

**ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN**

**April 6, 2005**

**Camden Lutheran Housing Corporation**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

Members of the Board present: State Treasurer, John E. McCormac, Chairman; Vice Chairman, Reverend J. C. Jones; Mayor Gwendolyn Faison; Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas; City Council President Angel Fuentes; Marge DellaVecchia representing Commissioner Susan Bass Levin; Freeholder Director Louis Capelli; and Public Members: Robert Milner, Rosa Ramirez, and Rodney Sadler.

Also Present: Assistant Secretary Maureen Hassett; Bette Renaud, Deputy Attorney General; Kenneth Rotter of the Governor's Authority Unit; EDA staff; and guests.

Absent: Senator Wayne Bryant, Legislative Member, and Assemblyman Joseph Roberts, Legislative Member, and Mayor M. James Maley, Jr., representative of the Regional Impact Council, and William Hosey, Public Member.

Chairman McCormac called the meeting to order at 10:00 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.

Chairman McCormac asked for a motion to approve the February 22, 2005 minutes of the Board.

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

**MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING**

Chairman McCormac asked for welcoming remarks from the Camden Lutheran Housing Corporation (CLHC). Liza Nolan of the Camden Community Development Association represented the Camden Lutheran Housing and welcomed the ERB Board and its guests to the headquarters of the CLHC. She described the hosting site as a 65-unit rental housing development constructed by the CLHC. She added that CLHC is also developing another homeownership project in North Camden. In addition, she stated that the Camden Community Development Association represents 15 Community Development Associations to implement housing and community development projects throughout the City of Camden.

Chairman McCormac stated that the first item on the agenda (Camden Baseball, LLC-P016526) would be held this month.

Chairman McCormac asked Maureen Hassett to present the Cooper's Ferry Development Association (CFDA) South Jersey Port Corporation (SJPC) -Infrastructure Improvements and Upgrades (P016497) project. She explained that the sites are owned by the SJPC and will be used to facilitate the design and construction of 18.7 acres of vacant underutilized land for SJPC business and to provide temporary parking for the waterfront attractions. The NJEDA will hold mortgages on the properties for the \$1,288,729 recoverable ERB grant. In the event that the properties are sold, the ERB grant would be recovered on a pro-rata basis from the net sales proceeds. Ms. Hassett recognized Anthony Perno of CFDA to answer any questions regarding the project.

Council President Angel Fuentes asked if the project was part of the Central Waterfront Plan and COO Randy Primas said that it was. Mr. Fuentes also asked if the ERB Board could approve the project without final approval of the Central Waterfront Plan and Mr. Primas said that the project could be approved.

Mr. Primas also asked specifically about the streets that the improvements would be made on. Anthony Perno clarified that the site on Broadway in the ERB Board Memo should be reflected as Kaighn Avenue and Fourth Street.

Rev. Jones asked if the project is located in a residential area and Mr. Perno stated that the project is located in an industrial area where vacant trailers are stored. Rosa Ramirez asked if the grant would be from the ERB residential funds. ERB Program Manager Laura Wallick stated that the funds are from the Demolition and Redevelopment Financing Fund.

Rodney Sadler asked if this project supersedes the other parking project in the Central Waterfront and Mr. Primas said that this project is in addition to the previously approved project for temporary parking. Freeholder Director Louis Capelli asked when would the project begin and Mr. Perno advised that the project would begin as soon as possible.

Rev. Jones asked if any of the temporary parking would be in a residential area and Mr. Perno answered that this application would not be. However, Mr. Primas clarified that the other temporary parking project is located in a residential area due to the City's obligation to provide parking within 3,500 ft. of the Tweeter Center. He added that the City is aware of the behavior that is seen in the parking lots and that the City is working with the Tweeter Center to increase security and to hire off-duty police officers.

Mr. Sudan, a Lanning Square resident in the audience added that no one spoke with the residents in the area about the parking, which would be disruptive to the community. He also noted that the residents are highly concerned and are willing to protest against the parking in their neighborhood. In response to whether or not the residential areas could be the last resort for parking, Mr. Perno said that the traffic would be directed to the industrial areas first. Mr. Fuentes added that CFDA should be mindful of shuttle buses as well. Marge DellaVecchia noted that the properties would be improved with gravel, fencing, lighting, and security, which should be helpful in preventing or containing adverse activities on the sites.

**MOTION TO APPROVE with the corrected location:**

**Ms. DellaVecchia      SECOND: Mr. Fuentes      AYES: 10**

Chairman McCormac asked Ms. Hassett to review the modification to the Citywide Demolition Project (P015365). She provided the update of the project, stating that 876 properties have been demolished and that 1,276 total properties are estimated to be demolished under the project. The Camden Redevelopment Authority provided a list of additional properties to be demolished, of which 41 properties are located at the Terraces project site. The modification was to inform the ERB Board that the Terraces properties would be included in this project, that a revised list of properties has been provided, an estimate of 1,276 properties is projected, and the total project cost amount is reduced to \$16,922,000 due to the reduction of the ERB grant.

Mr. Fuentes requested a copy of the 548 properties that were on the original demolition list. Mayor Faison noted that the City and the ERB Board should be mindful and patient in terms of working with Camden residents to provide better communication. She added that successful development could not occur without the residents' confidence in the development because it has an impact on the community.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Ms. DellaVecchia      SECOND: Mr. Milner      AYES: 9**  
**Mr. Primas abstained because he is the Chair of the CRA.**

Ms. Hassett provided an update of the activities of the EDA and the ERB, and highlighted the Second Annual Invest in Camden Day. She asked Chairman McCormac to comment on the event. He stated that the event was a tremendous success, which had nearly 400 attendees. It was as successful as the first year's event. Senator John Corzine gave the keynote address for the event, demonstrating his support for the revitalization of the City. Chairman McCormac also thanked the CRA and ERB staff for all of their hard work. In addition, Ms. Hassett noted that many of the exhibitors have expressed an interest in signing up for next year's Invest in Camden Day.

Rosa Ramirez reiterated the need for the ERB Board to better communicate with the community, suggesting that the parking project in Lanning Square should have been discussed with the residents prior to ERB Board approval.

Chairman McCormac requested public comments.

Pastor Melvin Allen of Mickle Baptist Church reiterated that community understanding is important to prevent animosity. He stated that the residents want development to occur but they also need to have confidence in what is being done in the City. He also offered his church as a meeting place for community meetings about the various projects in the City.

Mr. Primas stated that there were numerous meetings about the redevelopment plans that included the need for temporary parking.

A resident commented on the existence of the NJ Transit light rail, the PATCO speedline, and the buses and that these forms of transportation should be promoted more for visitors to the waterfront attractions. He did not feel that all the additional parking lots were necessary.

Mr. Kelly Francis asked for clarity on whether the funding for the Terraces component of the Citywide Demolition Project was additional to prior approvals and Ms. Hassett explained that the funding is already included in the approved project and is being allocated for the Terraces properties. Mr. Francis echoed the previous comments regarding parking, commenting that the residents have suffered long enough. He also stated that Camden has the largest per capita police protection and the highest tax rate in the area.

Mr. Roy Jones asked if the ERB Board was considering funding for parking in the Lanning Square neighborhood and Chairman McCormac said that the Board was not considering it today and that it had already been approved. Mr. Jones referenced an article by a professor that emphasized the misuse of parking and how it is sometimes located where housing and commercial activities should be instead. He suggested that the contract between the City and the Tweeter Center for parking should be renegotiated. He recapped his previous recommendations to Mr. Primas and Mr. Fuentes regarding parking at sites further away where there is ample vacant space for parking and to provide shuttle buses. He also summarized the ERB Board's funding approvals, and contended that many Camden residents could not receive jobs at various projects in the City, and how many of the approvals were made for projects that were bankrupt. He stressed the importance of supporting neighborhood redevelopment and stated that \$6 million for parking in the suburbs would not have occurred.

Mr. Jose Delgado and Rosa Ramirez exchanged words regarding the community being informed and participating in the redevelopment process. Mr. Ramirez felt that often, the people who are the most critical have not been present at meetings or are not working proactively to resolve differences. Mr. Delgado did not encourage civil disobedience, but understood why it could happen. He also felt that the parking contract should be renegotiated.

Chairman McCormac advised the residents that the ERB Board would take these comments into consideration as they have been educated about the community's concerns. He also stated that the ERB Board did not want to see civil disobedience in the City. Mr. Primas and Rev. Jones agreed that the next step would be to have a community meeting. Ms. Ramirez also suggested for the residents to inform their neighbors about the meeting and to participate.

Liza Nolan also recommended that the ERB Board post the agenda before the meeting so that the community could be aware of what is being acted upon and Ms. Hassett felt that it was a great idea.

Carlton Wilson of Lanning Square stated that sometimes bulldozers are knocking things down on private property without notice and disrupt the community as well, which should not occur.

**There being no further business, on a motion by Mr. Primas, and seconded by Mr. Sadler, the meeting was adjourned at 11:06am.**

**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, VP-Strategic Partnerships, EDA  
Assistant Secretary, ERB