

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

Stockton University – Atlantic City Campus

1) REMARKS FROM ATLANTIC CITY INITIATIVES PROJECT OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL EPPS

- a) Michael Epps remarked that next Tuesday will mark his first year with the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office and that the work has been a pleasure. He noted the Project Office is going into 2020 without two people – Jim Johnson and Rose Farias. Elijah Langford remains and the Project Office will get a new staffer at the beginning of the year.
- b) The Project Office serves as a conduit and support team for the Atlantic City Executive Council. In 2020, it will have a lot of deliverables and will continue to rely on the subject matter experts on the Executive Council.
- c) The Executive Council should keep its focus on the Atlantic City Transition Report. The goal is to get Atlantic City back to self-sufficiency and off state support. A successful Atlantic City is good for the entire region.
- d) Anytime someone from the Executive Council wants to have a meeting with him, he would be glad to meet.
- e) Added some new members to the Executive Council: the 600 NoBe apartment community and Ørstead.

2) ATLANTIC CITY UPDATE FROM MAYOR MARTY SMALL

- a) Mayor Small introduced some new members of the Mayor's office:
 - i. Steven P. Perskie, a former Superior Court judge who will serve as special assistant on policy
 - ii. Bruce Weeks, constituent services director who will also deal with small and minority-owned businesses and work on the census
 - iii. Mayor's aide
- b) A playground off Maryland Avenue will be renamed for Micah "Dew" Tennant, a 10-year-old boy who was shot at a high school football game in Pleasantville and passed away a few days later. The city will refurbish the park's basketball courts. If anyone would like to donate to the park, they can reach out to the Mayor's Office.
- c) City announced two weeks ago that there will be \$3.5 million in road repairs done in 2020. The city can't get every street done the first year; it will be very clear in articulating when the repairs will start. If a block or neighborhood street is not getting repaired this year, the city is not ignoring you. It is due to limited funding.
- d) City received much needed funding for Venice Park bridge and Penrose Canal bridge. City issued a press release yesterday about bulkhead work in the Chelsea neighborhood.
- e) City is getting a lot of positive feedback on the Atlantic City Police Department initiative on Atlantic Avenue. It is looking to expand the initiative to other streets in the city.
- f) A developer might be interested in bringing mixed-use development to Atlantic Avenue, which is great news.
- g) Mayor Small said Lt. Governor Oliver wants him to improve the city's relationship with Atlantic County, which he is trying to do. He is looking to partner and collaborate with the

county to give city taxpayers relief. He sent Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson the city's asks.

- h) Mayor Small and three city councilmembers met with Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) Executive Director Matt Doherty to talk about the vision for Kentucky Avenue. The city is eyeing a privately-owned building on Kentucky Ave. for a permanent home for the city's African American historic museum and 48 Blocks art initiative and maybe for a TV and music production studio to help market the city and give city youth a creative outlet.
- i) In the process of setting up a meeting with Atlantic Cape Community College to see how the city can improve partnerships with them.
- j) At the last CRDA meeting, Mayor Small talked about the city's street lighting. The city purchased nearly 100 LED lights, but only has one person to help with lighting. The city wants to see if CRDA or Atlantic City Electric can help install the LED lights.
- k) In an effort to patronize local businesses, City of Atlantic City staff held their night out for December at Chickie's and Pete's at the Tropicana. Also, the city held a holiday party for city employees, named an employee of the month for December, and held a City Hall door decorating contest.
- l) Today the city will host a real estate auction with more than 180 properties. Revenue from the auction will go to property tax relief. City solicitors will be aggressive in getting sales finalized so the city can benefit from the revenue. It took a lot of work to get the properties prepped for auction.
- m) It's the city's job to get in front of as many people as possible to sell and market the city. For example, Mayor Small gave a presentation to developers in Philadelphia.
- n) There is an effort underway to change the city's form of government. Mayor Small and others are questioning how the group behind the effort got signatures for the petition. The mayor said the city is going to aggressively fight the petition. He said the city has worked incredibly hard with the state to change the culture and climate of Atlantic City. The city budget shows that spending is down.
- o) Mayor Small talked about the recent S&P ratings upgrade. Yesterday, the city and state had a conference call with Moody's and expect another credit rating upgrade.
- p) There will be a toy drive 6 p.m. Friday night at the Uptown School complex that is open to all people in the city. There will be over 2,000 toys, Santa Claus, face painting, etc.
- q) The mayor will have a weekly radio show called 'In the Mix with Marty Small' beginning January 4 on 96.9 FM. If Executive Council members are ever interested in participating and talking about what they do, they can reach out to the mayor.

3) REMARKS FROM LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OLIVER

- a) It's been a tough time for the state with the shooting in Jersey City last week that resulted in several deaths. Yesterday, the Lt. Governor attended the wake of Jersey City Police Detective Joseph Seals, who is being laid to rest today. She asked everyone to keep the family of Detective Seals and the families of those killed in their thoughts.
- b) She said it is very important the Atlantic City Executive Council continues to work together to improve Atlantic City.
- c) The S&P credit rating upgrade and anticipated Moody's upgrade show that the city is on the right track.

- d) When Mayor Small took office, there was no support staff in the Mayor's Office, so the state allowed expanded staffing there and was able to accomplish it without a budget impact.
- e) The Lt. Governor thanked DCA Deputy Commissioner Rob Long, DCA Assistant Commissioner Kim Holmes, and Division of Local Government Services Director Melanie Walter for their work in the city.
- f) Road paving projects will begin in spring 2020.
- g) DCA plans to allocate \$20 million in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funding to help repair and replace infrastructure in Atlantic City such as bulkheads that damaged by Superstorm Sandy. The Lt. Governor talked about some of the projects and noted that all projects must be completed by the end of 2022 per federal regulations.
- h) Developers and investors want to see good infrastructure and resiliency in place in Atlantic City.
- i) There are a number of opportunities at DCA and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA) to create affordable housing. Very rarely does DCA and NJHMFA see applications from Atlantic City or Atlantic County. The Lt. Governor will have DCA's Office of Local Planning Director Sean Thompson meet with the mayor and CRDA about ways to do new construction and rehab of vacant properties in the city. She wants the city to take advantage of these opportunities.
- j) Lt. Governor Oliver will also try to facilitate a meeting with the city and Lynne Patton, head of Region II of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which oversees New York and New Jersey, to find ways to build supportive housing in the city.
- k) The Lt. Governor is very impressed with the work being done in Mercer County by Homefront. She will ask Homefront CEO Connie Mercer to join her on a visit to Atlantic City to potentially see what can be pursued in AC.
- l) Despite availability of developable land in Atlantic City, developers are going to be reluctant to invest if the city and state doesn't improve the social environment in the city.

4) PUBLIC HEALTH: UPDATE

- a) Atlantic County had a public health survey that was out and AtlantiCare had a survey as well. The Project Office harnessed the talents of Michelle McDonald, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Stockton University, and her office to form a collective that generated a summary of the surveys.
- b) Ms. McDonald said there was a lot of overlap between the County and AtlantiCare surveys. She reported that exciting conversations are happening between Stockton and AtlantiCare. For example, in the spring, there will be a summit between public health students at Stockton and AtlantiCare. She noted there is tremendous benefit to bringing together students from both entities.
- c) Michael Epps said the Atlantic City Police Department is doing a push in early 2020 to collect unused prescription drugs for safe disposal of opioids. This addresses the opioid issue mentioned in the Atlantic City Transition Report.
- d) Rutgers is wrapping up a study of the city's public health office to see if the city is getting enough out of its shared services agreement with Atlantic County. The Rutgers study is also looking at what the city is missing in terms of public health.
- e) While a supermarket is coming to Atlantic City, the Project Office is looking to work with corner stores in the city to help find ways for them to sell a better, more nutritious product. The Project Office is working with the NJ Department of Health to get this up and running.

5) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: UPDATE

- a) Executive Council members said there must be a determination of what the needs of employers are so that they can be matched up with unemployed workers in the city who can meet those needs.
- b) The Casino Control Commission hosted a meeting yesterday about helping people coming home from incarceration to find jobs. The Commission and Division of Gaming Enforcement have come a long way in helping remove barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals to find jobs in the gaming industry.
- c) A bill was up for consideration yesterday in the State Legislature. It moved out of the State Assembly and to the Senate. It allows people to get a key license who may have run afoul of the law in the past.
- d) AtlantiCare is actively looking for workforce housing development opportunities, which is very encouraging.
- e) Lt. Governor Oliver encouraged city and CRDA officials to meet with former Governor Jim McGreevey who is doing groundbreaking work in North Jersey in helping people with reentry. Atlantic City doesn't have to reinvent the wheel; there are resources and models out there to replicate.
- f) The Project Office would like to grow the summer youth employment and internship program in 2020. The office wants to help 200 city youth. If members of the Executive Council are interested in helping, the Project Office wants to hear from them. To the extent the office can get youth engaged in professional jobs, it gives them a leg up as they move up in their career.

6) GOOD OF THE ORDER

- a) Mr. Epps gave Executive Council members a chance to talk about their 2020 plans.
- b) Lori Herndon, President & CEO of AtlantiCare reported that there have been no family planning services in the city for some time. An AtlantiCare physician will be offering these services soon in the city. AtlantiCare is working with Shoprite to fill in gaps around food insecurity, i.e. finding ways to help families and elderly residents in high rises get food delivered from Shoprite.
- c) Michelle McDonald, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Stockton University, reported that enrollment is up at Stockton's Atlantic City campus and they are working to bump up summer offerings at the campus and provide new internship programs for students.
- d) Atlantic County Economic Alliance encouraged people to review a report on the Alliance's website about its progress in 2019.
- e) Christina Fuentes, Senior Community Development Officer, NJ Economic Development Authority (EDA), said EDA just released a new microbusiness loan program, which offers a true small business loan with a 2% rate fixed for 10 years. She said a small business lease assistance program, which is a true grant, is available for businesses that might want to expand to a larger space.
- f) Joyce Hagen, Executive Director of Atlantic City Arts Foundation, said the Foundation will have three full-time staff people in 2020 so it hopes to offer more activities to the community in 2020.

- g) Elizabeth Terenik of the Chelsea Economic Development Corporation in Atlantic City said the Corporation will be kicking off its planning process in order to apply for DCA's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit funds.
- h) Evan Sanchez, co-founder of Authentic City Partners, said he and his team will continue their revitalization work in the Orange Loop. They will be adding a housing component and looking to do landscaping in the Loop.
- i) New Jersey Community Capital is working on a package to do infill housing in three neighborhoods of the city. They are talking internally to see if there is enough interest in Atlantic City in working with the NJHMFA hospital program to bring supportive housing to the city.
- j) Reverend Hargrove, President, Fellowship of Churches, talked about cancer support for families in Atlantic City. The organization established a mentoring program called Saving Our Sons for approx. 20 boys at risk at Atlantic City High School. Nearly 50 percent of boys are not on track to graduate from high school. Also, they are looking to develop 60 affordable homes in the north side of the city.
- k) Atlantic City Housing Authority said it will focus on more mixed-income properties in city and the redevelopment of Stanley Homes Village.
- l) 600 NoBe apartment community ended the year strong and will continue to aggressively market next year.
- m) Carol Ruffo reported the new Historical Preservation Commission in Atlantic City is going out to do surveys of properties to see what can be put on the National and State historic registers.
- n) Bert Lopez, president of the Hispanic Association of Atlantic County, wants to do another Latino Town Hall in 2020, as well as the Latino Festival again.
- o) DCA Deputy Commissioner Rob Long said momentum is in the city's favor. He asked everyone to maintain enthusiastic participation in this endeavor and said the city and state will continue to manage city finances as much as possible. He said the outlook on city finances looks positive for 2020.