

City of Delray Beach

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Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

4:00 PM

Workshop Meeting at 4:00 PM

Delray Beach City Hall or Watch on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@cityofdelraybeachfl/streams>

City Commission

Mayor Thomas F. Carney, Jr.

Deputy Vice Mayor Angela Burns

Commissioner Tom Markert

Commissioner Juli Casale

Pursuant to Section 3.12 of the Charter of the City of Delray Beach, the Mayor has instructed me to announce a Workshop Meeting of the City Commission to be held for the following purposes:

WS.2. RESOURCE COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT ADVANCEMENT IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SYNERGY

Sponsors: City Manager Department

Attachments: [Agenda Cover Report](#)

The February 3, 2026 Commission Workshop meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. Alexis Givings, City Clerk, called the roll and the following were present:

Terrence Moore, City Manager
Lynn Gelin, City Attorney
Alexis Givings, City Clerk

Present: 4 - Commissioner Tom Markert, Mayor Thomas F. Carney, Jr., Deputy Vice Mayor Angela Burns and Commissioner Casale

The Mayor stated that the workshop was a follow-up to the December 1st economic development strategy discussion.

Assistant City Manager Jeff Oris reported on efforts to pursue a more aggressive economic development strategy focused on financial services and technology. City staff reviewed available resources and met with the Chamber of Commerce, including Stephanie Immelman, along with Economic Development Manager Rob Evans, to discuss collaboration. The city plans to reach out to existing local firms, particularly in the tech sector, to ask what the city could do to help attract similar businesses. Oris said incentives alone usually do not attract companies; factors such as efficient permitting, available space, and assistance navigating city processes are often more important. He also noted that technology firms may offer greater long-term growth potential than smaller wealth-management firms.

The city confirmed it has about \$500,000 in its economic development fund that could be used for marketing efforts without changing the budget, and a firm that previously gathered demographic data could assist with marketing. Oris reviewed incentive approaches used by nearby cities-such as job-creation incentives, high-wage incentives, expedited permitting, Boca Raton's focus on attracting headquarters, Boynton Beach's use of its CRA, and West Palm Beach's scalable job-growth incentives. He recommended flexible, customized incentives rather than large cash payments and suggested leveraging networks of existing companies, with

support from the Chamber of Commerce, to identify businesses that might consider relocating.

Mayor Carney stated the discussion was prompted by seeing Boca Raton heavily advertised by its mayor and noted that, based on conversations with people in the corporate relocation business, Delray is largely not on their radar compared to Boca Raton or West Palm Beach. They also said the Economic Council of Palm Beach County tends to highlight Boca first, partly because it has more office space, but they believe there is still opportunity for Delray. He also questioned why the report's updated program focus and prioritization relied on Broward County statistics and asked why Palm Beach County data was not used.

Commissioner Casale referred to a previous meeting where Ms. Smallridge said the City should determine its goals before taking further steps. She stated that the City has not yet done this and questioned what types of businesses would be appropriate for Delray, noting that the City is largely built out with limited land available. She said the City should determine what it wants to attract before spending money on advertising.

Mayor Carney stated the City needs to complete several steps before moving forward, noting that the Delray comprehensive and cluster analysis from 2019 has not been updated to reflect current land availability.

Mr. Oris stated that the City is exploring ways to better identify available commercial space and vacant land. He mentioned that a subscription service used by realtors could provide this information, including details about available properties and contact information for owners.

Deputy Vice Mayor Burns stated that the City needs a clearly written, structured strategy with defined objectives, measurable outcomes, responsible parties, and implementation steps. She emphasized that the Commission needs a roadmap rather than general information and expressed concern that multiple workshops have occurred without a finalized, actionable plan and asked that the next presentation include specific goals and accountability measures.

Commissioner Markert supported obtaining the subscription service to establish baseline data and acknowledged that Delray has a limited real estate portfolio, which should help determine which industries to target, meaning technology, wealth management, and possibly AI. He suggested conducting a deeper competitive analysis of neighboring cities such as Boca Raton and Boynton Beach and consider how to structure a business development team. He added that conferences and conventions can be useful places to meet company leaders and identify potential businesses.

Mr. Oris stated that once target industries are clearly defined, they can better determine where to focus outreach efforts.

Mr. Moore proposed to proceed with subscribing to the commercial real estate database service; conduct a full inventory and analysis of available land and commercial space; evaluate the potential structure of a business development team; consider external marketing or consulting support as needed; and develop a more structured economic development strategy. He stated that a brief progress update would be provided at the March 9, 2026, regular commission meeting, followed by a more comprehensive workshop presentation in April outlining specific recommendations and structural proposals.

The Commission reached consensus to proceed with the subscription service and the outlined next steps.

WS.1. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Carney opened the public comment portion of the meeting and invited anyone wishing to speak on the workshop agenda items to come to the lectern, state their name and address for the record, and noted that each speaker would have three minutes.

Paul Cannon, 33483

Referenced the recent visioning workshop, noting that economic development and education were key pillars discussed and suggested forming an economic development board that could work alongside a re-commissioned education board, noting they believe the two are closely connected. The speaker also questioned whether targeted businesses might prefer turnkey office space rather than undeveloped land, emphasized the importance of developing local talent through education, and asked whether partnerships with cities like Boca Raton and West Palm Beach could be explored. They also suggested that even if businesses locate elsewhere, Delray could attract their executives to live in the city through lifestyle appeal or housing opportunities.

Steve English, 33444

Stated economic development discussion was long overdue and encouraged the City to focus on what differentiates Delray Beach rather than copying other cities. He suggested targeting publications like Barron's if advertising funds are used and recommended documenting the City's success with Vertical Bridge as a case study. He also highlighted the strength of the local International Baccalaureate program and said promoting such assets could help attract employers.

Stephanie Immelman, 33444 Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce

Stated that the Chamber of Commerce is prepared to assist in economic development efforts. She noted that a collaborative team already exists, consisting of the City, Chamber, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and the Palm Beach County Business Development Board (BDB), and that these organizations have met prior to the workshop. She characterized economic development as a destination marketing effort and stated that promoting Delray Beach as a city is key to attracting businesses. She indicated that local tech firms have expressed support for this approach.

There being no additional speakers, Mayor Carney closed public comment.

Mayor Carney stated that he looks forward to continuing the discussion on March 9 and agreed that economic development should move to the forefront of the City's priorities.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Carney adjourned the workshop meeting at 4:45 p.m.

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