

# ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

## Zoom Conference Call

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

- a) With the COVID numbers here in New Jersey and in the region trending in a very positive direction, Governor Murphy has been easing restrictions throughout this month. Starting tomorrow there will no longer be an outdoor gathering limit in New Jersey and all percentage capacity limits for indoor and outdoor businesses will be lifted.
- b) Yesterday Governor Murphy signed an Executive Order lifting the mask mandate for outdoor public spaces. The mandate for indoor public spaces remains in place because the majority of New Jerseyans have yet to be vaccinated and this mandate will continue to protect them and their families.
- c) Additionally, Governor Murphy lifted the travel advisory, which means that travelers to New Jersey will no longer have to quarantine. This is phenomenal for Atlantic City, which many experts and analysts predict is going to have a stellar summer season.
- d) To keep these positive trendlines going, we have to keep fully vaccinating people against the coronavirus.
- e) The vaccine effort has largely moved away from the mega sites like the Atlantic City Convention Center and toward neighborhood initiatives and even direct person-to-person engagement at local pharmacies, churches, and community centers. We must continue encouraging our family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances to get the vaccine if they haven't already.
- f) As we keep emerging from the pandemic, there is good news coming out of Atlantic City and Atlantic County.
- g) Caesars Entertainment, Hard Rock, Ocean Casino Resort and Bally's Corp. are all making significant investments in their properties in Atlantic City.
- h) The state's largest arcade opened this weekend at Showboat, which has already announced it's bringing a family-friendly waterpark to the city in the very near future.
- i) The Atlantic County Economic Alliance is doing great work to diversify the Atlantic County economy, especially in the aviation district that includes Atlantic City International Airport, the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center, and the National Aviation Research and Technology Park (NARTP).
- j) Just last month, the Economic Alliance partnered with Israel Aerospace Industries to showcase technology that could be used to help detect and prevent the spread of diseases in airports and other public places. The demonstration received considerable press attention, which generated a lot of positive exposure about the county's economic development efforts.
- k) Based on legislation that is moving through the State Legislature, it looks like the State – in particular DCA – will continue its oversight of Atlantic City government.

- l) Under the Municipal Stabilization and Recovery Act, state oversight would end in November. The bill under consideration would extend this oversight for an additional four years.
- m) The Lt. Governor has previously expressed that the city could benefit from a few more years of collaboration with DCA since we still have more work to do to build a foundation of shared prosperity for people who live and work in Atlantic City.
- n) Governor Murphy also stated publicly last week that the city has benefitted from this partnership with the State and that unfinished businesses remains to be completed.
- o) DCA can provide a guiding hand on the federal relief money coming to Atlantic City from the American Rescue Plan and assist in putting the Atlantic City Restart and Recovery Working Group recommendations report that was issued earlier this month into action.
- p) Remind everyone on the Executive Council that the application period for the second phase of the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (CVERAP) remains open. It will continue to be open since we learned last week that DCA will receive at minimum another \$272 million from the federal government for emergency rental assistance.
- q) The program provides rental assistance to low- and moderate-income households that have had a substantial reduction in income or incurred significant costs as a result of the pandemic, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- r) Landlords may also apply for assistance on behalf of a tenant provided they have their tenant's permission.
- s) Applicants may be eligible for up to 12 months of rental assistance to help pay for rent arrears incurred after March 13, 2020, and future rent to the extent that funds are available.
- t) Participants are being selected from the overall pool of applicants through a randomized rolling lottery based on eligibility and lottery criteria.
- u) Please get the word out so that people know about this important program.
- v) The eviction moratorium will not and cannot last forever so it's important that people who are struggling to pay their rent apply for help now. That way they can avoid having an eviction notice filed against them.
- w) People can get more information about the program at [nj.gov/dca](http://nj.gov/dca) or by calling 609-490-4550.
- x) Steve Perskie, policy advisor to Atlantic City Mayor Small, said the pending bill to extend State oversight of Atlantic City is poorly written and must be improved. He also said no one who wrote the bill spoke with anyone in City Hall; he wants Lt. Governor Oliver to know this.
- y) Chief of Staff Holmes said the Atlantic City Business Administrator has submitted concerns about the pending legislation to the Lt. Governor; so she is aware of the City's concerns with the bill. Also Division of Local Government Services Director Jacquelyn Suarez is aware of the City's concerns.
- z) Members of the Executive Council asked for information about CVERAP Phase II. Chief of Staff Holmes said she would forward information about the program to Michael Epps, who will distribute via email to the group.

**2) YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: STEPHANIE KOCH, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF ATLANTIC CITY**

- a) Shared slideshow presentation that started with a story from a Boys and Girls Club graduate.
- b) Over 50 percent of staff are born in Atlantic City and 28 percent are club alumni. More than 50 percent of staff are Black and nearly 70 percent are female. 43 percent of staff have been with club for more than two years.
- c) Have two buildings that are licensed childcare centers – Chelsea Club (Sovereign Ave.) and Drexel Club (Drexel Ave.) open from 8 am to 8 pm; filled the gap when schools were closed due to the pandemic.
- d) Provide a safe space for virtual learning; dinner and snack served daily.
- e) Big focus is on career development. The club inspires kids to dream big and look for opportunities.
- f) Have STEAM lab at the Chelsea Club that features Lego Boost and Mindstorm. Apple is highly engaged with the lab, offers technical assistance on a regular basis, and helps the club see what is next in terms of robotics and coding. A lot of students at the club are being recruited by ACIT.
- g) Have a Teen Center at 317 Pennsylvania Ave. that provides academic enrichment, college and career readiness, and workforce development training. Teens are encouraged to find an area they are interested in pursuing.
- h) The Bridge Program is helping teens go to college. It is a dual enrollment program with Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC). ACCC brought college to students at the club so they can get some credits for college, i.e. Intro to Hospitality. Expanding in 2021 to other courses like Intro to Medical Terminology and Intro to Computers.
- i) Coupling mentoring with basketball through the Passport 2 Manhood program.
- j) Club is reopening basketball league this year.
- k) 21st Century grant through NJDOE to combat learning loss
- l) During the pandemic, club built a recording studio. It is doing a podcast called Hope Exists.
- m) Workforce Development Innovation Center is linking next generation to STEAM, healthcare, and hospitality industries. For example, kids in the hospitality section are prepared and certified to work in any restaurant in the city.
- n) Students in the STEAM workforce track utilize the Design Lab at the Teen Center.
- o) Students in the Healthcare Workforce Track become CPR certified and sample a variety of healthcare work options.
- p) Club will be open for summer camp this summer; more than 100 more slots available this summer compared to last.
- q) Teen Center will be open for free during the summer.
- r) There will be a basketball league this summer, free food, e-sports, music studio. The club will work on a container project involving farming food in the container all year long.
- s) Club Café on Mediterranean Avenue will open soon and will help club parents work during the day and then be able to return home when their kids come home from school. Plan to create a catering enterprise out of the club.
- t) Youth in the STEAM pre-apprenticeship can achieve stackable credentials so by the time the youth graduates from high school, he or she will have Apple Pro Certification and be able to work on an Apple help desk for customers.
- u) The club is expanding healthcare services so youth can get checkups if having a health issue.

- v) Atlantic City Business Administrator Anthony Swan mentioned the City is working hard to get its recreation department up and running and might find ways of partnering with the Boys and Girls Club.
- w) Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) Deputy Director Rosa Farias thanked the club for stepping up tremendously during COVID.
- x) Ms. Koch said the club is now serving 2,500 kids versus 1,300 pre-pandemic. It is working around the clock both virtually and in-person thanks to an amazing staff.

**3) YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: SHERMAINE GUNTER-GARY PRESENTING ON BEHALF OF PASTOR COLLINS DAYS, SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH IN ATLANTIC CITY**

- a) The training workforce development program for Atlantic City at-risk youth started in 2019 as a pilot program. That year it helped about 36 youth.
- b) The youth primarily are referred from the Probation Department, the Atlantic City Police Athletic League, and the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office. Youth in the program remained arrest free during the program.
- c) In 2020, the program employed 278 at-risk youth. The young people just worked outdoors due to COVID. There were 20 teams of 10 youth and one team leader. The youth collected on average 10 bags each of trash in one day. They had a team of mowers and weed wackers. They did this in conjunction with the Atlantic City Department of Public Works and focused on vacant lots and clearing debris.
- d) In 2020, the program experienced very little issues with youth becoming exposed to the COVID-19 virus.
- e) The program still held weekly workshops for the youth on stress relief and financial education.
- f) 212 of the young people participating in the program in 2020 had never worked before; so, the program helped them learn how to get a job, apply for a job, present themselves on a job interview. Some of the youth went on to get jobs themselves after the summer program.
- g) Also had a winter workforce development program that consisted of three projects: environmental cleanup, podcasting, and food service.
- h) The food service project was done at Turning Point Homeless Center where they prepared meals for homeless people. The youth had to prepare meals and come up with their own recipes and do food shopping. They finished their safe service certification and will take the test in June.
- i) For the podcast project, the youth had two different podcasts and could study toward a broadcasting certification.
- j) This summer the program is hoping to reach 210 youth. It is hoping to place many youth with retail stores on the boardwalk to foster cultural relationships and give people experience and insight into retail business. They also have an ice cream business option to learn about entrepreneurship.
- k) The program is hoping to collaborate with City Hall on office jobs. Also, O.C.E.A.N. Inc. will take some youth. The program will still have a cleanup project this year, including the boardwalk. Right now, there are 15 different work site locations for 2021.

- l) The program is looking forward to another great year of getting youth work experience and pride of getting paid for work.
- m) They are helping youth set up bank accounts and gain financial literacy and will have different workshops for the youth to further personal development.
- n) They are still looking for work sites and space to hold podcasting and broadcasting classes, and fashion and design classes.

#### **4) GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- a) Atlantic City Business Administrator Anthony Swan wants the Executive Council to email him with their views on recreational marijuana in Atlantic City. He said their views will help guide the City's plans on this issue. He asked for it as soon as Executive Council members could get it to him and noted that City Planning Director Barbara Woolley-Dillon is putting together a zoning ordinance on recreational marijuana for Atlantic City.
- b) Carol Ruffu of the Chelsea Neighborhood Association suggested that BA Swan reach out to civic associations in the city to get their thoughts about recreational marijuana.
- c) BA Swan said if towns are going to have recreational marijuana, they have to have rules in place soon to prevent the wild west from happening.
- d) On May 25<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. there will be a diversity summit in Atlantic City.
- e) Lori Herndon, CEO of AtlantiCare, said AtlantiCare is down to 20 COVID patients in the hospital. She said AtlantiCare is willing to work with organizations to do pop-up vaccination clinics. She said the region is on a roll with controlling the virus and wants to keep it going.