

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Zoom Conference Call

1) REMARKS FROM DCA CHIEF OF STAFF AND ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER KIM HOLMES ON BEHALF OF LT. GOVERNOR SHEILA OLIVER

- a) Opened with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”
- b) Said this can be applied to current COVID-19 pandemic situation in Atlantic City because all the residents, property owners, businesses, casinos, educational and healthcare institutions, local government, and state partners of this iconic city are inter-related.
- c) To make a comeback, it must be done together.
- d) With this understanding of the inescapable network and inter-relatedness, the Murphy Administration has been providing help for months to small businesses and microbusinesses in the state.
- e) Latest example is the \$5 million expansion of the Small Business Lease Emergency Assistance Grant program, which is run by the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, which is affiliated with DCA.
 - i. Provides grants up to \$10,000 for commercial rent relief for COVID-impacted small businesses and nonprofit groups located in NJRA’s 66 designated communities of which Atlantic City is one.
 - ii. Targeted to businesses with 5,000 square feet of leased space or less.
 - iii. Applications can be found online, and funds are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - iv. The application opens on Monday, February 22nd at 9:00 a.m. and will remain open until the funds are exhausted.
 - v. Spread the word to small businesses and nonprofits in the community about this program. \$10,000 means a lot to our smaller establishments that are trying to keep their doors open during the pandemic.
- f) Businesses of all sizes are being helped by the fact that Governor Murphy signed an executive order earlier this month that increases indoor capacity limits from 25 percent to 35 percent for food and beverage establishments and entertainment and recreational businesses.
- g) Executive order lifts the 10 p.m. curfew that was in place for in-person indoor restaurant service and for casino floor beverage service, which is key for casinos and restaurants in Atlantic City. Pleased that we’re stopping the spread of COVID-19 enough to be able to ease some limits and trust that casinos – even with the lifting of some restrictions – will continue to operate in a safe and responsible manner for their customers and employees.
- h) Noted that Trump Plaza will be imploded tomorrow after years of vacancy, falling debris, and safety hazards. The conversation about the future of this site will begin with Mr. Icahn

since it is his property. Once the conversation starts, the State fully intends to participate to find ways to best utilize this center city, oceanfront location.

- i) Noted First Lady Tammy Murphy's Nurture NJ initiative, which aims to make New Jersey the safest and most equitable place in the nation to deliver and raise a baby. Their latest initiative is the Nurture NJ Maternal and Infant Health Strategic Plan, which includes over 70 specific, actionable recommendations for maternal health stakeholders across all sectors.
- j) Truly a crisis when Black women are experiencing rates of mortality that are 7 times that of their white counterparts. And Black babies are dying at 3 times the rate of white babies.
- k) Mentioned a 2018 Rutgers study that found children in Atlantic City are more than 3 times as likely as other New Jersey children to die before the age of 1. And Black infants in the city are nearly 2 times as likely as white infants in the city to die before the age of 1.
- l) The City's health department considers maternal and infant health a top issue to address and that it seeks to identify key contributors of the city's high infant mortality rate so that preventative measures can be implemented. It can use the Nurture NJ Strategic Plan, which takes a scientific approach to the problem, as a resource.
- m) DCA was an active partner in developing this plan and will continue to be a partner, especially in making sure that families can live in safe and stable housing with the services they need.

2) REMARKS FROM JACQUELYN SUAREZ, DIRECTOR, DCA'S DIVISION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- a) Said she attended the State of City address given by Mayor Small on February 11 and looks forward to having a strong partnership with the City.
- b) Talked about her career, how it started with DCA and then continued at the Governor's Office where she served on the Governor's Counsel. Working in the Governor's Office gave her the opportunity to partner with different state agencies and departments and see what resources they have.
- c) Said she wants to put faces with names of people in Atlantic City and get a flavor of the initiatives that are being done in the city.
- d) Said she is interested in not just stabilizing City of Atlantic City finances, but looking at a wholistic strategy of revitalization for the city. For example, she listed affordable housing as a very important issue to her.

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

- a) Restated the importance of the Atlantic City Executive Council and having meetings.
- b) Thanked everyone for continuing to attend the meetings.

4) STATE OF THE CITY: MAYOR MARTY SMALL

- a) Reminded Executive Council members that the Trump Plaza implosion is at 9 a.m. tomorrow. Can't wait to get into conversation with property owner Carl Icahn about the future of the site.

- b) Said Atlantic City is coming back for everything and more that the COVID-19 pandemic took away. Talked about importance of continuing to test for COVID to stop the virus from spreading to other people.
- c) In 2021, the big picture is attracting investment to the city.
- d) Police technology upgrades in vehicles and body cameras.
- e) New recreation department and recreational offerings for youth, as well as activities for adults and seniors.
- f) Start of One Neighborhood Evolution, which is being housed at Soldiers Home with help of OCEAN Inc.
- g) Multicultural Affairs Office to support initiatives for city's diverse population such as Latino Festival, cricket field, Vietnamese cultural center.
- h) Small Business Academy hosted by the City. Will be to promote the program, which will start on March 24.
- i) Focusing on entrepreneurship and career and job readiness, including CDL trucking school and opportunities to get real estate license.
- j) City joined the NJ FAM Fund – 40 acres and a mule fund, which is fascinating opportunity with other urban mayors to support African American and Latino businesses.
- k) Moody's and S&P gave City's credit ratings a positive outlook even in midst of COVID-19 pandemic.
- l) City is pursuing municipal tax decrease; city budget will be under \$200 million; working with legislature to bring sports betting revenue to the city.
- m) City budget is \$57 million under the spending cap. The city has significantly decreased the number of municipal employees; if the city hires, it's to fill a vacancy. There were 889 employees in 2020 down from 1,299 employees in 2010.
- n) CRDA has been a tremendous partner with the City of Atlantic City, providing \$650K for recreation program, \$1 million for demolition, and funding for mega vaccination site, Neighborhood Coordination Officers program, Class 2 police officers, and CDL trucking school.
- o) Highlighted potential housing project at Massachusetts and Rhode Island avenues. It's a project that can transform the city and city officials are going to do everything they can to make this housing development happen.
- p) Talked about engineering projects – Venice Park Bridge, finishing 2020 streets, Caspian Pointe connection, bulkheads.
- q) Investments in the city include Dougherty's Steakhouse & Raw Bar, \$400 million in capital improvements in Caesars, AtlantiCare expansion, Stockton University Phase II, Splash and Dash Carwash, HUD Envision Center, Lincoln Tech.
- r) Bader Field redevelopment, working to get a city dredging permit.
- s) Spoke with Senator Cory Booker to meet with USDOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg to talk about the Atlantic City boardwalk.
- t) Atlantic Avenue – repaved and redone – from four lanes to two lanes with bike lanes on either side and median in the middle to increase safety.
- u) Caspian Pointe – putting pressure on property owner to develop and if don't want to develop then sell it to someone who will.
- v) Buzby Village – being upgraded.

- w) Stanley Jr. Site – new public housing in the city; will include health building.
- x) ShopRite is still interested in coming to Atlantic City.
- y) MPMB – North Beach Mini Golf project.
- z) Showboat Water Park –told ground will be broken soon and that financing is in place – much needed family entertainment.
- aa) Reliance Medical – Northside Project – will include birthing center.
- bb) KY. & The Curb – talked about the project – African American museum and multimedia center.
- cc) MGM/Boraie housing development near Golden Nugget.

5) ECONOMY: ØRSTED PROJECT UPDATE

- a) Ørsted project has acquired support from PSEG.
- b) Wind project will be 15 miles off the coast of South Jersey and will power 500,000 homes.
- c) Redevelopment plan for O&M facility approved by City of Atlantic City in Bungalow area – will use this space to keep city residents engaged in the plan and project and beautify the area.
- d) \$250 million investment in Paulsboro to build the equipment for wind turbines.
- e) Will be three options for points of interconnection with mainland; only two will be selected.
- f) One of potential points is Higbee/Ontario in Atlantic City; potential interconnect points in city also include S. California Avenue, MLK Blvd, S. Rhode Island/S. Vermont avenues.
- g) Atlantic City may not be an interconnection.
- h) All the facilities and cables will be underground.
- i) Atlantic City O&M facility: Site selected near Clam Creek in Atlantic City Marina (N. New Jersey Avenue and Magellan Avenue). Seeking city approval of redevelopment plan.
- j) Necessary improvements include dredging (within marina and at Absecon Inlet), bulkhead, dockside space, office space, warehouse and workshop space. Want to start construction in 2022/2023.
- k) Ocean Wind offshore construction – hope to begin in 2024.
- l) Still in federal approval process under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); approximately two years; will be two key opportunities for public comment.
- m) Will be engagement across the spectrum of stakeholders: local community, NGOs, fishing, academic, research and development.
- n) Series of open houses started in August 2019, even had virtual open houses during pandemic.
- o) Looking for ways to educate the community, including area youth about the technology and science behind the wind turbine project, including climate change and resiliency.
- p) For example, have considered feedback; project now proposed at 15 miles offshore instead of 8 miles offshore.
- q) Pro-NJ Grantor Trust: \$15M trust to support small women-owned and minority-owned business in NJ looking to enter the offshore wind industry.
- r) Trust also supports infrastructure resiliency projects in Atlantic, Ocean and Cape May counties.

