

**CAPITAL CITY REDEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

*This Meeting was held in-person and via Microsoft Teams.*

**October 17, 2023 @ 11:00 AM**

**MEETING MINUTES:**

***Members of the Board Present, in person or via conference call:***

Jo-Ann Povia, Chair, Designee for State Treasurer Elizabeth Muoio  
Elvin Montero, Vice Chairman  
Anthony Cimino  
Gina Fischetti, representing the Department of Community Affairs  
Jeffrey Laurenti, Board Secretary  
Rosa Rosado  
George Sowa  
Willard Stanback, Board Treasurer  
Susan Weber, representing DOT Commissioner Diane Gutierrez – Scaccetti

***Members of the Board Absent:***

The Honorable Reed Gusciora, Mayor, City of Trenton

***Others Present:***

Jamera Sirmans, Associate Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit  
Office of the Attorney General: Matthew Reagan, DAG  
Office of the Attorney General: Meredith Friedman, DAG  
Tom Solecki, Treasury Administration  
Danielle Esser, Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives, EDA  
Hector Serrano, Governance Officer, EDA

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Povia called the meeting to order at 11:09 am with a quorum of the Board members present. Ms. Esser read the Open Public Meetings announcement and performed the roll call of the Board.

The Chair requested a moment of silence for all those suffering in the Middle East and in conflicts elsewhere in the world.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

The Board was presented with minutes from the Board of Directors meeting from September 19, 2023.

A motion to approve the September 19, 2023, minutes, was made by Mr. Cimino, seconded by Mr. Sowa, and approved by the Board in a vote of 8-0-0.

Mr. Laurenti thanked Ms. Sanders for her efforts and great attention to detail when drafting the September Board Meeting minutes, which captured all of the issues raised by members of the board and of the public in response to guest presenter Stephanie Fortunato's presentation.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

Chair Povia advised that there will be a presentation from the NJEDA Real Estate group scheduled for next month's Board meeting. Additionally, Chair Povia thanked Ms. Fischetti for her involvement on the preparation of a map of the CCRC overlaid with TDA and will provide comments after reviewing.

Mr. Montero joined the meeting at this time.

### **PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Mr. Thomas Solecki, Department of the Treasury, summarized the CCRC Financial Report as of September 30, 2023. He reported that there is \$16,468 in the state account, \$16,009 in the PNC operating account, \$468,850 in the PNC Tax Building Account, and a FY24 Appropriation of \$1,500,000, for total resources of \$2,001,507 in the operating accounts. The CCRC budget anticipates \$12,000 in administrative expenses (insurance and audit), leaving \$1,989,507 unencumbered in the Operating Accounts.

Mr. Solecki said there was, including interest, \$4,660,715 in the restricted PNC Taxation Building Account for the Old Taxation building, and that with authorized expenses of \$865,085 (for removal of the walkway connection to the nearby office building and for the reuse study), this account currently has an unencumbered balance of \$3,795,630. Regarding the walkway expense, Mr. Solecki advised that all the invoices for the removal work are now in, and CCRC is in the process of making payment to reimburse the division of property management for that cost.

Mr. Solecki stated that of the \$1,500,000 in the account for the Front Street garage, the grant to the Trenton Parking Authority approved this spring of \$156,000 would leave a balance of approximately \$1,344,000.

Mr. Solecki concluded that the CCRC's total resources were \$8,162,042, from which authorized expenditures of \$1,033,085 will leave a projected surplus of \$7,128,957.

### **THEMATIC PRESENTATION: NJEDA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS SERVICES PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES:**

This presentation was opened by Ms. Diana Rogers, Senior Community Developer Officer, NJEDA, introducing some of the programs and products that NJEDA has available across the state that can assist businesses, developers, and individuals in the CCRC district and the city of Trenton.

Ms. Rogers noted that her Portfolio specifically includes the cities of Trenton, Atlantic City, and Paterson, the three cities designated under the Economic Recovery Act of 2020 as "government restricted municipalities" (GRMs), selected based on need. The Governor and the Legislature determined that NJEDA should ensure that these three cities had maximum opportunity to take advantage of the resources available through the ERA, with the Authority dedicating a staffer to assist and be a liaison between NJEDA and the municipalities. Ms. Rogers serves as that liaison with the city of Trenton.

She highlighted the benefits of as a result of the designation of Trenton as a GRM, which includes the following:

- Projects located in a GRM automatically qualify for higher incentive awards.
- Reduced project costs threshold and net benefit requirements.
- Higher award calculations – the total tax credit award not to exceed 80% of total project costs, where it is 50% for projects in other areas of the State.
- Expanded transit-oriented bonus.
- Reduced job creation thresholds for a GRM to make it easier for applicants to qualify.
- An applicant in a GRM is eligible for the highest tier of base tax credit award (\$8,000 per job).

The next topic was presented by Mr. Jason Miller, Senior Planner, NJEDA, regarding the Asset Activation Planning Grant. This program, launched as a pilot program in 2022 and renewed in April 2023, is currently accepting a second round of applications that are due by November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Mr. Miller explained that the program provides grant funding to activate "distressed public assets," and it is open to municipal and county governments and to municipal, county, and State authorities and boards. It targets deficient, under-utilized, or vacant land, buildings, or infrastructure and focuses on improvement of distressed public assets to benefit the community and its regional economy.

Mr. Stanback asked if anybody inside the CCRC district besides the Trenton Parking Authority (TPA) has yet applied for this particular grant. Mr. Miller responded that TPA has been the only applicant in the CCRC district. Chair Povia asked if there have been joint applications that include several partners, such the County and City, and whether there might be any other interesting way for an applicant to come forward to address a distressed public asset from which CCRC could learn. In a similar vein, Mr. Laurenti asked whether a nonprofit could apply to rescue and adapt a historic asset like a revolutionary-era church, e.g., Trenton's First Presbyterian Church as an example.

Mr. Miller replied that eligible sponsors could include nonprofits, and eligible sites could expand to include lands adjacent to the distressed asset. He added that the program also helps with capacity building, so that municipalities with limited planning staff or other entities that don't have the capacity to manage such projects could have a strategic partner that applies with them to do the application and manage all the grant follow through and the project itself.

Following Mr. Miller's presentation, Ms. Kathy Guzman, Sr. Small Business Liaison, NJEDA, provided a presentation about programs under the Main Street Recovery Program, which was designed to provide financial support in the wake of COVID-19. It has extended \$124 million in approvals to date, and the Legislature this year allocated additional funding of \$50 million in the 2024 budget. Ms. Guzman provided details regarding improvement grants and small business lease grants, which have averaged \$25,000. The latter provides grant funding to offset a portion of lease payments for businesses leasing new or additional space. These opportunities, Ms. Guzman acknowledged, are available statewide and are not restricted to distressed municipalities.

Mr. Cimino posed a question about eligibility requirements -- specifically, if cannabis businesses are eligible for this program. Ms. Guzman replied that businesses in this category are not eligible.

Mr. Stanback sought more detail about the eligibility restriction to the ground floor. Ms. Guzman answered that this requirement arose since there is a large number of street-facing vacancies on ground floors as a result of COVID-19, and the EDA wants to fill these spaces.

She went on to describe EDA's Small Business Improvement Grants (reimbursing business owners for costs of interior and exterior building improvements as well as furniture, fixtures, etc.) and its Small Business E-Commerce Support Program (providing free e-commerce and digital marketing consulting services to small businesses in the restaurant, retail and personal care industries).

Chair Povia asked what consideration may be given to group applications, such as from a restaurant row or restaurant district. Ms. Christina Fuentes, VP Community/Business Development, EDA, replied that these programs were created through the Economic Recovery Act's Main Street Recovery Finance Program, and that EDA cannot itself change requirements set by the legislation. Ms. Fuentes proceeded to provide details about the Main Street Lenders Grant program and highlighted a list of partners.

Next, Mr. Warren Birchmore, Senior Business Development Officer, EDA, spoke about loan programs offered by the EDA, which include:

- Small Business Fund, which offers financing up to \$500,000 for businesses with revenue up to \$3 million that have been in operation for at least one full year;
- Direct Loans, which offer financing up to \$2 million for fixed assets for businesses that have been in operation for at least two full years with two full years of tax returns; and
- Premier Lender Program, similar to the Direct Loan Program but with loan participation with one of their "premier" lender banks (EDA currently partners with 25 banks).

Ms. Fuentes shared statistics on small business assistance within the Capital City District: 5 businesses (out of 66 total in the City of Trenton) have been approved for the Micro Business Loans and the Small Business Improvement Grants, out of a total of 26 applications (10 of the applications were withdrawn, 5 declined, and 6 are still in process).

Mr. Laurenti asked if businesses owned by minority-group individuals, such as in the growing Hispanic community in Chambersburg (outside the Capital District) have applied to these programs. Ms. Rogers replied that the New Jersey Small Business Development Centers (NJSBDC) has a very strong relationship with the Latino community in the Chambersburg area, along with the Latino Merchant Association of NJ; she added that these associations are very familiar with the products and resources that are offered by the EDA. Ms. Rogers added that at the State level, EDA is in partnership with the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ (SHCCNJ).

### **City of Trenton Update:**

Mr. Jim Beach, chief of staff to Mayor Gusciora, stated that the City of Trenton continues to make progress on the redevelopment front. In the last two months, the City has approved 5 redevelopers that are addressing over 30 properties. Most of these are, he acknowledged, outside the Capital City district, with perhaps the most notable project being rehabilitation of 19<sup>th</sup> century mayor Magowan's mansion on North Clinton Avenue (at Monmouth Street).

Additionally, Mr. Beach mentioned that the City of Trenton is partnering with NJEDA on the Novella Center for Entrepreneurship, toward which NJEDA is contributing \$7.5 million and the city of Trenton \$1 million (from its American Rescue Plan allotment). Mr. Beach provided a background of this project and expressed the idea of locating the Novella Center for New Jersey in the City of Trenton.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Taxation Building Update:**

Julie Krause, Senior Advisor- Special Projects, Treasury

Ms. Krause reported that the EDA and Treasury staff have been meeting with the designated consultant team regarding the reuse study of the former taxation building. Ms. Krause informed the board that the consultants were concluding most of the work related to the engineering structural evaluation of the building and had determined that, from an engineering building perspective, it has a good potential for conversion to residential.

Ms. Krause added that final presentation will be given to the Board at its meeting in December or January.

#### **Front Street Garage Update:**

Mr. Stanback stated that he and Mr. Laurenti had attended a community engagement activity regarding the future of the Front Street garage site that New Jersey Futures organized in September. He invited Ms. Anne LaBate, Chairperson of the Trenton Parking Authority (TPA), who was in the board room, to provide an update.

Ms. LaBate stated that TPA did complete the civic engagement process, and expected to have their report shortly. The parking authority would want to incorporate that public input into its RFEI and is hopeful to find developers that share the vision of the community. She added that the authority would like to have consultants go in and do the asbestos testing and possibly abatement, if necessary.

Mr. Stanback added that CCRC is going to have to do a much deeper dive with respect to what CCRC is bringing to the table, what it can fund, what it can reimburse, and what it cannot.

### **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:**

#### **CCRC Strategic Planning – Budget/Programs – Skip Cimino, Chair**

Chair Povia provided a brief update on this Committee since Mr. Cimino had to leave the meeting at the time of this presentation. Chair Povia mentioned that in December there will be substantive discussion on how to use newly appropriated CCRC funds.

#### **CCRC Strategic Planning – Partnership/Collaboration – George Sowa, Chair**

Mr. Sowa reported that there was discussion on how CCRC can get the word out and bring in specific partners for the collaboration to better understand some of the initiatives and programs that CCRC plans on doing.

### **Rt. 29 Application Status**

Ms. Krause advised that Mercer County released an RFP to hire the consulting firm that closes at the end of October. It will then go through a selection process, contract negotiation, and all the necessary administrative work; Ms. Krause stated that this process just has to continue to play out through the end of the year.

Ms. Krause introduced Ms. Elena Saucedo-Peeples, Ph.D. candidate and an intern for the Office of the State Treasurer, who is doing historical research on the Bloomsbury neighborhood, as it existed before urban renewal clearance replaced it with the surface parking lots and Route 29 of the past half-century.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:**

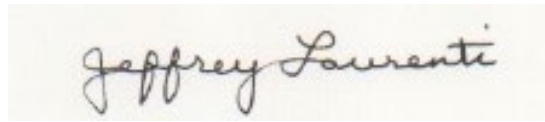
There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was approved on a motion by Mr. Sowa, seconded by Mr. Laurenti, and approved by a unanimous vote at 1:00 pm.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**

The next meeting date for the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation is scheduled for Tuesday, November 21, 2023, at 11:00 AM.

**CERTIFICATION:**

The foregoing and attachments represent a true and complete summary of the actions taken by the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation Board of Directors at its Board Meeting on October 17, 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeffrey Laurenti". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

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Jeffrey Laurenti, Secretary