

COLLIER COUNTY ECONOMIC RECOVERY TASK FORCE (ERTF)

Type of organization: Grassroots, volunteer initiative involving multiple agencies and individuals.

Mission Statement: To investigate and recommend immediate, short term, potentially time-limited solutions for economic recovery in Collier County.

History and Background: In February 2008, the Collier County Foreclosure Task Force (FTF) was formed by Legal Aid Service of Collier County and the Collier County Bar Association as a grassroots, pro bono initiative to prevent foreclosure through education and intervention. The FTF project grew rapidly in scope, and agency members currently include, but are not limited to: the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, NABOR, Collier County Code Enforcement, Collier County School District, Collier County Sheriff's Office, Collier County Clerk's Office, Housing Development Corporation of SW Florida, Inc., David Lawrence Center, Mental Health Association of SW Florida, Marco Island Chamber of Commerce, and Marco Island Area Association of Realtors.

On March 2, 2010, the FTF conducted a Workshop before the Collier County Board of County Commissioners on foreclosure and its effects on the local community. At the Workshop on March 2nd, the FTF made certain recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) - which included the concept of forming an Economic Recovery Task Force (ERTF). This ERTF would also be a grassroots, volunteer initiative, with clearly defined short term goals. The BCC expressed support for the formation of the ERTF, and the FTF pledged to form a Steering Committee to facilitate the launch of the ERTF.

Formation: A Steering Committee for the ERTF was appointed and a wide spectrum of local stakeholder agencies and individuals were contacted to gauge interest in the project. After a positive response by those contacted, the ERTF Steering Committee scheduled two initial meetings which were conducted on May 12 and May 19, 2010 at the Naples Daily News community room.

Stakeholder agencies and community leaders agreed after the meetings in May to move forward with the ERTF project and several categories of projects were identified for further action. It was agreed that 'SWAT Teams' with designated leaders would be formed to work on each project category. The teams would be comprised of those agencies and individuals with the specialized knowledge and expertise needed to achieve the stated objectives. Community members were subsequently contacted and assigned to the various SWAT teams. An initial meeting of the SWAT team leaders and other members was conducted at the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce on July 1, 2010.

Role of each individual ERTF member: To utilize creativity, expertise, local market knowledge, and personal and professional contacts while working effectively and efficiently with others in a 'SWAT Team' to achieve the identified goals and objectives established by each team.

Role of each SWAT Team leader: To organize and facilitate discussions within the SWAT Team to identify realistic goals that can be achieved within the scope of the mission of each SWAT team; to also establish meetings of the SWAT Team and create an action plan for each task or project. The leaders shall also report to the Co-Chairs of the ERTF on status and recruit new members as may be necessary to fill 'gaps' or complete tasks.

Executive function - ERTF: To facilitate and coordinate the global functions and goals of the ERTF, Jeff Ahren and Diane Flagg have been designated as Co-Chairs of the ERTF. The Co-Chairs call meetings of

the entire ERTF membership on an as needed basis and provide administrative and other support to the SWAT team leaders and other members. They handle media requests and answer questions from the public about the overall project.

The SWAT Teams are completely empowered to act swiftly on their own initiative. The ERTF is thus not 'top down' in structure. The Co-Chairs assist the SWAT leaders and teams as needed.

Culture and Characteristics of the ERTF initiative:

- * Goal driven
- * Open/transparent
- * Non-hierarchical
- * Inclusive
- * 'No silos'
- * Encourage communication, collaboration, and the free flow of ideas
- * Innovate - think 'outside the box'
- * Enhance existing agencies and projects - no duplication of efforts
- * Speed - we need early results and impact on the local economy

Outcomes sought:

- * Business recruitment
- * Business retention
- * Job creation
- * Job retention
- * Diversification of the local economy
- * Expansion of existing business activity
- * Utilization of vacant/underused commercial space
- * Increased tourism
- * Pushing out positive messages and stories about Collier County (as a premier destination to live, work and visit)

Contact information: Co-Chairs

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