

STATE ECONOMIC RECOVERY BOARD FOR CAMDEN

August 3, 2004

Rutgers University-Student Center

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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

Absent: Alfred Koeppe, Chairman of the NJ Economic Development Authority and Assemblyman Joseph Roberts, Legislative Member.

Also Present: Secretary Caren Franzini; Assistant Secretary Maureen Hassett; Deputy Attorney General Bette Renaud; Kenneth Trotter of the Governor's Authorities Unit; NJEDA and CRA staff, and guests.

Chairman John McCormac called the meeting to order at 10:12 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.

Senator Bryant and Marge DellaVecchia entered the meeting at 10:14 am and 10:18 am respectively.

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

Chairman McCormac stated that the approval of the minutes from the June 22, 2004 ERB meeting were being deferred as they were not made previously available to the Members for review.

Chairman McCormac introduced Mr. Roger Dennis, Provost of Rutgers University-Camden. Mr. Dennis welcomed the ERB members and guests to the Camden Campus. He explained that Rutgers is involved in the renovations of homes in the Fairview Section of Camden, the Cooper Grant project for market rate housing, as well as the expansion of the Camden Campus with more student housing and a new law center. Mr. Dennis noted that the University will provide a 2 for 1 match of funding for the law center because of its commitment to continue to serve as an anchor in the City.

Chairman McCormac asked Maureen Hassett to present the Financial Plan for consideration. Ms. Hassett explained the requirement of the Financial Plan per the Camden Recovery legislation. The Financial Plan details the commitments and anticipated commitments of ERB and NJEDA funding.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Nash

SECOND: Mr. Primas

AYES: 10

Chairman McCormac requested Ms. Hassett to review the scope of the Centerville HOPE VI project. Ms. Hassett explained that the ERB Board previously approved a reservation of \$5 million for

infrastructure improvements to the comprehensive housing project. The Camden Redevelopment Agency is working with the Camden Housing Authority (CHA), the developer of the project. The CHA has received a \$20 million HUD grant to implement the \$142 million project that will include the construction of 668 units of rental and homeownership units. The project will include 4 development sites over 10 phases. Ms. Hassett noted that each phase receiving the indicated funding commitments will need to be applied for on an annual basis from HMFA and DCA.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Sadler SECOND: Mr. Milner AYES: 9
Randy Primas abstained from the vote because he chairs the Camden Redevelopment Agency.

Maureen Hassett explained the Cooper Grant Homes project - the construction of 28 market units, including 16 townhouses and 12 twinhouses on vacant lots. The \$9.4 million project is being developed by Cooper Grant Developers LLC, a joint venture between Pennrose Properties and the Cooper Grant Neighborhood Association. The units will sell for \$160,000 to \$190,000. The ERB is providing a soft loan of \$1,550,000 for the project and will file a third mortgage on the homes.

Rosa Ramirez asked about the waiting list for the homes and Mr. Arijit De, Executive Director of the CRA explained that it was compiled by the neighborhood association and that the individuals will be pre-qualified for the units soon. Rev. Jones asked about any tax breaks and Mr. De explained that the homeowners will pay property taxes but the tax rate will remain unchanged for five years per the legislation.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mayor Faison SECOND: Mr. Primas AYES: 10

Chairman McCormac asked Maureen Hassett to present the infrastructure project by Fairview Village Urban Renewal Associates, LP and RPM Development LLC. The project consists of 5 parking courts containing a total of 54 parking spaces as well as street and alley improvements. This project supplements the housing development the applicant is currently working on in the neighborhood, which includes 73 rental units, 105 homeownership units, and an upcoming additional 60 rental units. The grant request is for \$791,694, which is conditioned upon the transfer of land ownership from the City of Camden to the applicant, who will maintain the lots. The residents will have permits and will pay \$35 per month to park in the lots.

Mayor Faison added that she is excited about the level of activity and private investment in the Fairview neighborhood. She noted that residents are also excited about this involvement and she thinks that it is great.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Hosey SECOND: Mr. Fuentes AYES: 10

Chairman McCormac introduced Bridget Phifer, Executive Director of the Parkside Business and Community in Partnership, Inc. (PBCIP) Ms. Phifer gave a presentation regarding the vision for the neighborhood, commercial plans including a business improvement district for the historic Haddon Avenue, and plans for educational facilities. Mr. Carlos Morales, Director of Housing for PBCIP explained the organization's past and current home ownership projects, of which an ERB soft loan was approved for one market rate homeownership project. He also indicated that future housing development is planned for the neighborhood and PBCIP plans to submit an additional application for ERB funding.

Chairman McCormac asked Maureen Hassett to present the Technical Advisory Report. Ms. Hassett referred to the report and its summary of projects in the City of Camden. Ms. Hassett also thanked the ERB Board Members for their participation at the 2nd Anniversary Event for the ERB on July 22, 2004, in which Governor McGreevey announced the progress of the ERB program in the City of Camden. Chairman McCormac indicated that it was a great event and that the Governor was pleased with the ERB Board. Chairman McCormac thanked the EDA staff for all of the work that is done behind the scenes. Caren Franzini, Executive Director of the EDA, thanked the staff individually for a job well done.

Chairman McCormac requested comments from the public.

Ron Green of American Community Partnership (ACP) updated the board on the progress of its 13-week construction training program. The program served 150 students including many Camden residents, of which 106 students completed the program and were placed in union and non-union jobs with "family-sustaining" wages. Some of the participants did not have GEDs or driver's licenses upon enrolling in the program. ACP plans to buy the former Liedtka site and apply for ERB funding to renovate the facility.

Kelly Francis of the NAACP and Camden City Tax Payers expressed his concern dating back 10 years regarding a concentration of minorities, poverty, and pollution in the Centerville section of Camden. He stated that the area should be slated for commercial use.

Marianne Emanuel of Centerville was happy regarding some things in the area but was very concerned about the pollution in the area. She owns a home in the area and wants to continue to live there but wants the problem resolved as it also affects the Liberty Park, and Morgan Village neighborhoods as well. Ms. Emanuel agrees with Mr. Francis regarding commercial use for the Centerville area.

Mary Cortez stated there was a lot of money allocated for mandated projects but there needs to be more jobs for Camden residents to help eliminate drug sales. She was also concerned about the flooding in Cramer Hill, near the proposed new library and that meetings need to be more available to residents. Ms. Cortez had pictures of the flooding for the Board.

Roy Jones asked about the regional impact office, community advisory board, and the training funds per the legislation. He also stated that Camden is still one of the poorest cities in the country and needs the State to invest more in the local residents.

David Shahade, representing the workers of the State Aquarium, expressed concern about the upcoming layoff of workers in September and the loss of health benefits. They are seeking assistance from the State. Rev. Jones asked will the people be able to return to their jobs after the completion of the expansion project in May and Mr. Shahade said that negotiations were taking place so that they can return to their jobs.

Sarah Hernandez of Cramer Hill requested the board to allocate funding to reform criminals and train them for jobs.

Lula Williams of Waterfront South noted that she was unaware of a redevelopment plan and that the level of toxicity in the area causes cancer for the residents. As a mother and grandmother, she wants the problem resolved.

Frank Fulbrook, VP of Cooper Grant Neighborhood Association thanked the Board for the allocation of funds for the housing project and noted that the neighborhood's 40% vacancy rate has reduced to 3%. The area has almost a 100% occupancy rate, which is a first for a Camden neighborhood.

LaVerne Williams of Branch Village stated that Centerville has a vision just as Parkside does, which is to have businesses, jobs and a decentralization of poor residents. She is also concerned about the lack of police protection because they are mostly renters. Lastly, she wants more training for the youth and the meetings to be more accessible to the residents.

Mike Hagan of Cramer Hill expressed his concerns of health and safety issues, which are not being addressed.

Angel Cordero stated that he holds the State accountable for the loss of homes, jobs, and children and likened the situation in Camden to the genocide of Native Americans.

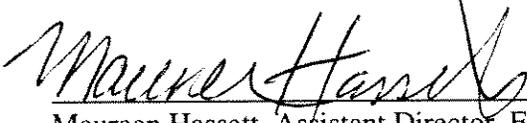
Betsy McBride spoke about the need and environmental impact of the industrial development in the Waterfront South area and that the meetings for DEP and ERB need to be more accessible to the public. She also informed Freeholder Jeff Nash that she did not believe the investment into the proposed Tram is a wise decision.

Carmen Ubarry-Riveria of Cramer Hill thanked the Chairman and Marge DellaVecchia for meeting with a group of residents prior to the board meeting and asked if there is ERB funding for the No Family Left Behind program. Mr. De stated that the program was part of a community support services program in which service providers are currently working with families. She also confirmed that COO Randy Primas reports to the Governor.

Chairman McCormac informed everyone that the September meeting would be held on September 28, 2004 at City Hall- Council Chambers at 10am.

There being no further business, on a motion by Freeholder Director Jeffrey Nash, and seconded by Mayor Faison, the meeting was adjourned at 12:07 pm.

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