

ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN

March 28, 2006

Walt Whitman Arts Center

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Board present: Reverend J. C. Jones, Vice Chairman; Michael Livharcik, designee for State Treasurer Bradley Abelow; Marge DellaVecchia representing Commissioner Susan Bass Levin; Chief Operating Officer, Randy Primas; Mayor Gwendolyn Faison; City Council President, Angel Fuentes; and Public Members: Rosa Ramirez, William Hosey, Robert Milner, and Rodney Sadler.

Also Present: Lisa Thornton of the Governor's Authorities Unit; Caren Franzini, Secretary; Maureen Hassett, Assistant Secretary; Elizabeth Renaud, Deputy Attorney General; EDA staff; and guests.

Absent: Mayor James M. Maley, Representative of the Regional Impact, Committee Freeholder Director Louis Cappelli, Jr., Legislative Members: Assemblyman Joseph Roberts and Senator Wayne Bryant.

Vice Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 10:06 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.

Vice Chairman Jones asked for a motion to approve the February 28, 2006 minutes of the Board.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Sadler SECOND: Mr. Primas AYES: 10

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Vice Chairman Jones called on Pamela Bridgeforth, Executive Director, Walt Whitman Arts Center(WWAC) to deliver the welcoming remarks. Ms. Bridgeforth welcomed the board and expressed her gratitude to the board for its contributions to the satellite office located at 2nd and York Streets, which she hopes to be completed by year's end. She went on to say that the Arts Center had leveraged \$1 million in funds, and that 9,000 students have been served to date within 5 neighborhoods in the city. Ms. Bridgeforth stated they have a program "Made in Camden", which encourages partnering with AHEC and they're also working with Rutgers University to continue progress over the next decade.

Tom Corcoran, Board President of the WWAC and Executive Director of Cooper's Ferry

Development Association, addressed the board stating that the building that houses the Walt Whitman Arts Center was built in the 1920's by Eldridge Johnson with Victorian parlor and gardens. The building played an important role in the city and was the site of many concerts in the park. During the sixties and seventies the park and building declined. In the 1970s a theater was placed in the building. In the 1980s, ownership of the building transferred to Rutgers University, which stabilized the building. Mr. Corcoran stated that, \$2 million project (\$1 million from the ERB) is for restoration of the park, a new entrance and an elevator in the rear. The building is a gateway to the Cooper Grant neighborhood and Rutgers. The park will be the center of the new developments by Pennrose, Rutgers, Radiolofts and the school board. The project is expected to be completed in October 2006. Mr. Corcoran invited that ERB board to meet at the building in October in order to see the finished project and take a tour of the facility.

Vice Chairman Jones asked Ms. Hassett to summarize the first agenda item, the American Community Partnership ("ACP") (P017180). Ms. Hassett stated that the item was a \$100,000 recoverable grant for the ACP to fund a feasibility study and pre-development costs for the proposed expansion of their project site located in the Waterfront South neighborhood in Camden.

Ms. Hassett explained that for the past seven years, ACP through Working Together for Jobs - Camden ("Working Together-Camden"), ACP's trademark, has developed a pre-apprenticeship program that has trained over 100 New Jersey residents annually for apprenticeship and employment primarily in construction, as well as in culinary arts and nursing assistance. This training has been done in partnership with labor, community and faith-based organizations, employers and government.

ERB funds will be recovered based on the result of the feasibility study. If the project moves forward, the grant will be repaid from the permanent financing on the project. The ERB funds will be disbursed based on submission of invoices submitted by ACP. Contingencies are receipt of commitment letters from DRPA, CEZ and TCM.

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

Lisa Thornton, Counsel for The Governor's Authorities entered the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Reverend Jones commended Ron Green for his hard work on the program, and asked if ACP is working with the high school. Mr. Green indicated that they do partner with the school district and hold career day seminars to attract youth interested in construction. Mayor Faison asked if they were working with the Second Chance population. Mr. Greet said they do and they require a high school diploma or GER, a driver's license and the desire to work. He added that the building trades have extended a welcome to ACP to allow residents who are unemployed, homeless and or incarcerated to work with them. Mr. Hosey stated he works with the building trades, and does a great job.

Vice Chairman Jones asked Ms. Hassett to summarize the Cooper Health System modification (P015233). Ms. Hassett stated that the Members were asked to approved a modification to the project scope and use of funds for the \$12.35 million ERB grant to Cooper Health System (Cooper) to fund a portion of the financing needed for the building structure expansion.

Vice Chairman Jones requested comments from the Members.

Marge DellaVecchia stated that the TAC report is distributed monthly and highlights Camden projects completed by various state agencies. She indicated that the list is increasing each month and that DCA has added several new programs including: Main Streets located on Fairview and Broadway, Fairview Residential Programs, Block Grants, and lead-based paint abatements.

She added that the Faison Mews project, (named after Mayor Faison); grand opening was held less than a month ago. The Faison Mews is an HMFA project located across from Camden High School with 51 units for seniors. It was an impressive day and has great apartments for seniors. Mayor Faison agreed.

Randy Primas stated that an event highlighting the success of the ERB is being held at 11 am. on Wednesday, March 29, 2006 at the Camden Waterfront Technology Center and that Governor Corzine would be present.

Maureen Hassett stated that the EDA's Business Growth Fund with PNC, had funded two projects. 1) Ralph's Heating and Contracting, Inc. for \$375,000. Ralph's Heating has 31 employees and will create 10 new jobs; and 2), Syspro for \$1.5 million. They have 23 employees and will create 15 new jobs.

Council President Fuentes took the opportunity to acknowledge City Councilman Whip Wilson.

Vice Chairman Jones requested comments from the public.

Mr. Colandus "Kelly" Francis, President NAACP of Camden County thanked Marge DellaVecchia for acknowledging Faison Mews. Mr. Francis serves on the Parkside Business and Community in Partnership Board and has been working on the project for the last seven years. He stated that it was a beautiful facility. Mr. Francis also added comments on the Hope VI infrastructure project that involves a \$5 million dollar ERB infrastructure grant, stating that a concentration of poverty is not desirable in the city.

Gloria Lake, Owner of Gloria's Cleaning Service addressed the board and stated there were four buildings she wants to rehabilitate. She pointed out that next Friday, April 7, 2006 there would be a meeting regarding Camden residents obtaining construction jobs.

Marge DellaVecchia stated that the CHIP program for Camden homeownership is working with residents and non-profits to enable soft loans for housing improvement projects throughout the city. HMFA worked with the ERB and CCOP to establish the program.

Mr. Hosey added in regard to ACP's training, that while people are receiving their training in Camden, they're working all over seven different counties, not just in Camden and that this is a desirable outcome.

Steve Dragos, Executive Director, Greater Camden Partnership provided an update on the Special Services District. He stated that the program, which started in October 2005 with a \$200,000 equipment grant from the ERB, has really made a difference in Center City. More improvements

will be evident this summer. They have a maintenance and hospitality program, and all 12 full time employees are Camden residents. They have received 160 employment applications for the program so far. Mr. Dragos acknowledged Maceo Malone, the Program Director and several District Managers. Mr. Dragos thanked the board for its support of the program.

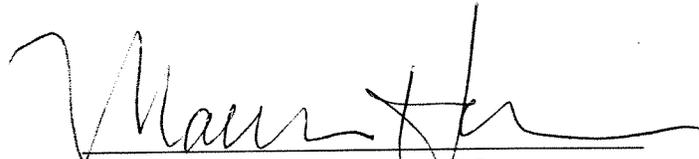
Mayor Faison commended Mr. Malone stating that he volunteered himself and his staff for a cleanup effort in Whitman Park last Saturday from 8 – 11 am. His staff's efforts are encouraging residents to maintain the area and they did an excellent job.

Shawn Brown, a Camden resident stated he was excited about the progress in the City. Mr. Brown stated that although problems have long plagued the City, his generation will help take the City the next level.

Ms. Hassett recognized that Christine Roberts, Camden Innovation Zone Coordinator of the EDA's Real Estate Development Division, was in attendance, and that Ms Roberts would be working with business and the research community to expand the Innovation Zone Concept that seeks to create a vibrant technology neighborhood.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Primas and seconded by Mayor Faison, the meeting was adjourned at 11:16 am.

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, Vice President
Strategic Partnerships, EDA
Assistant Secretary, ERB**