyndall's business and tap into the military families who live off base. Tom Graney stated that there are opportunities for economic growth that are being missed with Tyndall Air force Base. He further discussed that the brochure was not related to the EDC in any way, but they will look at it and take ideas from it. Graney stated that economic development shouldn't have anything to do with government or politics except to have their support. Graney stated that there is no one with a political agenda on the EDC. Chairman Traylor thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further business, the meeting did then adjourn at 11:30 a.m., E.T.

**BILLY E. TRAYLOR
CHAIRMAN**

ATTEST:

**REBECCA L. NORRIS
CLERK**