

WORKSHOP
Leon County Research and
Development Authority
(Innovation Park)
February 9, 2010

The Board of County Commissioners met for a Workshop on Innovation Park in the County Commission Chambers on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 11:30 p.m.

Present were County Commissioners Bob Rackleff (Chairman), John Dailey, Akin Akinyemi, Cliff Thaeil, Jane Sauls, and Bryan Desloge. Commissioner Proctor was absent. Also present were County Attorney Herb Thiele, County Administrator Parwez Alam, and Board Secretary Rebecca Vause.

Facilitator: Vince Long, Deputy District Administrator

Mr. Long provided that the Workshop was being held to provide an opportunity for the Board to hear from and provide direction to the Leon County Research and Development Authority.

Chairman Rackleff turned the Workshop over to Mr. Tom Barron, Chairman, Innovation Park Authority; who in turn introduced other Workshop participants:

- John Sewell, Kimley Horn & Associates, Inc., Land Planner
- Linda Nichol森, Executive Director of Innovation Park and Co-Director of the Technology Incubator;
- Robert Nixon, Regional Director of the FAMU Small Business Development Center and Co-Director of the Technology Incubator
- Richard Benham, Executive Director, Elections by the People Foundation and 2009 Technology Commercialization Grant Winner

Mr. Barron utilized a power point presentation to provide information to the Board on the Authority. His presentation included:

- Establishment of the Authority;
- History and Mission of the Park;
- Strategic Plan;
- Innovation Park Assets;
- Economic Impact;
- Park Enhancements;
- Land Planning Update;
- Park Tenants;
- State of the Research Parks;
- Strategy for Success;
- Targeted Industries;
- Success Story;
- Partnership with Business Groups;
- Technology Commercialization Grants;
 - Mr. Benham (2009 Technology Commercialization Grant Winner) gave a demonstration of the Hybrid Voting System (HVS) software that combines the computer touch-screen feature with the reliability of a 100 percent voter verified paper ballot. He added that Grant funds will be used to extend this concept and prototype.

- Technology Incubator;
 - Incubator Clients,
 - State of the Incubator
- Looking Ahead, and
- Future Challenges & Opportunities.

Mr. Barron concluded the presentation by providing the areas where Board support is needed: 1) Community support/partnerships to expand and develop a cohesive community incubator program; 2) Speculative commercial building in the park for recruitment, and 3) Venture capital for retention of current tenants

Commissioner Discussion:

Commissioner Desloge proposed that the Board's representative on the Authority serve for a longer term as this would allow for better consistency. He also mentioned that he would like to see a proposal for a "spec building" especially looking toward future expansion. Mr. Barron responded that there are 60 acres at the park which can be used for expansion purposes.

Commissioner Dailey inquired about the Authority's relationship with Vision 2020. Mr. Nixon responded that a couple of companies have been referred to Vision 2020; however the Authority has not been able to engage them in any meaningful way as of yet.

Commissioner Akinyemi stated that it was his personal goal to have a bigger, well known Innovation Park. He suggested that consideration be given to increasing the Universities (FSU & FAMU) appointments to the Authority. He also remarked on the absence of property ownership by FAMU at the Park and asked what can be done to help them acquire ownership which may improve the relationship and thus create more sense of inclusion. Mr. Barron indicated that these issues can be addressed at the upcoming Board of Governors meeting.

Commissioner Thaelle appreciated the Authority's response to the Board's questions in writing and in advance. He encouraged Mr. Barron and the Board of Governor's to seek ways to foster better relationship with the universities. He provided that he would like more focus on ways to cultivate, facilitate and support any type of entrepreneurial efforts. Mr. Barron invited the Board's involvement and interest in Innovation Park and noted that efforts in this area would be ongoing. He noted that private ownership was missing from the Park and that a good balance was needed among all participants (university and private).

Chairman Rackleff voiced concern regarding the finances of Innovation Park; however noted that he has a lot of hope for the Park achieving its potential and being a greater source of economic development for the community. He opined that the Park should be self supporting and expressed unease about the current financial condition. He questioned such areas as 1) proposed administrative, budget, legal expenses, public relations contract, leases with state agencies with no escalator, and the absence of financial statement for last fiscal year. Chairman Rackleff and Mr. Barron engaged in dialogue regarding these concerns and Mr. Barron conveyed that he would welcome an opportunity to discuss any financial issues with him. Mr. Barron also noted that a current audit is being conducted and would be provided upon its completion.

Chairman Rackleff suggested that a management review of Innovation Park be conducted similar to that done for the Educational Facilities Authority.

Commissioner Akinyemi offered that the high administrative cost was a valid concern and that it may be appropriate to look at overhead costs. In regard to the suggested management review by Chairman Rackleff, he stated that he "does not want to go there yet" and opined that the Workshop was a good first step in dialogue and the Authority should be given an opportunity to address the issues brought forward by the Board.

Commissioner Sauls conveyed that she had served on the Board of Governor's for a number of years and opined that it was dedicated, hard working and projects brought before it are thoroughly vetted. She suggested it appropriate for the Authority to come before the Commission on an annual basis to submit its report.

Commissioner Proctor conversed with Mr. Barron on the need for a more focused approach on the recruitment of business prospects from within the region. Mr. Barron noted that growth of local business was part of the long term strategy philosophy. Commissioner Proctor also established that the Park has property available and the ability to provide incentives for local businesses with viable proposals or requests. Commissioner Proctor suggested that a study on the environmental effects of bio-mass plants be considered.

Commissioner Sauls moved, duly seconded by Commissioner Thael, to approve Option 1: Accept the update on the Leon County Research and Development Authority. The motion carried 6-0 (Commissioner Desloge out of Chambers).

The workshop was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

ATTEST:

BY: _____
Bob Rackleff, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners

BY: _____
Bob Inzer, Clerk of the Court
Leon County, Florida