

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

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

December 17, 2024 @ 10:00 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
Susan Weber, representing DOT Acting Commissioner Francis K. O'Connor
Gina Fischetti, representing DCA Commissioner Jacquelyn Suarez
Jeffrey Laurenti, Board Secretary
Willard Stanback, Board Treasurer
Anthony Cimino
Rosa Rosado
June Dowell-Burton
George Sowa

Members of the Board Absent:

The Honorable Reed Gusciora, Mayor, City of Trenton

Others Present:

Jamera Sirmans, Senior Counsel, Governor's Authorities Unit
Meredith Friedman, Counsel, Attorney General's Office
Julie Krause, Office of the State Treasurer
Tom Solecki, Office of the State Treasurer
Elena Saucedo Peeples, Student Intern, Office of the State Treasurer
Robert Tessier, Department of Community Affairs
Nat Bottigheimer, Director, Real Estate Special Projects/Planning, EDA
Diana Rogers, Sr. Community Development Officer, EDA
Danielle Esser, Director, Governance & Strategic Initiatives, EDA
Hector Serrano, Sr. Governance Officer, EDA
Fabiola Saturne, Project Officer, EDA
Muneerah Sanders, Board Liaison, EDA

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Povia called the meeting to order at 10:00 am with a quorum of the Board members present.

READING OF PUBLIC NOTICE:

Ms. Sanders read the Open Public Meetings announcement and performed the roll call of the Board.

Ms. Saturne read the process for public comment.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:

The Board was presented with minutes from the Board of Directors meeting from November 26, 2024. Mr. Laurenti (Secretary) expressed appreciation to Fabiola Saturne, whose first time it was distilling board discussion into an initial draft for him.

A motion to approve the November 26, 2024 minutes was made by Mr. Cimino, seconded by Mr. Montero, and approved by nine (9) members, with Mr. Sowa abstaining because he had been absent for much of the meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT:

Ms. Povia stated that she did not have much to report for today's meeting and would accommodate the Committee reports as part of her report. She noted that Patriots Week was imminent and linked it to the Board's ongoing discussion of heritage tourism as a contributor to economic development in the Capital District. She exhorted CCRC members to attend Patriots Week events.

Referencing the Strategic Planning Committee, Ms. Povia stated that Treasury is bringing a part-time individual on board, and that a large portion of this individual's time will be allocated to the CCRC board; she suggested a Memorandum of Understanding agreement could be presented to the board at its next meeting to accept Treasury's offer of this person to be the managing director for the CCRC. Ms. Povia turned to Mr. Cimino for additional comment.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:

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

Mr. Cimino noted the ongoing review of the proposal that was received on the RFP by the evaluation committee. He was present earlier in the morning for an announcement by the county executive and thought it was fascinating that Mercer County is establishing an office of travel and tourism that will complement and coordinate with the CCRC's initiative.

CCRC Front Street Garage Committee – Willard Stanback, Chair

Ms. Povia stated that Treasury did receive comments from the Parking Authority on an MOU. Though neither Ms. Krause nor Ms. Povia had yet had a chance to review them in depth, at first glance they seemed positive. They will discuss them in more depth in January at the committee meetings.

Mr. Stanback stated he did not have more to add, but was pleased we have gotten some feedback from TPA. As soon as we can get this committee meeting scheduled, he added, the better.

Concluding the Chair's report at this last meeting of the year, Ms. Povia thanked board members for their work and commitment to the board, which she said has gone from something that was a little bit sleepy and has been injected with enthusiasm, energy, and some resources.

APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER TO EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Danielle Esser, Director, NJEDA presented the next item. The Members were asked to affirm the appointment of June Dowell-Burton to the CCRC's three-member Evaluation Committee, which evaluates the RFP for the audit but does not replace the audit committee. Its other two members are

the Treasurer and the Transportation Commissioner or their designees. Chair Povia has asked Ms. Dowell-Burton to serve as the third member, and she has accepted.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Mr. Montero, SECOND: Mr. Cimino. AYES: 8
RESOLUTION ATTACHED AND MARKED EXHIBIT: 1**

Ms. Dowell-Burton abstained from the vote since it pertained to a position for which she was being nominated. Mr. Laurenti had a frozen screen and did not vote.

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Solecki, Department of the Treasury, reported that not much has changed financially since November's meeting. He stated that there was approximately \$3.5 million in the operating account. The Taxation Building account has about \$3.9 million and the Front Street Garage account has \$1.5 million. He stated that the two redevelopment accounts created earlier this year with PNC bank for the EO40 Transit Center and the Willow Street/Canal Banks parking areas remain with \$2.1 million and \$1.6 million in resources respectively. Counting the various restricted resources, the CCRC has approximately \$12.8 million in total resources.

**PRESENTATION: BLOOMSBURY: A SNAPSHOT OF A MID-CENTURY
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Ms. Krause noted the importance, both in CCRC's work program and in other forums, of development issues in the urban core area along the river now occupied by Route 29 and large State office buildings and parking lots. This had been the Bloomsbury neighborhood, till it was cleared by urban renewal. She introduced Elena Saucedo Peeples, who has been with the Treasury for two years doing intensive research on the Bloomsbury neighborhood before its demolition. The report that she would make to the Board, Ms. Krause added, is just a preview snippet of a report that will eventually be published in an interactive Arcgis story app.

Ms. Saucedo Peeples introduced herself as both Treasury's research intern and a doctoral candidate in the joint programs in Anthropology at Columbia University's Teachers College. Prior to that, she had worked in Trenton at the East Trenton Collaborative, which is a neighborhood-based redevelopment initiative through the neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit program.

The Bloomsbury neighborhood was historically part of downtown Trenton until it was demolished in the early 1960s as part of urban revival. The study Ms. Saucedo Peeples conducted asks, "how did people use the Bloomsbury neighborhood prior to its demolition?" The study looks at the range and number of businesses and organizations in operation in the neighborhood in the late 1950s to give a sense of the people, place, and activity happening in the neighborhood at the time. Study findings show that Bloomsbury not only served the local residents but maintained regional impact and it offered opportunities for entrepreneurship and for employment. It also served as a place for social connection, for diverse communities existing alongside one another.

The Bloomsbury neighborhood was an area of some hundred acres located southeast of the State House along the river -- defined for this study as bounded by the Delaware River on the West, the Assunpink Creek on the North, South Broad Street to the east, and the Northeast Corridor rail line to the south. This area now contains several State and county offices and facilities, including the justice complex, the historic Trent House mansion and its surrounding grounds, and that those office facilities' adjacent parking lots.

Bloomsbury was a very different place in 1959 – a dense neighborhood of homes, businesses, and houses of worship. In the 1950s and ‘60s, the City of Trenton planned a series of redevelopment activities through the federal government's urban renewal program. This included the John Fitch Way Urban Renewal area, which eventually came to encompass the Bloomsbury neighborhood. The City began acquiring properties in May of 1960 and began demolishing them in January of 1961. Ms. Sauceda Peeples stated that City officials envisioned newly constructed residential, commercial, and office buildings that would promote economic growth in the City. As the “renewal” project progressed through the 1960s, also it became intertwined with discussions and work related to the construction of the Route 29 expressway along the Delaware River.

Ms. Sauceda Peeples stated that to construct a snapshot of the neighborhood prior to its demolition, she reviewed archival materials from the late 1950s through the 1960s. The materials were accessed from Trentoniana, Trenton Times Historical Archive through the New Jersey State Library, and other publicly available collections at the State archives. The study found approximately 335 businesses and 28 institutional organizations, for a total of 363 sites located throughout the neighborhood. The two largest business categories were food and hospitality and general retail and services. Ms. Sauceda Peeples gave an example of the information available for the historical materials, citing Joe's Market at 608 South Warren, which offered Puerto Rican and Southern foods, as one of several shops focused on providing cultural foods to area residents.

Ms. Sauceda Peeples also mentioned that the Bloomsbury neighborhood was also home to vibrant and diverse religious communities. Jewish services were offered at two locations in the neighborhood, including Congregation People of Truth. There were also a number of Christian services of various denominations at several locations across the neighborhood. Other examples were provided that showcase the neighborhood's diversity as well as its regional impact, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities.

Ms. Povia asked for Ms. Sauceda Peeples to describe the changes that impacted the “good intention” to “revitalize” the area; asked whether the neighborhood at that time had access to the river; and inquired as to what became of the people and businesses displaced by the “renewal.”

Ms. Sauceda Peeples replied that the Post-War period brought lots of change: new home ownership opportunities becoming available, at least to certain demographic subsets, as well as international and domestic migration that meant lots of population change in the City of Trenton. City leaders' intention was to respond to these changes. She was less sure about the ease of access to the riverfront across the road, John Fitch Way, which was a surface road so presumably people could walk but it's unclear if there was official rules about access, but she noted that Arthur Holland had run for city office insisting that this renewal project not repeat the many things that had gone wrong in the Coalport renewal. As for what happened to the people and businesses that were displaced by demolition, Ms. Sauceda Peeples stated that some businesses and people relocated to other parts of the City, but there was “white flight” and lots of suburbanization happening in those years, so depending on one's economic situation and access to resources, many impacted businesses and people may have ended up in the suburbs, or closed altogether.

Noting that this study reflects some 70 years back, Mr. Cimino asked whether Ms. Sauceda Peeples has done any envisioning of what the future might hold, or should be, for this neighborhood? Ms. Sauceda Peeples answered that future possibilities are outside the scope of this study, but she hopes that other great folks working on the future can draw on this look at its past. Mr. Cimino followed up asking whether the tools are in place for the City now to work collaboratively with the State government, the way other collaborations have helped revitalize New Brunswick, Elizabeth, Jersey

City, and New York. Wearing her “historian’s hat,” she replied that urban renewal did not have the tools to do that.

Mr. Stanback followed up on Chair Povia’s question, asking whether any of the businesses that relocated because of the demolition still existed over the next five years. In addition, he wondered whether there were other neighborhoods in Trenton of roughly comparable character in the 1950s that did not undergo such “renewal”: could they show us what the Bloomsbury neighborhood could have been today if it had simply continued?

Ms. Sauceda Peeples answered that her study had not tracked the survival rate of businesses that had to move from the Bloomsbury neighborhood; anecdotally she had heard of some that are still around six decades later, such as Ben’s Lunch in Morrisville, PA.

Mr. Laurenti asked Ms. Sauceda Peeples what one sees in the Census data for the Bloomsbury census tract from 1940 to 1950 onward by way of demographic changes in race, ethnicity, and relative income, that would have drawn the attention of urban “renewalists” to make this neighborhood a prime candidate for razing. Secondly, what may have been the role of the State in pushing to clear this area for its own space needs, once Governor Meyner abandoned his proposal to scatter State offices in the suburbs and agreed to keep them in the city?

Ms. Sauceda Peeples replied that working with the census data is challenging because the neighborhood was in a much larger census tract than just Bloomsbury and straddled another. What the study reveals in the tax photos is that the neighborhood was perhaps diverse in a way that other neighborhoods in the city were not, and that may have played into the decision-making. As for the State’s role, after Meyner announced in 1955 that the State government would stay in Trenton, the fact that Bloomsbury was adjacent to existing State buildings was surely part of the decision-making for the area’s redevelopment.

Ms. Fischetti followed up on the question of demographics, focusing on what types of housing was available in the neighborhood. The study seems to have focused on businesses, but a vibrant commercial district depends on the people living next to it.

Ms. Sauceda Peeples said in the larger census tract, the ratio of renter-occupied units to owner-occupied units was about 53% to 47%. She acknowledged that many of the storefront properties recorded as commercial also had residential apartments on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Ms. Dowell-Burton inquired if the study included an oral history component. Ms. Sauceda Peeples answered it did not and acknowledged Treasury staff has discussed that and that it would be a very important addition to the project.

CITY OF TRENTON UPDATE:

There was no City of Trenton Update as the Mayor was not present for the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

FORMER TAXATION BUILDING UPDATE:

Nat Bottigheimer addressed the Board on this matter, stating that while the CCRC did receive one response to the RFP – a credible proposal from an experienced developer who had done this kind of work before -- after review and consultation with the Office of the Attorney-General, it was determined to be non-responsive to the overall solicitation. We have communicated this to the

applicant, and at this point the application process is closed. We need to revisit next steps and how to handle that building.

Ms. Povia added that Treasury is reflecting on what has transpired with its own office needs over the last couple years, what it might do with that building, and what the resources are for what the administration feels is a possible path forward. Over the past five years, she added, CCRC has issued two RFPs, neither of which produced a private developer.

RT. 29 BOULEVARD UPDATE

Ms. Krause stated that there was a local-officials briefing on the project, which is a standard step in the local concept development study. This briefing was held by the county executive and there were members of the County, DEP, DOT, and Treasury present as well. Ms. Krause also stated that she plans to work with the county to get a presentation to the CCRC Board on where they are in the process, but that would not be any sooner than Spring of 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Esser read the open public comment policy.
There were no comments at this time.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

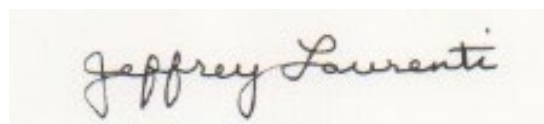
There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Cimino, seconded by Mr. Stanback, and approved by unanimous vote at 11:14AM.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting date for the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025 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 December 17, 2024.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jeffrey Laurenti", is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Jeffrey Laurenti, Secretary
Capital City Redevelopment Corporation