

The Board of Commissioners of the City of Camden Redevelopment Agency **held the Monthly Caucus on Wednesday, May 3, 2023** via tele-/videoconference.

Vice-Chairperson Maria Sharma called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Board Clerk Donna Arthur-Pettigrew called roll.

Present: Maria Sharma, Derek Davis, Christopher Collins, Gilbert Harden Sr., and Tasha Gainey-Humphrey

Absent: Ian Leonard

Attendees: Olivette Simpson, Mark Asselta, Donna Arthur-Pettigrew, Sulena Robinson-Rivera, and Robert Quevedo-Rodriguez, CRA, Jack Layne, DCA, Melody Johnson-Williams, Executive Director, Chuck Valentine, Director of Modernization and Development, Housing Authority City of Camden (HACC), Johnathan Compton, Executive Director, Portia Simmons, Board Chair, Cheryl Heatwave-Shank, Christoff Lindsey, Center for Environmental Transformation, (CFET) and Councilperson Shaneka Boucher Camden City Ward 1

Ms. Donna Arthur-Pettigrew advised the Board that, pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, notice(s) had been posted in the Courier-Post, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Office of the City Clerk.

Review of Minutes

Date of Meeting: April 5 and 12, 2023

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Ms. Sharma verified that everyone had a chance to review the Minutes and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Interim Executive Director's Report

Date of Meeting: May 3, 2023

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Ms. Simpson informed the board of two presentations for the Meeting. First, Melody Johnson-Williams, Executive Director, and Chuck Valentine, Director of Modernization and Development, for the Housing Authority City of Camden (HACC), addressing Resolution 05-10-23D. Resolution 05-10-23D is to authorize a Shared Services Agreement with the City of Camden so that the CRA, acting as the City's agent, would acquire by eminent domain seven privately-owned vacant and underutilized sites for a Phase IV housing development. The property would be acquired, pursuant to the City's statutory power under the Fair Housing Act and in furtherance of the redevelopment of the Ablett Village /CNI Grant.

And, secondly, Jonathan Compton, Executive Director of Center for Environmental Transformation, (CFET), will speak to Resolution 05-10-23E. Resolution 05-10-23E, CRA seeks authorization to convey CRA-owned property to CFET for an industrious community garden and environmental program. The CRA owned parcel is located on both sides by property owned by CFET. CFET years ago leased the property from CRA; and has since continued to use the site as part of a community garden.

Redevelopment Project Presentations

Ms. Simpson introduced Melody Johnson-Williams, Executive Director, and Chuck Valentine, Director of Modernization and Development, Housing Authority City of Camden (HACC). Ms. Johnson-Williams thanked the CRA Board of Commissioners for all of their support of the Ablett Village/Cramer Hill Transformation Plan, she asked Mr. Valentine to continue with an update to the board. Mr. Valentine discussed the need for sites suitable for acquisition and construction of 73 additional housing units. Mr. Valentine stated Phase I Off Site Family and II Senior housing projects are nearly complete. A Phase III will be constructed on the current Ablett Village site, providing for the demolition of 306-units and replacement of new 202-units on site. A total of 223 new units are called for in the off-site build-out. And, a total of 425-units overall. The sites selected for the Phase IV project are located (Site #1) across the street from Ablett Village and down from Mastery School, (Site #2) next to the Kroc Center, and (Site #3) along Harrison Avenue nearby the almost completed Senior development.

Mr. Valentine thanked the CRA and its Board of Commissioners for their continued assistance in acquiring land for CNI developments and adding to the City's affordable housing inventory. His remarks included thoughts on the transformational change that is taking place in the neighborhood with over \$500 million in leveraged development.

Ms. Simpson stated spoke to the need for the shared services agreement

Ms. Simpson asked Ms. Robinson-Rivera to introduce Mr. Johnathan Compton from CFET. Ms. Robinson Rivera stated she has been working with CFET for a little over a year regarding a property that is owned by CRA and is an active garden run by CFET. Mr. Johnathan Compton, Executive Director, Portia Simmons, Board Chair and resident, Cheryl Heatwave-Shank, Christoff Lindsey and Councilperson Shaneka Boucher spoke to the community garden as an iconic environmental initiative.

Mr. Compton gave a brief presentation on the property use in the Waterfront South neighborhood. CFET works with several groups and hires teenagers between 14- 17 years old to work in the garden. A wide variety of produce is grown annually, and once a week farm stands are stocked throughout the growing season. The garden serves as a classroom for the children, exposing them to a natural environment and growing of food. CFET also provides seedlings to others in the community for their gardens. CFET sells honey from beehives in the garden and hot sauce produced in support of the program. Over 2000 pounds of produce is grown, 66 farm stands are supported, and over 200 volunteers are involved in the program. About \$66,000.00 is generated annually to offset the estimated \$18,000.00 in costs necessary to maintain the garden. Mr. Compton reiterated the how significant and vital the community garden is to programming initiatives for youth in Waterfront South. CFET is excited to purchase the property and remain a steward of the garden.

Resolutions for Review and Action (cont'd)

05-10-23E Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with Center for Environmental Transformation, an Environmental Justice & Urban Farming Non Profit, for the Sale of Certain Property Designated as Block 480, Lot 38 of the City of Camden Tax Map and Located in the Waterfront South Neighborhood

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Councilperson Boucher spoke to thank the CRA Director Simpson for her support and Ms. Robinson-Rivera for her guidance in helping CFET throughout the acquisition process. She reiterated remarks of the other speakers as to the good deeds of CFET and its work in the Waterfront South community; including the educational opportunities for youth, summer jobs, as well as, a stalwart stakeholder in the neighborhood. She also thanked the CRA for acting on CFET's proposal and being a great partner for the Waterfront South Neighborhood the neighborhood plan approved by the City. Ms. Simpson recognized Ms. Robinson-Rivera for all of her hard work.

05-10-23F Resolution Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with Brownfields Redevelopment Solutions, Inc. to Provide Environmental Management Services on an Hourly Rate Basis for a Total Amount Not to Exceed \$250,000.00

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Ms. Simpson remarked CRA advertises for Environmental Management Services twice a year due to the increased volume of ongoing brownfield projects. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for services including; contractor supervision, review of technical documents, preparation of grant applications, grant reporting and compliance and land use redevelopment planning for the city's brownfield sites. These services are covered by shared services agreements with the City, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Hazardous Site Discharge Remediation Fund (HDSRF) brownfield grants. The resolution is a placeholder for the RFP that is due May 5, 2023. The content will be given at the Regular Meeting.

05-10-23G Resolution Authorizing a Pre-Qualified List of Appraisal Companies for the Camden Redevelopment Agency for a Period of One-Year

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Ms. Simpson informed the Commissioners this resolution would authorize a pre-qualified list of appraisers be established and will be in place for the period of one year. Qualifying proposals are due May 8 and this resolution is a placeholder and the contents will be provided at the Regular Meeting.

05-10-23H Resolution Authorizing a Pre-Qualified List of Title Companies for the Camden Redevelopment Agency for a Period of One-Year

Motion: Ayes:

Nays: Abstentions:

Comments: Ms. Simpson informed the Commissioners this resolution would authorize a pre-qualified list of appraisers be established and will be in place for the period of one year. Qualifying proposals are due May 8 and this resolution is a placeholder and the contents will be provided at the Regular Meeting.

Public Comments

None.

Old Business

Action has not been taken regarding Resolutions 03-09-22 E & F.

New Business

None.

Executive Session

None.

Chairperson's Remarks and Observations

None.

Adjournment

Commissioner Collins made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Ramos and affirmed with a Roll Call vote by all Commissioners. This meeting ended at approximately 6:45 PM.