

# ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 17, 2019

## Stockton University – Atlantic City Campus

### 1) REMARKS FROM JIM JOHNSON, SPECIAL COUNSEL TO GOVERNOR MURPHY

- a) Jim Johnson reported that he had a meeting with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center regarding doing performances at Boardwalk Hall and bringing events, education and new ideas to Atlantic City.
- b) He noted that it's just about a year since the Atlantic City Executive Council began to form. The first report (i.e., Atlantic City Transition Report) was about building a foundation for a shared prosperity in the city. Mr. Johnson said he feels a foundation has been set and the Executive Council now has to move to the next step in the city's revitalization process.

### 2) PUBLIC SAFETY: UPDATE ON NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATION OFFICERS PROGRAM

- a) Atlantic City Police Chief Henry White wasn't able to attend the meeting due to a death in his family. Therefore, Deputy Chief Jim Sarkos provided brief remarks, saying police must maintain a relationship at all times with the public so that people know the police are the public and the public are the police. He said that is what the Atlantic City Police Department is doing through the Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCO) program.
- b) Deputy Chief Sarkos turned the NCO update over to Lieutenant Wil Santiago, the head of the NCO program.
- c) Lt. Santiago reported that the 16 police officers in the NCO program have department-issued cell phones to strengthen communication among the people who live and work in the wards they officers serve. The officers use the cell phones to make appointments with people in the community and to work out issues among people in their assigned ward. He noted that four of the officers in the NCO program are designated for outreach to homeless individuals.
- d) Lt. Santiago addressed NCO data and highlighted follow-ups, which are instances when NCO officers visit families after a crime incident to see how they are doing and show that the community cares about them.
- e) The Lieutenant talked about NCO officers' efforts to address abandoned properties with overgrown yards that can become public safety hazards.
- f) He explained that NCO homeless outreach officers go out at 6 a.m. twice a week underneath the boardwalk to meet with homeless. He said many homeless individuals don't know there is assistance available so the NCO officers help connect them with organizations and resources.
- g) Lt. Santiago reported that NCO officers will soon start a program to help clean up graffiti.
- h) Regarding excessive trash, the Lieutenant said NCO officers take photos of the litter and direct the photos to the proper channels in city government to get the area cleaned so people don't have to live near such conditions. He said banks that own these blighted properties are being held accountable for these conditions and noted if they don't clean up the trash, the city will fine them.
- i) Lt. Santiago talked about school fun days. The philosophy behind this activity is that police officers should positively be a part of children's lives early so children don't associate police only with trauma. Children shouldn't see police officers for the first time during a 9-1-1 call.

- j) NCO officers also hosted community barbeques in every ward. The officers worked together to fundraise for these picnics and bikes were donated to children. The summer barbeques had a very good turnout.
- k) NCO officers participated in after school homework help activities in housing developments such as Buzby Village and Stanley Holmes Village.
- l) Future NCO events for 2019 include graffiti clean-up with children; Thanksgiving dinner for senior citizens who live in senior buildings in the city; and Shop with a Cop for Christmas where 25-30 children will be able to spend \$100 each on items they need.
- m) Lt. Santiago talked about some NCO success stories, one about reconnecting a homeless married couple with their friend, who was a sheriff officer in Georgia.
- n) The Lieutenant said the police department would like to increase the number of NCO officers. He stated that doing this would decrease the geographic area of responsibility for each NCO officer from an entire political ward to a neighborhood and enable the department to begin a second shift of NCO officers, which can increase engagement with community members and city youth.
- o) Civic association representatives commented on the positive impact NCO officers are having on the community.
- p) Jim Johnson said NCO officers joined a trip the Atlantic City Citizens Advisory Board took to the Newark to meet with the Newark Street Team and learn about the work they do. A meeting will be held later today to see where community partners are in bringing this idea to Atlantic City.

### **3) YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: VIDEO PRESENTATION**

- a) Elijah Langford, community outreach manager for the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office, presented a short video featuring some Atlantic City college students who interned at institutions in Atlantic City during the summer. In the video, the summer interns described the positive impact the internships had on their lives.

### **4) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: ATLANTIC COUNTY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE PROGRESS REPORT**

- a) Lauren Moore, executive director of the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA), reported that 300 jobs have been created at the first building at the National Aviation Technology Park in Egg Harbor Township. There are eight tenants at the building. All tenants and jobs will be in the building by the first quarter of 2020.
- b) ACEA recently won a USEDA grant to attract research and development companies and investors to Atlantic County. The grant will kick off the first of next month. A director has been hired for the grant program, which will partner with Cape May County.
- c) Mr. Moore reported that ACEA can't keep leaning on Atlantic County to help them put deals and financing together for developers. He said ACEA is looking to state government to help. He said if people want new, good paying jobs in Atlantic County, then buildings to attract these jobs must be built because the buildings needed aren't in Atlantic County. He said all this requires money and Atlantic County can only do so much.
- d) Mr. Moore explained the first building in the tech park was built on speculation without any tenants. He said the private sector wouldn't do that, which is why government had to step in. He noted the tech park is a 12-minute ride from almost anywhere in Atlantic County, including Atlantic City.
- e) Mr. Moore said the NJEDA has a real estate team and noted that NJEDA Executive Director Tim Sullivan visited the tech park to see what, if anything, the NJEDA can do to move this project

forward. He said it's been hard to find support in Trenton, which is why ACEA keeps moving forward with grant opportunities.

- f) Mr. Moore said employers follow employees and stated Atlantic County needs to have an educated workforce, which is why ACEA is working to create an aviation training program with Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. The first courses are being taught at the Atlantic County tech school. He said with the help of the Atlantic City Executive Council, ACEA can push this training and technical education forward.
- g) Jim Johnson said he would like next year's summer internship program to reach 200 Atlantic City youth. He said the aviation training can feed into this internship program to create opportunities. Mr. Moore said that to make this happen school district superintendents and the Atlantic County Executive would have to get involved. Mr. Johnson said he would like to have a conversation about putting this together.

#### **5) PUBLIC HEALTH: ATLANTICARE ATLANTIC CITY CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT**

- a) The AtlantiCare chief operating officer reported that a footprint has been set for the health system's new medical arts facility in Atlantic City and the hope is to break ground in January 2020.
- b) AtlantiCare is in discussions to connect with a microgrid for energy sustainability in the event of a storm or other disaster.
- c) AtlantiCare is still having conversations with its employees about purchasing homes in Atlantic City. A significant number of medical students are now living in the city and a lot of employees are interested in living in the city, but the issue is limited housing stock.
- d) AtlantiCare stated that it does have staff who can connect with families/people impacted by trauma and violence and it has provided this information to the city school district.

#### **6) CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: LATINO FESTIVAL UPDATE**

- a) Rosa Farias, deputy director of the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office, reported that over 3,500 people registered online to attend the Atlantic City Latino Festival. She said there will be roughly 20 food and merchandise vendors, music, and a lot of family-oriented activities at the festival on September 22. She noted the festival will also feature a resource fair.

#### **7) GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- a) Bert Lopez of the Hispanic Association of Atlantic County said Atlantic City Executive Council members Rosa Farias, Evan Sanchez and AtlantiCare will be recognized at the 2019 Nuestro Pueblo Awards.
- b) Jim Johnson said that in the next year the Atlantic City Executive Council will be thinking through metrics and how to move the ball forward on impactful initiatives for the city. He spoke with the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City and Stockton University about starting to prepare young people for jobs. He noted one of the things unique to Atlantic City is 30 percent of parents and caregivers leave home for work in the afternoon/early evening whereas the national average is 10 percent. He said this is why the Executive Council has to think through issues; like how diversifying jobs means parents/caregivers will be more likely to work regular hours and be home and available to lead a Girl Scout troop or coach a youth sports team.
- c) There was discussion over the recent property tax bills and how taxpayers are upset about them. Jim Johnson said a working group has been created to look at the situation. He noted

CRDA, DCA, the city school district, city, and county all attended the first meeting of the working group with a view to working through the tax situation cohesively.

- d) Michael Epps, director of the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office, noted that on September 24, the city and Project Office will hold a town hall for people who live and work in Wards 1 and 2.