



MINUTES – September 16, 2025

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Economic Development Council held in the
Indian River County Administration Building B
Conference Room B1-501
1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL at
3:30 PM on Tuesday, September 16, 2025

23 Members / 12 Quorum

1. Call to Order

Jordan Lulich, Chair, called the September 16, 2025, meeting of the Indian River County Economic Development Council to order at 3:30 PM.

2. Roll Call

Members Present

Aaron Vos, City of Vero Beach
Jordan Lulich, Esq., Real Estate Industry, Chairman
Bob Morgan, Sebastian Chamber of Commerce
Danny Markford, Local Manufacturing Industry Rep.
Joe Idlette, III, Gifford Community
J. Rock Tonkel, BCC Appointee
Fred Jones, City of Sebastian
Tracey McMorris, Career Source
Lee Hunter, Tourist Industry, Vice Chair
Lance Lunceford, Member at Large
Todd Howder, Member at Large
William Penney, Banking Representative
Stevie Ray Stark, Healthcare Industry
Commissioner Susan Adams – Non-Voting Commission Liaison

Members Absent

Jessica Salgado, City of Fellsmere
Jerry Renick, Agricultural Industry
Dori Stone, Indian River Chamber of Commerce
Anna Kirkland, Member at Large
Dr. Terri Graham, Indian River State College
Karl Zimmerman, Member at Large
John Dyer, Local Industry Representative
James Raphalian, Town of Orchid
Sam Carroll, Jr., Town of Indian River Shores
Peggy Jones, Indian River County School Board
Brian Bauer, Workforce Development
Peter Robinson, Local Developer

QUORUM – *The minimum quorum requirements were not met.*

Attorney Lulich stated that we did not have a quorum. The bulk of the agenda is just informational. He stated that we have the TIP folks who presented an update as far as the Strategic Action Plan. Mr. Ryan Sweeney, the Acting Planning Developmental Services Director introduced Doug Dombroski, the County's Economic Development Manager. Mr. Dombroski stated he had previously worked for the City of Melbourne as their Economic Development Manager for 20 years. Prior to that he was the Economic Development Community Development Director for the City of Parma in Ohio. He stated within the month he has been here; he has met a lot of the stakeholders. He has been reviewing the existing Economic Development Programs to see where there might be some updates.

3. Approval of Minutes

Moved to end of meeting.

4. Presentations

- a. Economic Development Strategic Action Plan Update & Consultant Presentation – Ryan Sweeney, Doug Dombroski, & TIP Strategies

Jeff Marcell, Senior Partner with TIP Strategies presented the Strategic Action Plan Update. He introduced Alex Cook who is a Senior Vice President of Consulting for their team. Alex has been with TIP for the last 28 years and has done more economic development strategic plans than I believe anybody in the country at this point. He's a valuable part of their team. They have made a lot of progress since the last time they were all together. He was excited to share with the Committee Members and give an overview of the draft plan. They wanted to take thoughts and input today. They will continue to refine the document, make adjustments and make changes. There are already things that we're going to update from the planning document or the draft document that you have right now. They had already started to make adjustments but today is really about listening and learning from you. Sharing with you, giving you a high-level overview of the plan but then having you share your own thoughts and your own questions so that they can continue to refine the plan.

He discussed the project goal. This is a ten-year horizon for this strategic plan. It's really all about what the County can do to create and maintain a positive environment for economic success for all of the residents across the County. Most of the strategies, and any actions that you see in the document today are really directed at the County but there are also a lot of other strategies and there are other things in the plan that are really going to be much more along the lines of the role of other partner organizations. For example, the Indian River Chamber of Commerce will play a really important role in implementing some of the work that you've read so far.

As you recall we started this project almost eight and a half months ago back in January. It's been an extensive project. He was pleased to tell you that they are on time, and they are on track. They felt very good about the progress they've made and where they are. The last two times when we have all come together really helped them to frame and build the document where they are today. They still have work to do but he appreciated all of the comments that they've had and all the conversations.

He highlighted the stakeholder engagement because it has continued since the last meeting. They had over 150 participants from across the County providing input in the plan. They have spoken to a ton of stakeholders and have had a chance to speak with representatives from Vero Beach, Orchid Island, Indian River Shores, Fellsmere and Sebastian. He had a fantastic discussion with the Mayor of Fellsmere, Mayor Salgado, regarding the surf park. They have also done six town halls. It has been a broad cross section of folks that have shared their thoughts and desires for the economic success in the County.

He also wanted to highlight that all of the data research that's been compiled as a part of this effort they've actually built a data tool called, "Tableau." This is where they've captured over 40 different data sets, and you can see all of the different categories for the data themselves. It's everything from population, economic and demographic data to employment and industry information, commuting patterns, earnings data and real estate data so a whole host of different data points have also helped them to build along with the stakeholder input a true sense about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the economy across the County. So that gives you a little bit of perspective about what has taken place over the last several months.

Their graphic design team put together a new cover entitled for the plan entitled "Treasure Tomorrow." For the draft plan they have added three additional catalyst projects. In addition to that they provided more detail related to the actions for each one of the strategies and you see that in the document as well. He mentioned earlier they have gone back and forth with the County team making changes, edits and updates and will continue to do that. A lot of things have taken place over the last month. They wanted to put together a map that was able to identify just how large the County is and just how large the unincorporated parts of the County are. It's a very large geography and they wanted to make sure to represent that, so people just had context as they were going through the plan. They also have been looking at performance metrics; how will you measure success over the life of the ten-year implementation that this plan is going to carry out. They have been identifying a whole host of different performance metrics. He stated once they have been solidified and once, they are completed with all of the strategies and actions what they will do is take all of that work and put them into a spreadsheet as called an implementation matrix. It's a large-scale spreadsheet where they list every single strategy in action, but they also put associated to that priority areas, timelines associated with individual actions or tasks. They also put together metrics so that associated with each one of those so that everyone will get a chance to see what's been accomplished over that 10-year horizon so that you can keep track of where you are in terms of implementing all of the things that are incorporated in the plan and you get the chance to look back and see what's been successful and what are the things you need to work on.

There are three different goal areas. They introduced these two meetings ago just as their general framework for the plan. It's made up of three goal areas. First concentrating on targeted industry development. These are the industries that are going to be driving the economy in Indian River County forward over the next several years. Goal number two is centered on those catalyst projects that we talked about. These are large development projects that will have a significant economic impact across the County, a large impact to the tax revenue, job creation, all of those things. Those were identified and held up in goal number two. Goal number three and this is really about County resources and services, some of the functions and efforts that the County will carry out over the life of the plan. Those are the three goal areas.

He started off with the targeted industry development. These are the industries that are really going to drive the economic success of the County moving forward. What we're talking about here is spending energy targeting these industries, being proactive in addressing these industries. It doesn't mean we're not encouraging or thinking about supporting all businesses, small businesses, retail businesses, businesses that may not fit in each one of these four categories. They felt like because these are going to be so important to the healthy economy moving forward, they deserve to be a dedicated proactive approach to addressing them and ensuring that they're successful. The first category is aerospace and manufacturer. He thought this one was obvious in everybody's mind supporting Piper and making sure that they are absolutely as successful as possible and making sure that they can fill the jobs that they have and leveraging if they are suppliers that we might be able to encourage to locate nearby. He was trying to make sure that we get as much out of that economic success for the County as we possibly can. They're also thinking about light industrial small footprint manufacturers as a part of this category as well. These are the folks that really create blue collar jobs that are great wages for young people who grow up in Indian River County, want to stay in Indian River County and so thinking about small footprint so that they have the least impact on the environment. So that's what this entire category under aerospace and manufacturing is making sure that you're also leveraging all of the marketing and success that is taking place in the Space Coast activities as well as an important part of this category.

Under finance, insurance and professional services this is really about leveraging the high-net worth individuals that live in Indian River County and using those folks and leveraging that to attract professional services companies, wealth management companies, all kinds of activities that can help support and serve those high-net worth individuals. They also identified there's real opportunity to establish an Angel Investment Network to help fund small startups, those kinds of things, so doing everything you can to help serve that community.

Agriculture and aquaculture are also fantastic industries for the County. Agriculture as you all know is an incredible legacy for the County and honoring that legacy is really important. Agriculture is still a really critical part of the area economy. But also thinking about how that AG industry stays successful but also promoting things like agritourism, farm to consumer activities as well. Those are really important things. There are lots of communities around the country that think about the concept of aquaculture even though they don't have anything that actually takes place but it looks like aquaculture but you actually do you have successful aquaculture operations in the County right now and supporting those efforts, growing that sector, they thought that absolutely makes sense as well. In addition, promoting new crops. What has taken place in the citrus industry across all of Florida but impacting Indian River County has been tragic but trying to think about promoting new and different crops. We are fortunate because we have such a strong and active Farm Bureau, a local Farm Bureau. Using them as a partner to think through how do we make sure that our AG industry is vibrant and strong and continues moving forward.

The last one he referenced was healthcare. Trying to address the workforce needs and the challenges that Orlando Health, Cleveland Clinic and the other healthcare providers have across the County is really important. Working to help attract doctors and physician specialists is also another really important component that healthcare service providers struggle with. Attracting service providers and specialists for the older population that exists in the County, they also thought is something that would benefit not just as an economic driver, creating jobs and generating capital investment, tax revenue but also would serve the community as well. So, these are the targeted industries and the types of things that we're encouraging the County and its partners to do to help achieve economic success in these spaces.

There was member discussion related to targeting industry development.

Mr. Marcell stated goal Number 2 these are the catalyst projects. This is the second goal and as we've talked about these are projects that once they come together will have a significant impact on the County's economy and all of these are very long-term projects and so it does fit within that 10-year horizon but it's the kind of thing even though it's a long term you have to stay vigilant at all times. These are the first 4 that we discussed during our last time together at the last meeting. The first is the Three Corners Project. It was just really trying to think about what the County can do to support those efforts to help promote or educate the community about the project itself, its economic impact and importance to the overall economy. They are also looking at and having conversations with the County staff about specific things that they might be able to do. Doug Dombroski has great expertise in community redevelopment areas and that might be something that the County can offer and provide dedicating a dedicated effort for building and fire permit review, those types of things once the development really starts to move. Those are the kinds of things maybe potentially looking at if there are brownfield issues how the County can help get involved. Those are some of the things that we're thinking about. We will make some adjustments in this section.

In thinking about the Vero Beach Airport, they've already had enough conversations with folks about this first draft. Just talking about this as the Vero Beach Airport doesn't do this justice. We should be talking about this as all airports across the County including Vero and Sebastian and so they will certainly make those adjustments and make those refinements. Thinking about the airports as economic engines that might be able to support and help drive the aerospace targeted industry that they have talked about or even light manufacturing industries close or adjacent to those airport properties. They think that that's a really important thing. They think that's a great thing for this plan to move forward on. The Oslo

Corridor Project recommendations really were centered around moving that planning process or planning project forward but also thinking about how the targeted industries can align with that Corridor. The Indian River Mall is a redevelopment opportunity by working with the owner, looking at and considering rezoning to mixed-use. That's precious commodity across the County and it should be a real economic engine, a real economic driver to build tax revenue to build the tax base in the County. Also communicating with the public so that they understand what's happening with the potential of the property itself so that people feel like they're being informed. These are the first four categories of catalyst projects.

Mr. Marcell discussed the three new topics. The first three of the new catalyst projects is the Fellsmere Surf Park. They're going to have an estimated 160 jobs there. Looking at County Road 510, the project is near the City of Sebastian. This is a 2000-acre parcel, residential and mixed-use. It is the ultimate plan for this parcel or the developer's plan for the parcel. They thought the recommendations are centered around working closely with the City. The City is going through kind of the rezoning process to fold in those parcels but working with the developer, working with the City and in addition to that communicating with the public so that they understand how this project being both residential and commercial but especially the commercial side how that will benefit and generate tax revenue so that more services can be provided across the County and just what the economic drivers will be so that people understand the why behind the project. The last one is the I-95, SR 60 corridor project and this is the one they talked about at length during our last meeting and this was this job's corridor concept. He wanted to thank Charlie Sandler. He's really been driving home this concept and how important he felt like this concept was to the future of the economy of Indian River County. This is really about promoting light industrial development, small footprints so it doesn't damage the quality of life that everybody appreciates but creates industrial jobs, skilled jobs, blue collar jobs that provide great wages for folks who grow up in the County. So, that's what we're thinking about related to that corridor.

There were discussion and feedback related to these three catalyst project areas.

Mr. Marcell stated the 3.1.3 having this group, this body acts as a convener and communicator to the community he thought was really an important strategy and an important concept. He was thrilled to see that there are people who are in in the gallery who aren't actively a part of the committee itself but what they would encourage you to do is really think of this committee and when it comes together as the gathering point for all things economic development and related to the economy and Indian River County and using this not just as a forum to make decisions as a committee but to allow all kinds of groups to come together or come in front of this body to present what they are doing and projects that are underway or opportunities that are presented or challenges that various groups are seeing so that this group is seen as a convener and a coordinator. If anybody wants to know what's happening in the economy, all they have to do is go to this group on a reoccurring basis and attend these meetings.

There were general discussion and feedback.

Mr. Ryan Sweeney stated from a procedural perspective he thought we were going to account for the input that's been provided and any additional input, but he didn't think we could belabor bringing it back to a formal capacity. It's going to put that timeline at jeopardy. Certainly not that we won't account for everything, but he thought that the main sort of the final opportunity to say yeah, that's what we agreed to or no we really don't agree to that change, we'll be at the County Commission level just from a procedural timing perspective.

Mr. Sweeney stated we never received a quorum, so the July minutes were pushed to the next meeting.

5. Next Meeting: November 18, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.

6. Adjournment

Being no further business, Jordan Lulich, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly K. Moirano
Recording Secretary