

STATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN

May 21, 2004

Camden Empowerment Zone Corporation

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Members of the Board present: State Treasurer John E. McCormac, Chairman; Mayor Gwendolyn Faison; Arijit De for Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas; Reverend J. C. Jones, Vice Chairman; Marge DellaVecchia representing Commissioner Susan Bass Levin; and Public Members William Hosey, Robert Milner, and Rodney Sadler.

Absent: Tonio Burgos representing Alfred Koeppel, Chairman of the NJ Economic Development Authority; Legislative Member, Senator Wayne Bryant; Assemblyman Joseph Roberts, Legislative Member; City Council President Angel Fuentes; and Public Member Rosa Ramirez.

Also Present: Assistant Secretary, Maureen Hassett; Deputy Attorney General Anthony DeFelice; Victoria Pratt of the Governor's Authorities Unit; NJEDA and NJSCC staff, and guests.

Chairman John McCormac called the meeting to order at 10:13 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.

Freeholder Director Jeffrey Nash entered the meeting at 10:24 am.

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

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

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. De SECOND: Ms. Della Vecchia AYES: 8

Chairman McCormac introduced Rick Cummings, Managing Director of the Camden Empowerment Zone Corporation (CEZC) for opening remarks. Mr. Cummings welcomed the ERB members and all attendees of the meeting. He wished the Board a productive meeting and provided an update on the CEZC's progress. He noted that the CEZC received a \$20.8 million Federal grant in late 1994, formed a corporation and began operations in the beginning of 1997 after the community reorientation process had occurred. Mr. Cummings indicated that the CEZC would like to partner with the ERB on projects. He noted that the CEZC has participated in housing development, small business development, social programs, and job training. He indicated that the CEZC has a commitment of \$2.5 million for housing development in the Lanning Square section of Camden to assist with mortgage subsidies and pre-development

grants. The agency also has \$4 million remaining that is not allocated for redevelopment projects in the Empowerment Zone area.

Chairman McCormac introduced Dr. Phyllis Della Vecchia, President of the Camden County College for a presentation on the new facility at the corner of Broadway and Cooper Street. Dr. Della Vecchia said that she was delighted to be at the meeting to discuss the expansion of the College's Camden Campus. She noted that the newly constructed facility is 278,000 sq. ft., is mixed-use, with a 600+ space deck parking, state-of-the-art classrooms, and a bookstore that is shared with Rutgers University and Rowan University. The project is referred to as the "Gateway" to the University District, with "Gateway" programs: 1) a 2-year degree that would be furthered to obtain a 4-year degree from another institution, and 2) a Career Ladder program that starts at entry level with a certificate and then a 2-year degree in a pre-medicine field with some on the job training.

Dr. Della Vecchia stated that the College will continue to market to the community. The College's role is to help build the middle class and have a positive impact on the City of Camden. Lastly, Dr. Della Vecchia recognized Melissa Hopp, Vice President for Administrative Services and Louis Bezich, President of Public Solutions, for working on the project and being available to answer any specific questions. Maureen Hassett asked if the new building had meeting space available and Dr. Della Vecchia said that they would have conference rooms available for use very soon.

Chairman McCormac asked Ms. Hassett to present Camden County College's \$3,500,000 grant request to the Board for approval (P015822). Ms. Hassett noted that the funding would be permanent financing. In addition, she stated that the College is negotiating with Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas on the Annual Service Charge and that closing would occur once the negotiations have concluded.

Rev. Jones asked how the recruiting was being done to attract Camden residents. Dr. Della Vecchia noted that the College reaches out to the churches, community centers, high school, the NJ Stars, a new program introduced by Governor McGreevey and Senator Bryant, which provides a 2-year degree free for high school graduates in the top 20% of their class. The College expects to double its size to 4,000 students.

Robert Milner asked of the 4,000 students, how many are being recruited from Camden? Dr. Della Vecchia indicated that there is a strong marketing campaign; ads are at the end of the Ben Franklin Bridge, the College will have a sign on the building, and remedial development programs will be available as well for recruitment. Mr. Milner expressed his concern about 80% or so may come from areas such as Cherry Hill. The College President noted that the Cherry Hill campus has a high technology campus and is in the process of becoming a full-fledge campus. As for Camden, she asked Melissa Hopp to distribute the brochure on the Camden Campus, which illustrates its urban focus.

William Hosey asked about the computers on the second floor and if they were specific for Microsoft or Cisco systems or broad-based. Dr. Della Vecchia explained that the computers are broad-based and the College will provide across the board computer training. Marge Della Vecchia inquired about jobs, job development, and job placement for the students. The College

does offer these services as well as partners with the Camden County Workforce Investment Board, the Department of Labor One-Stop Shop, and etc. Dr. Della Vecchia also noted the College's partnership with the County Clerk's office, which offers part-time jobs to students that many times become full-time jobs for graduates.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. De SECOND: Mr. Hosey AYES: 8

Chairman McCormac asked Ms. Hassett to present the modification request for Cooper's Ferry Development Association (CFDA)'s York ship Square infrastructure improvement project (P015445). At the December 2003 ERB Board Meeting, the Members approved a \$1,600,000 grant to CFDA to manage the project. The modification is to indicate the Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) as the sole applicant, which will have a management agreement with the CFDA to administer the project on behalf of the CRA.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Ms. Della Vecchia SECOND: Mr. Sadler AYES: 7

Mr. De abstained from the vote because Chief Operating Officer Randy Primas is the Chair of the Camden Redevelopment Agency.

Chairman McCormac asked Arijit De to introduce the Octavius V. Catto Demonstration School Project and its presenters. Mr. De explained that the project is part of demonstration project in East Camden and that most of the pre-development process was completed. Also, Chairman McCormac, the State Treasurer, had previously approved the project. Mr. De indicated that the project would be a significant improvement to the area and would secure an area that is key to redevelopment of that portion of East Camden. The plan is comprehensive for open space, joining communities, enhancing State and Federal investments as well as 550 new housing units at Baldwin's Run in the neighborhood. Mr. De introduced Rahim Islam of Universal Companies of Philadelphia, who gave the floor to David Millman of Keating Partners, LLC.

Mr. Millman explained how the project, along Dudley Grange Park near the newly constructed Baldwin's Run HOPE VI units, would bring the Boys & Girls Club and the school system together. The project includes an athletic field, parking, Boys & Girls Club, distance learning center, media center, and its primary focus is to share amenities. The shared amenities are the cafeteria, auditorium, and the 10,000 sq. ft. gymnasium. The school will also gain the benefit of a swimming pool. Mr. Millman also noted the sketches of the Boys & Girls Club and the new school, which detailed the various components of the project. He also stated that the consulting team is working with five State agencies and need key approvals in timely fashion in order to complete the project. The agencies included are the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Green Acres Program, NJ Transit, NJ Department of Education, NJ Schools Construction Corporation, and the State Treasurer's office. Chairman McCormac offered to assist with obtaining the necessary approvals with the project as he is affiliated with the agencies.

Rahim Islam reiterated that the collaboration is critical to get the various approvals from the agencies by June 24, 2004 and that they needed support from the ERB. Mr. De noted that another Park is nearby so the project would be part of a larger green space initiative. Mr. Millman highlighted the incredible Boys & Girls Club facility located on Park Blvd, and Mr. De added that the Camden Board of Education is currently leasing space from the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Islam noted that the area where the project is located is devastated and needs help.

Mr. Sadler asked if the land is currently vacant. The land is partially vacant, where Stockton Station apartments were demolished recently. Also noted was the acreage size, which would be a total of approximately 10.7 acres. Mr. Dwaine Williams of the Camden Board of Education mentioned that there would be an easement to the property for the project. Ms. Marge Della Vecchia commented that the Office of Smart Growth is promoting projects that have joint uses for the facilities. To her knowledge, this project would be the first time a project entailed these joint uses in the State, since the creation of the Office of State Growth. Mr. De stated that the acquisition would occur immediately once all the approvals are in place.

Rev. Jones asked if this project is replacing an existing school, which was answered in the affirmative. William Hosey asked if the project was part of the Abbot School program and it is a part of the program. Rev. Jones asked will other schools have access to the pool and the answer was yes. Ms. Hassett noted that under the demonstration projects authorized by the NJ Educational Facilities Financing Act, the school district could take on redevelopment activities as well. Mr. Hosey asked which grade levels are included in the project and the answer was Pre-Kindergarten through Sixth grades. Mr. De added that program activities for seniors would also be held at the facility. Mr. Millman commented that the project would facilitate 540 students.

Mayor Faison, Vice President Rev. Jones, Chairman McCormac, Ms. Della Vecchia, and Mr. Hosey commended the project for its comprehensive nature and the benefits it would bring to Camden residents. Ms. Della Vecchia noted that the State House Commission is on June 21, 2004 and the required materials should be submitted prior to that date as well. Mayor Faison commended the consultant team and the Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for their work on the project. Ms. Hassett also recognized William Upton and Keith Jones of the NJ Schools Construction Corporation.

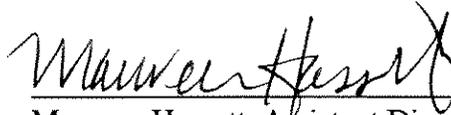
Mayor Faison indicated that she was displeased with letters she received recently from the Camden Churches Organized for People (CCOP) stating that they did not have knowledge of information on projects that are being approved in the City. Chairman McCormac suggested that staff was exploring ways to share information with community groups prior to Board meetings. Mayor Faison added that she was recently at a retreat with the Greater Camden Partnership on various downtown activities. She had also previously discussed redevelopment projects with Ms. Della Vecchia, Executive Director of the NJ Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency.

Mayor Faison also expressed her concern with transients who are being bused into the downtown area at the Transportation Center. Freeholder Jeffrey Nash inquired about those individuals as well. Mayor Faison added that funding is needed to fix Broadway as well. Mr. De commented that the Soup Kitchen is located downtown and that people are being bused in from Philadelphia. Mr. Sadler added that there are a number of social service providers in the downtown area of Camden. Mr. De explained that the CRA is working with the Soup Kitchen to move its facility into a campus-like setting that would also include the Methadone Clinic outside of the downtown area.

Chairman McCormac requested comments from the public.

There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Della Vecchia, and seconded by Mr. Hosey, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 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, Assistant Director, EDA
Assistant Secretary, ERB