

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Stockton University – Atlantic City Campus

1) REMARKS FROM DCA CHIEF OF STAFF AND ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KIM HOLMES ON BEHALF OF LT. GOVERNOR SHEILA OLIVER

- a) Welcomed Sean Pattwell to the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) as its new executive director. Said Lt. Governor Oliver and DCA's Atlantic City team look forward to working with Mr. Pattwell to serve the residents of Atlantic City and expand economic opportunities in the city.
- b) Noted the CRDA has done much in the last four years in Atlantic City. For example, it's helped to fund the:
 - i. Atlantic City Police Department's Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) Program, a community policing approach in each of the city's six wards and the Tourism District;
 - ii. ShopRite grocery store, which will be Atlantic City's first full-service supermarket in more than 15 years when it opens in 2023.
 - iii. Expansion of Stockton University's Atlantic City campus, which includes construction of a 416-bed residence hall near the existing residence hall and academic building that opened in 2018.
 - iv. Demolition of neglected properties across the city to address neighborhood blight.
- c) The Atlantic City Working Group's Economic Diversification Subcommittee has focused its efforts on attracting new investment and maintaining existing business in the city, and on making Atlantic City clean and safe. Reported that the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is helping with this work.
- d) In March 2022, DCA approved more than \$2 million in Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) funding for three neighborhoods in Atlantic City: Chelsea, Midtown, and Ducktown.
 - i. The NRTC Program is designed to spur the renewal of neighborhoods at risk of experiencing a downturn.
 - ii. Program accomplishes this through strategies developed by local residents and community-based nonprofit organizations that assist them, as well as through financial contributions from corporations.
 - iii. Possible uses of NRTC funds include affordable housing; commercial development; small business assistance; employment training; and recreation, crime prevention, and community outreach activities.
- e) The Atlantic City Working Group's Workforce Development Subcommittee helped apply for grant funding to do a broadband accessibility study for Atlantic City.
- f) Reported that the City got the grant.

- g) The grant doesn't require matching dollars from the City. It will fund a broadband master plan and related work such as Internet access surveys, network design, financial modeling, and risk assessment.
- h) The end goal is to improve Internet access and help close the digital divide among underserved populations in the city.
- i) Talked about a new program at DCA: the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). It was launched in March 2022 and provides financial assistance to low-income households that are overdue on their residential water and wastewater bills. The assistance can be used to:
 - i. Restore services where services have been terminated and pay reconnection fees and other charges accrued due to a disconnection;
 - ii. Avoid service disruption for those residential customers who are in danger of disconnection (i.e., received shut off notices or have past due balances) and to help them afford bill payment going forward; and
 - iii. Support those household customers who are current in their bills but might be in danger of falling behind in the near future.
- j) Priority is being given to families with elderly or disabled household members and/or with children under the age of five.
- k) To be eligible for LIHWAP assistance, applicants must be water/wastewater bill holders who are responsible for paying their water and sewer bills directly to the vendors. Also, applicants' total gross household income must be at or below 60% of the state median Income (\$6,439 a month for a family of four).
- l) People can apply online through the DCAid application portal.
- m) Said DCA needs the Executive Council's help in letting people know that water assistance is available. Encouraged the Executive Council to spread the word among their networks.

2) REMARKS FROM DCA DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES (DLGS) DIRECTOR JACQUELYN SUÁREZ

- a) Welcomed Sean Pattwell to CRDA on behalf of DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS).
- b) Said DLGS has a number of technical advisors and professional staff that are helping the City of Atlantic City. She noted:
 - i. The Division's Local Assistance Bureau (LAB), which is led by Richard Richardella, the bureau chief who is very familiar with Atlantic City and municipal police department issues.
 - ii. Chris Brown, a former State Senator who is DCA's Senior Advisor for Atlantic City Affairs.
 - iii. Leon Costello and Doug Petrix, who provide technical assistance to ensure City finances move in a good direction.
 - iv. Phil Gonzalez, who helps with police department matters and police deployment, i.e., directing manpower to areas most in need and to keep the city clean and safe.
 - v. DLGS also has technical advisors for fire safety, public works, and other municipal areas.

3) REMARKS FROM ATLANTIC CITY INITIATIVES PROJECT OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL C. EPPS, ESQ.,

- a) Said thankful and optimistic are two words that come to his mind now in his work leading the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office.
- b) Stated he is thankful for the Atlantic City Executive Council, which is still coming together and still talking about great ideas since it first met in the fall of 2018.
- c) Stated he is optimistic that Atlantic City is moving in the right direction.
- d) Noted that City of Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small has a press conference scheduled for 12 noon today. Therefore, the mayor and City Business Administrator Anthony Swan were unable to attend the Executive Council meeting.

4) PRESENTATION: CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE

- a) Presentation was started by Rick Gianetti, a consultant with the Atlantic City Housing Authority. He explained that in 2020 the Housing Authority got a Choice planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the city's Westside Neighborhood.
- b) The focus of the planning grant is on Stanley Holmes Village, the oldest public housing community in the city and the region. It was built in the 1930s and precedes HUD. Stanley Holmes was often used by the federal government to promote public housing to other communities around the nation.
- c) Mr. Gianetti explained there is very little HUD housing development money left. There are approximately 424 units at Stanley Holmes Village to repair/rehab, which would cost a significant amount of money.
- d) The \$450,000 Choice neighborhood planning grant is helping the Housing Authority look at how to redevelop Stanley Holmes Village and the surrounding neighborhood.
- e) Mr. Gianetti said that HUD reextended the grant and the local planning team is at the stage now where it is fully implementing the planning grant. He said the team will be reaching out to Executive Council members for their input. The team wants to reengage the Executive Council into the project since many Executive Council members wrote letters of support for the Choice planning grant
- f) Ivy Melendez from the Atlantic City Housing Authority reported that Stanley Holmes Village residents are participating already by completing surveys and providing input on redevelopment. She said the Housing Authority is planning to hold a kick-off event in June for the planning grant project and would like to have stakeholders represented at the event.
- g) Ms. Melendez said the Housing Authority needs to engage and listen to people in the First Ward to make sure the housing plan represents what the community wants.
- h) Nick Cangelosi from the Michaels Organization, which the Housing Authority selected as its development partner for Stanley Holmes Village, said the Biden Administration has doubled the amount of Choice funding available.
- i) Mr. Cangelosi said \$350 million is available in HUD Choice grants. He explained that because considerable coordination and work is required to apply for the grants, the pot of funding is undersubscribed right now. He said this is an opportunity for the Housing Authority and

Michaels Organization to try to maximize the amount of funding it can get from the Choice grants.

- j) Mr. Gianetti said the Housing Authority understands it has to look beyond the housing in Stanley Holmes Village as part of plan and determine what the community needs in this neighborhood. He said the housing units in Stanley Holmes Village were never designed to be long-term homes for people, but rather short-term housing for three years at the max. He said the housing is primarily one-bedroom units with very limited storage space and doesn't take into consideration climate change and sea level rise.
- k) Mr. Gianetti noted that no Stanley Holmes Village residents will lose their affordable housing. He said the housing will be reconfigured into maybe senior housing and family housing that is climate resilient.
- l) Mr. Cangelosi said the Housing Authority wants to weave in AtlantiCare community health programs, police department initiatives, youth programs, etc. into the redevelopment.
- m) Mr. Gianetti said the Housing Authority will work to displace Stanley Holmes Village residents as little as possible during the redevelopment. The Authority wants to find a way to keep residents local and do as few temporary moves as possible. He said any redevelopment budget must include temporary housing because residents can't pay for any temporary housing out of pocket.
- n) Mr. Gianetti said the Housing Authority understands that there is very limited suitable housing in Atlantic City and Atlantic County to move Stanley Holmes Village residents to during a redevelopment. They will work to address this challenge.
- o) Mr. Cangelosi said the immediate goal is to secure a \$50 million grant from HUD. He said the Housing Authority and Michaels Organization have until June 2022 to do an outline of the project and until the end of the year to do a draft plan. He said a final plan is due by the end of the first quarter in 2023. Then at the end of next year, the Housing Authority can apply to HUD for the grant. He said the application process is very competitive, but the Atlantic City Housing Authority has a good chance because of all the positive things that are happening in the city.
- p) Mr. Cangelosi said that if the application is successful, it would take at least two years from a grant award announcement for physical work to start at the site.
- q) Mr. Gianetti said Stanley Holmes Village must be redeveloped because it can't stay as it is. If the Housing Authority doesn't get a HUD grant, it will also be looking for other resources and options to get better housing for the residents who live there.
- r) City of Atlantic City Planning Director Barbara Wooley-Dillon commended the team in place for this project, which, she said, overlaps well with the Weekes Park redevelopment area. She said this represents a tremendous opportunity because there are several multi-layered plans coming together at the same time in this neighborhood. She encouraged Executive Council members to reach out to the Housing Authority and see how to get involved in this project.

5) PRESENTATION: STOCKTON UNIVERSITY 50TH ANNIVERSARY, PRESENTED BY BRIAN JACKSON, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER OF STOCKTON'S ATLANTIC CITY CAMPUS

- a) Stockton University is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.
- b) It is planning a community day clean up and after party in O'Donnell Memorial Park on Saturday, April 23 to celebrate the anniversary.

- i. Clean up in all six wards of the city.
 - ii. Will kick off 8:30 in the morning and end around 11:30 a.m.
 - iii. Vendors participating in the after party in the park include food trucks, musicians, crafters, and family activities.
 - iv. When volunteers register, they can select what clean up activity they would like to do or ask to be stationed at an activity where help is needed.
- c) Stockton will bring back commencement ceremonies to Boardwalk Hall. Commencement will be May 13th and will have two ceremonies because so many students scheduled to graduate.
 - d) Stockton will hold a scholarship gala on May 14 at the Hard Rock Atlantic City.

6) **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- a) Dr. Natalie Devonish from the Atlantic City campus of Atlantic Cape Community College said the ACCC commencement is scheduled for May 9th and Jim Allen, the chairman of Hard Rock International, will provide the commencement address.