

STATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN

March 23, 2004

At The Camden Lutheran Housing Corporation

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Board present: State Treasurer John E. McCormac, Chairman; Mayor Gwendolyn Faison; Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas; Reverend J.C. Jones, Vice Chairman; Senator Wayne Bryant, Legislative Member; Louis Capelli for Freeholder Director Jeffrey Nash; and Public Members William Hosey, Robert Milner, and Rodney Sadler.

Absent: Tonio Burgos representing Alfred Koeppel, Chairman of the NJ Economic Development Authority; Assemblyman Joseph Roberts, Legislative Member and Public Member Rosa Ramirez.

Also Present: Assistant Secretary, Maureen Hassett; Deputy Attorney Generals Anthony DeFelice and Bette Renaud; and EDA, the Department of Treasury, and the Camden Redevelopment Agency staff and guests.

Chairman John McCormac called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Ms. Hassett announced that notice of this meeting has been sent to the *Star Ledger*, the *Times*, the *Courier Post* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* 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.

Marge DellaVecchia for Commissioner Susan Bass Levin and City Council President Angel Fuentes entered the meeting at 10:06 am and 10:10 am respectively.

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Chairman McCormac asked for a motion to approve the February 27, 2004 minutes of the Board.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Primas SECOND: Mr. Hosey AYES: 9

Chairman McCormac introduced Elizabeth Clifford, Executive Director of the Camden Lutheran Housing Corporation (CLHC) for opening remarks. Ms. Clifford welcomed the ERB members and all attendees of the meeting. She noted that the CLHC is a developer of homeownership and rental units with a focus on development in the North Camden section of the City. Ms. Clifford noted that the CLHC completed a homeownership project at Fourth and State Streets, called Grace Housing, and is completing the financing with the Camden Empowerment Zone Corporation, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency, and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York for Phase II of the project. She also noted that on May 10, 2003, the Riverview Homes development experienced a devastating fire and the CLHC plans to rebuild at

the site. Ms. Clifford added that CLHC is very receptive to partnering with other neighborhoods and developers to engage in more construction of housing units throughout the City of Camden.

Chairman McCormac asked Assistant Secretary Maureen Hassett to present the Public Purpose Project Scoring Criteria for discussion. Ms. Hassett summarized the criteria determined to better assess the viability and impact of the public purpose applications reviewed by the ERB. The scoring criteria were presented for informational purposes only.

Maureen Hassett presented the \$641,250 grant request from the Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to prepare needed redevelopment and neighborhood plans for various areas throughout the City of Camden. Subject to an agreement with the ERB and the CRA, the grant will fund consultant fees and other expenses to prepare and distribute the plans. Funds will be disbursed upon receipt of satisfactory contracts, fee schedules, and reports detailing scope of work and related time schedules. ERB staff will review that draft plans to determine their consistency with the ERB's adopted Strategic Revitalization Plan & Capital Improvement Infrastructure Master Plans.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Sadler SECOND: Mr. Hosey AYES: 8
Mr. Primas recused himself from the vote because he is the Chair of the Camden Redevelopment Agency.

Chairman McCormac requested Ms. Hassett to present the modification to the Terraces Demolition Project. Ms. Hassett explained the changes made to the scope of the project subsequent to ERB and EDA Board approvals. The land acreage has increased to 12.36 acres, including additional City-owned properties as well as a reclassification of and the addition of a commercial facility. The total project costs has increased to \$4,734,500, but the ERB approval of a \$2,039,500 recoverable grant remains unchanged.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Hosey SECOND: Mr. Fuentes AYES: 8
Mr. Primas recused himself from the vote because he is the Chair of the Camden Redevelopment Agency.

Chairman McCormac asked Ms. Hassett to review the grant request of \$1 million for the Settlement Music School (SMS). The grant will be used to renovate a facility in the Downtown area to provide musical instruction to pre-school, elementary, and high school students. The \$4 million project will result in the leveraging of private and public funds. Secured by a performance mortgage, disbursement of the ERB grant request will be subject to receipt of outstanding financing commitments for the project. SMS will pay a \$10,000 PILOT to the City of Camden for the building.

Mayor Faison asked if this project would complement the Creative Arts High School. Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas said the project would be a compliment to the school as it would be available to children of all ages. Council President Fuentes added that his son is taking music lessons and how beneficial the additional music lessons will be for the children. He also recognized Ms. Valerie Clayton, the Branch Director of the Camden Branch on Westfield Avenue.

Rev. Jones asked about the highest costs for Camden residents to take music lessons. Ms. Clayton responded that the maximum fee is \$16 for Camden residents, but can be reduced based on need.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Fuentes SECOND: Mayor Faison AYES: 9

Chairman McCormac asked for Ms. Hassett to present the Technical Advisory Committee Report. Ms. Hassett noted the inauguration of the light rail system, the River LINE, from Camden to Trenton as well as the EDA Board Approval of an \$800,000 Local Development Financing Fund (LDFF) loan to the EDM Holding LLC. The LDFF loan, approved at the March 9, 2004 EDA Board meeting, will supplement the \$392,500 ERB loan for the industrial project.

Mayor Faison asked about a gate for the River LINE at the intersection of Broadway and Martin Luther King Boulevard because there was a near collision recently. Chairman McCormac indicated that he would follow-up with George Warrington, Executive Director of New Jersey Transit. Mr. Primas noted that there is a meeting scheduled with Mr. Warrington on March 24, 2004 to discuss the light rail system. Mayor Faison added that she had a great time on the inaugural ride of the River LINE and Chairman McCormac commended the inaugural event as well.

Chairman McCormac introduced Ms. Sherie' Jenkins, Account Executive of the NJ Department of Labor to speak regarding the various training programs and services available to the City of Camden. Ms. Jenkins noted that the Department is working in a collaborative effort with State, County, and local organizations to assist residents and businesses in job training and employment needs. Ms. Jenkins introduced Tom Billett, Executive Director of the Camden County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Mr. Billett spoke about the WIB's role of program development and oversight of the One-Stop System located at 2600 Mount Ephraim Avenue. The center partners with a number of local and County organizations, including the Camden County Resource Center, the Board of Social Services, the Rutgers Small Business Development Center, Cooper Hospital, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, the Latin American Economic Development Association and the Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation to train Camden residents in a variety of job types and providing financing. Mr. Billett invited people to visit the One Stop System office.

Rev. Jones asked about training for construction jobs and Mr. Billett indicated that the American Community Partnership (ACP) provides an eight-week training, pre-apprenticeship program for construction jobs. Council President Fuentes added that there is also a 12-week training program through ACP in Washington, D.C.

Rev. Jones also asked about jobs for people that have not received training. There are some low skill jobs available, but training is usually required for many jobs in the City. Mr. Fuentes requested the assistance of the Department of Labor to assist with a Job Training Summit to be held in the summer to work with Camden residents on acquiring skills. He noted that \$100,000 has been provided for the Summit. Ms. Jenkins indicated that the Department of Labor would assist with the event and Mr. Billett added that a meeting is scheduled for the afternoon to talk about job training. Ms. Jenkins added that she is working with all types of businesses that are interested in Camden. The Department of Labor wants to continue to work with the WIB and all

of the partners to improve the workforce in the City.

William Hosey added that the Unions are working with Camden residents for jobs as well as the American Community Partnership. He noted that the program is doing well. Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas stated that training is key and that the local government will work on providing better communication so the residents are well informed of the numerous programs and opportunities that are readily available. Mayor Faison stated that she, Mr. Primas, and Mr. Fuentes are working together to continue to inform residents of the current information. Rev. Jones offered to assist with this effort as well. Senator Bryant added that job training is necessary and that residents need to commit to invest in themselves by participating in the training programs in order to obtain the jobs that are coming to Camden. Mr. Fuentes suggested that the Job Summit's theme should be "Invest in Yourself".

Chairman McCormac introduced Elmer Winston, President of the Camden Neighborhood Renaissance (CNR) to speak regarding its activities in the City. Mr. Winston indicated that the organization was formed in 1995 upon the recommendation of Council President Fuentes to eliminate drug activity in the City and to redevelop the areas block by block. CNR works in collaboration with various organizations on the Weed and Seed program, which reduces crime, demolishes abandoned homes, and provides community programs for youth and adults.

Chief Figueroa of the City Police Department spoke on the origin of community policing and how it has benefited the community by encouraging participation among the residents and the police department. They also work with the Federal and State Police Departments to assist with the community policing effort, which includes the towing of abandoned cars as part of the clean-up effort in the communities.

Delbert Nelson, Vice President of the CNR spoke about the progress that has been made in the Parkside section of Camden such as more drug arrests, graffiti removal, cleaner lots, and more block captains. Tim Gallagher of the Prosecutor's Office added that the U.S. Attorney's Office is involved in the community policing effort and that the statistics show that abandoned homes and drug activity are related, resulting in a need for more demolitions of abandoned properties. Connie Williams, of East Camden, noted that the after school and recreational programs have helped the community as well. Ms. Williams helped to form the Eastside Civic Association, a non-profit organization to work with the CNR and now 90% of the drugs are gone in the area. She also advised that they have a monthly newsletter to post jobs that are available. Carol Dann, Executive Director of CNR stated that the organization has 34 partners throughout the City to help improve the community.

Council President Fuentes concluded that the CNR is making a good grassroots effort and has pride in the community, in which children are now able to play. Mr. Fuentes suggested that the ERB should consider providing assistance to the CNR if possible. Senator Bryant commented that the ERB funding is made available to support structural improvements to the City and is not for the operations of social service programs.

Chairman McCormac requested comments from the public.

Frank Fulbrook, a Cooper Grant resident, commended Mr. Primas, Mayor Faison, Arijit De, and

Mr. Fuentes, and all involved on the Rowan University project that will be located on Fourth and Cooper Streets. He added that announcements on these types of projects freeze real estate transactions, but there will be a tremendous amount of private investment on Block 75 because there is a great demand for residential units.

Nancy Stultz, a resident of Block 75, stated that she was glad to see a focus on job training. She had been in the first pre-apprenticeship training class of the American Community Partnership. Ms. Stultz would like more linkages between the unions and Camden residents. She noted that the EDA is providing financing for additional garbage trucks for Camden residents, Cooper Grant Homes will begin construction this year, and the City appears to be moving from planning to implementation as promised.

Jose Delgado, a resident of East Camden, echoed Senator Bryant's remarks regarding the necessity of job training. Mr. Delgado has attended meetings on the Cramer Hill project and feels that the vision for 5,500 new homes should include an improved quality of life for the residents. He said that this entails examining the impact that an additional 20,000 residents in the area will have on the community such as the need for more access for cars, schools, and recreational facilities.

Marsha Wallace and Doreen McQueen of RC Bistro, a new restaurant located at the Victor Building on the waterfront, thanked those who have visited the restaurant and invited everyone to attend the grand opening on March 24, 2004. RC Bistro is owned by a group of investors, Investment Strategies for Us, which is dedicated to the community and provides housing and employment for Camden residents. Ms. Wallace and Ms. McQueen are excited about being a part of history in the revitalization of Camden.

Senator Bryant recommended that the ERB work on the pipeline of projects through the subcommittee process on a monthly basis and that the Board meetings be scheduled on a bi-monthly basis. Maureen Hassett noted that if a business requires financing, ERB staff would need to call for a meeting to accommodate the request.

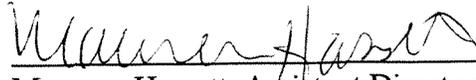
Mayor Faison invited everyone to attend the community meeting that is held every month on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 9am at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in the Osborne Conference Room. All of the projects and programs that are ongoing throughout the City are discussed at the meeting to inform the community of activities.

Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas advised that there are a lot of good things happening in the City. He spoke about reaching a critical mass and how the City has started to use Channel 19 to help with outreach and that more of an effort will be made to inform residents. The City will also look into obtaining additional funds from foundations and the ERB to help with the costs of outreach. Mr. Primas has attended several meetings including the Cramer Hill Development meetings, which will be held three times a month in English, Spanish, and for the business community. Mr. Primas praised the Governor and the Legislature for having the foresight to do something different in Camden. He indicated that the Mayor, the ERB, the Legislature, and Council have made progress and that the community is a full partner. Lastly, Mr. Primas noted that the first Community Advisory Committee was held last week.

Rev. Jones informed everyone that Rosa Ramirez was unable to attend the meeting because her father passed away.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Primas, and seconded by Mr. Sadler, the meeting was adjourned at 11:21am.

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, Assistant Director, EDA
Assistant Secretary, ERB