

ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN

February 18, 2016

200 Federal Street, Camden, NJ

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Board present: Dr. Roger Cohen, designee for State Treasurer Scudder; Ilene Lampitt, designee for Mayor Dana Redd; Maureen Hassett designee for EDA Chairman, Al Koepp; Jason Asuncion designee for City Council President Francisco Moran; Gina Fischetti designee for DCA Commissioner Chuck Richmond; Anthony Bianco designee for Legislative Member Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli, Jr., Non-Voting Member; Public Members Bill Hosey, and Rodney Sadler.

Also Present: Michael Collins, Governor's Authorities' Unit; Bette Renaud, DAG; and EDA staff.

Dr. Cohen called the meeting to order at 10am.

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Ms. Hassett announced that notice of this meeting had been sent to the *Star Ledger*, the *Times*, and the *Courier Post* at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and that a meeting notice has been duly posted on the Secretary of State's bulletin board at the State House.

A quorum of the ERB Board was present.

Dr. Cohen asked for a motion to approve the May 29, 2015 minutes of the Board.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Ms. Fischetti **SECOND:** Mr. Sadler **AYES:** 7

Secretary Hassett asked EDA Director Donna Sullivan to present the next item before the Board, Grant Request for Replacement Parking Improvements on the Camden Waterfront.

The Members are asked to approve a grant to the New Jersey Economic Development Authority in the amount of \$5 million for a replacement parking improvement project on the Camden waterfront. Ms. Sullivan stated that due to steady growth over the last few years, surface parking lots at the Camden waterfront are being converted into parcels for building development, placing a strain on the existing parking inventory. In order to alleviate the shortage of parking due to waterfront development, the Authority has identified the parcels for parking improvements on the Camden waterfront consisting of the following: 1. Authority-Owned Properties, 2. Proposed Private Property Acquisition and Parking Improvements, 3. South Jersey Port Corporation Properties.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Sadler **SECOND:** Ms. Fischetti **AYES:** 7

Secretary Hassett asked Director Weick to present the next item before the Board, Modifications for Previously Approved Projects and Elimination of Business Lease Incentive and Improvement Incentive Grant Programs. Mr. Weick summarized the item, and stated that the Members are being asked to 1) approve the extensions of the subject grants to permit time to complete the projects, 2) reinstate the unfunded portions of the Salvation Army and Rowan University grants, and 3) to modify the residential neighborhood improvement grant to NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

He added that the Members were also being asked to consent to ending the Business Lease

Incentive and Business Improvement programs due to anticipated deployment of all remaining ERB funds, and delegate authority to EDA staff to manage all remaining ERB commitments without further ERB board approval, unless noted herein.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Sadler **SECOND:** Ms. Fischetti **AYES: 7**

Dr. Cohen requested comments from members of the public.

After hearing no comments from the public, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Sadler, and Ms. Fischetti.

In order to accommodate several members of the public who had just arrived, Dr. Cohen asked for a motion to reopen the meeting to hear public comments and place them on the record.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Hosey **SECOND:** Ms. Fischetti **AYES: 7**

Reverend Chris Collins, publisher of the Anointed News Journal said with business coming into the city, and businesses wanting to step up their game, why eliminate the Business Lease Incentive program? Ms. Hassett stated that after today's board actions, and anticipated future recommendations, there will be no remaining funds.

Mr. David Flowers asked if the board could redirect some of the funds to other projects. Ms. Hassett stated that that would be a request for the Board.

Ms. Rosemari Hicks, RHC Consulting expressed concern that funds in the ERB pipeline were going to large organizations instead of small businesses. She added that some small business projects could probably move more quickly than those coming from the large organizations.

Reverend Collins asked how the Board notifies the small businesses in Camden about the funds. Ms. Hassett stated that information was made available through many avenues as well as through a partnership with the Camden Redevelopment Agency throughout the fourteen years of the program.

Mr. Sadler stated that the Economic Recovery board has a small pot of money; he is a member of the Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation who has more money to lend, so he recommended interested folks apply there. He also added that he believes there is money locally.

Mr. Hosey stated that the board has been in existence for 14 years, even before the tech center was built. He stated that Reverend Jones, and Rosa Ramirez are former members, some of the Camden churches have been active in getting the word out to the community, as well as the Camden Redevelopment Agency and that we put notices in the newspapers and on the website.

Ms. Barbara Kelly, Camden Business & Contractors Association asked if the program could be reopened to small businesses if some of the businesses approved now are not successful.

As a result of the concerns expressed, Ms. Hassett made a motion that the Board may want to reconvene in six months time to reconsider opening up the program to applications. If the pipeline projects don't proceed in that timeframe, funds may be made available should the board agree.


MOTION TO APPROVE: Ms. Hassett **SECOND:** Mr. Hosey **AYES: 7**

The previous speakers expressed their thanks for the opportunity to be heard and for the suggestion to revisit in six months.

Dr. Cohen stated he was glad the meeting was reopened, and the Board gained valuable guidance based on the questions asked.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Hosey, and Ms. Fischetti. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45am.

Certification: The foregoing and attachments represent a true and complete summary of the actions taken by the State Economic Recovery Board for the City of Camden at its meeting.



Maureen Hassett, SVP, Finance & Development, EDA
Secretary, ERB