

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, March 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) In honor of Women's History Month, recognized all the women past and present who have positively contributed to the Atlantic City community. Thanked all of the women participating in today's Executive Council meeting for the work they do and the example they give to young people. Appreciate all the women who are helping with Atlantic City's overall revitalization and the city's restart and recovery from COVID-19.
- b) The Atlantic City Working Group that Governor Murphy formed last summer to focus on the city's post-COVID future resumed meeting last week after a brief hiatus. The working group's recommendations report is completed and will soon be submitted to the Governor's Office for review and consideration. The report in many ways is an extension of the Atlantic City Transition Report that was issued in 2018.
- c) While the state navigates recovery from COVID, the Murphy Administration continues to help those households most affected by the pandemic and economic crisis.
- d) Governor recently extended the state's moratorium on utility shutoffs and on evictions.
- e) Read several news stories about people being locked out of their rental units because they've not been able to keep up with their rent. Please let people know that this activity is illegal.
- f) The eviction moratorium remains in place. Lt. Governor Oliver and NJ Attorney General Grewal will be holding a virtual town hall with experts from across state government on this important topic later this month.
- g) Recognizing that New Jersey residents continue to need rental assistance during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor and Lt. Governor will announce later today that the application period for a second phase of the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program will open on March 22, 2021.
- h) The program will provide rental assistance to low- and moderate-income households that have had a substantial reduction in income because of the pandemic, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- i) Property managers or owners of a residential dwelling may also apply for assistance on behalf of a tenant.
- j) Applicants of the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program Phase II (CVERAP Phase II) may be eligible for up to 12 months of rental assistance to help pay for rent arrears incurred after March 13, 2020, and future rent to the extent that funds are available.
- k) The application period will remain open until an adequate number of applications have been received to distribute the approximately \$353 million allocated to the program.
- l) Participants will be selected from the overall pool of applicants through a randomized process based on eligibility and lottery criteria.

- m) March is also STEM Month in New Jersey.
- n) Phenomenal announcement made last Friday that Atlantic City is one of 16 cities in the country to be selected by the Mark Cuban Foundation to host an Artificial Intelligence Boot Camp for high school students.
- o) Kudos to the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office – especially Deputy Director India Still – for making this happen.
- p) The free AI Boot Camp will introduce underserved students in grades 9 through 12 in the Atlantic City area to basic artificial intelligence concepts and skills. The camp will be held over four half-days on Saturdays beginning October 23rd at South Jersey Industries’ headquarters in Atlantic City for students with an interest in technology.
- q) The Mark Cuban Foundation will provide the boot camp’s curriculum materials, train volunteers, recruit local students, and coordinate the events.
- r) Thoughtspot, a tech company based in Sunnyvale, Calif., will provide the volunteer instructors for the boot camp in Atlantic City.
- s) Students will learn what artificial intelligence is and isn't, where they already interact with AI in their own lives, the ethical implications of AI, and the AI systems behind technology like smart assistants, facial recognition, and self-driving cars. Students also will learn how to use Microsoft's cloud computing tools to build their own AI applications.
- t) We want to give Atlantic City’s youth broader opportunities to realize their full potential. The AI Boot Camp is an opportunity that can really change a young person’s life trajectory.
- u) Also want to make sure that all people – regardless of race, gender and socioeconomic status – are represented at tech companies. Opening the doors to everyone will help promote diversity and inclusion in artificial intelligence, which is especially important since this technology is increasingly affecting daily lives.
- v) In recognition of STEM Month, there are several STEM activities happening in Atlantic City.
 - i. For example, the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City is having specific activities each week this month in their STEAM Lab and Design Lab. The activities include coding, making iMovies, creating personal brand identities using Adobe Creative Cloud, and understanding type and monograms.
 - ii. Also, South Jersey Industries is hosting a moderated discussion on “Women in STEM” with topics geared toward high school students.
 - iii. And the Atlantic City branch of the NAACP is sponsoring a contest for high school students challenging them to develop a promotional video or logo artwork to promote the Blue Economy in the city.
- w) Because many of today’s higher-paying, career-oriented jobs require science, tech, engineering, and math expertise, this focus on STEM projects helps unlock the potential of Atlantic City residents and create a skilled workforce that attracts a wide array of businesses.

2) REMARKS FROM ATLANTIC CITY INITIATIVES PROJECT OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHAEL C. EPPS, ESQ., AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR INDIA STILL

- a) Mike Epps thanked India again for her work to bring the Mark Cuban Foundation AI Boot Camp to Atlantic City. The Foundation is going to select the students; 20 students will be able to do the camp

- b) India Still said the intention is to mentor the students who attend the camp. The camp is meant to garner their interest either in technology or some other STEM field. She thanked South Jersey Industries for its commitment to the AI camp; it is providing space and equipment for the camp.

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) REMARKS FROM MAYOR MARTY SMALL

- a) Since last Executive Council meeting, Trump Plaza has been imploded. Debris removal is going well.
- b) Atlantic City is part of NJ FAM Fund – 40 acres and a mule fund. 8 municipalities are participating in the initiative, which aims to support African American and Latino businesses.
- c) Sat on panel at Kean University about vaccinations in the urban community and talked about what Atlantic City is doing.
- d) Met with Atlantic County Workforce Development Board and signed off on Lincoln Tech to come into city to provide educational and workforce skills.
- e) Plans to have major meeting to address homelessness in Atlantic City; can't say much right now, but excited about the possibilities.
- f) New recreation office is up and running, as well as anti-violence program.
- g) Small Business Academy will start on March 24 with a cohort of about 100 people.
- h) Partnership with Keller Williams real estate will begin with cohort of about 15 people to get real estate license.
- i) City applying for grant with US Economic Development Administration. Grant requires 20 percent city match. Initiative will teach adults how to invest and will have summer camp teaching youth how to invest money.
- j) Regarding city finances, City administration presented the city budget to Lt. Governor Oliver on Friday. Residents of the city will be happy because will see municipal tax decrease of 5.4%.
- k) City of Atlantic City will receive \$33 million from American Rescue Package signed by President Biden. City will receive \$16.5 million this year and \$16.4 million next year.
- l) Talked about City's food distributions for residents.
- m) Lt. Governor Oliver appeared on 'In the Mixx with Mayor Marty Small Sr.' radio program last Saturday. Talked for 45 minutes.
- n) Will appear on the March 20 episode of 'Full Frontal with Samantha Bee.'
- o) Talked about MGM/Boraie housing development near Golden Nugget casino.

5) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: RICH TOLSON

- a) Tolson is director of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers of New Jersey. Also serves as vice chairman of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA).
- b) Said AtlantiCare is doing fantastic job with delivering vaccines at Atlantic City Mega Vaccination Site at Atlantic City Convention Center.
- c) Congratulates educators in state for New Jersey being ranked number one in country again for public education.
- d) Regarding building trades, said it was fortunate that Governor Murphy kept construction going throughout the pandemic.
- e) The building trades' fear going forward is if there will be work because of hesitancy of investment and future construction projects in the aftermath of the pandemic. For example, the State had intended to go out to bond for school construction projects in 2020 and that didn't happen.
- f) For future generations of building trades, the pandemic has had an effect on training and on the ability to attract people to trade schools and training centers, which are not working at their typical capacity.
- g) One of ways building trades is trying to counter the pandemic's impact is to get information about apprentice programs to high schools. They are holding informational meetings and calls in early evenings so parents can attend with their high school-age children.
- h) There is still work going on right now, but worried that projects in the future and later this year won't materialize.
- i) Majority of the building trades used to have headquarters in Atlantic City, but none are there now. At New York Avenue and Pacific Avenue, labor union will put training center in there to attract future workers. Exciting news that a training center is coming back to Atlantic City.
- j) Steve Callender, president of the Casino Association of New Jersey, mentioned that many casinos in the city are committed to doing work, much of it renovation work. He said making Atlantic City look better is in everybody's best interest.

6) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: ANDY KRICUN OF MOONSHOT MISSIONS AND KIM IRBY OF NEW JERSEY FUTURE AND JERSEY WATER WORKS

- a) Jersey Water Works is an initiative promoting water equity issues across the state. Goal is to make sure there are water workforce opportunities in disadvantaged communities, especially since much of the water workforce is older and getting close to retirement. Jersey Water Works wants to see these replacement workers to come from the communities that the water utilities serve.
- b) Want to develop a training program where Atlantic City residents, for example, can get important training to put them in a position to get these jobs at utilities. Hoping Atlantic City will be one of the featured program cities.
- c) Andy Kricun also works for a nonprofit organization called Moonshot Missions. Moonshot has gotten funding to assist Atlantic City.
- d) Kricun explained that a Community Collaborative Initiative, which comes from a NJEDA/NJDEP partnership, selected 12 cities in New Jersey to be recipients of special on the

ground assistance to transform dangerous environmental eyesores into valued community assets. Atlantic City wasn't one of the 12 cities selected.

- e) What Moonshot Missions is doing is with Dodge Foundation funding is to create a type of Community Collaborative Initiative for three cities: Atlantic City, Elizabeth, and Pleasantville.
- f) The goal is to create a road map to try and solve environmental challenges in these three cities. Then, if the work shows good results, the idea is to go back to NJDEP to make Atlantic City, Elizabeth, and Pleasantville permanent additions to the State's Community Collaborative Initiative.

7) GOOD OF THE ORDER

- a) Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office Deputy Director India Still encouraged Executive Council members to look at the second issue of the Atlantic City STEM newsletter that was issued earlier in March. She said the Project Office is working hard to get STEM embedded into the educational curriculum to create real pathways for students to STEM careers.
- b) Elizabeth Terenik of ACDEVCO and the Chelsea Economic Development Corp, said that the Chelsea EDC just got \$681,000 in funding from DCA's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) Program for the Chelsea neighborhood in the city. Chelsea EDC will use the NRTC funding for a neighborhood beautification program; grants to homebuyers to buy homes in the Chelsea neighborhood; façade grants for businesses; money for the Atlantic City chapter of the Boys and Girls Club, Our Lady Star of the Sea, and Mud Girls; and work to get homeless individuals off the streets and into stable housing.