

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Zoom Conference Call

1) REMARKS FROM LT. GOVERNOR SHEILA OLIVER

- a) Stated that every time she visits Atlantic City and Atlantic County she is reminded that different parts of the state experienced COVID-19 differently. For example, North Jersey went virtually on lockdown because of the high number of cases and hospitalizations.
- b) Response to the COVID-19 pandemic strained local government budgets and state budget.
- c) Atlantic County and Atlantic City were luckily not as hard hit by COVID-19 cases.
- d) Slowly New Jersey is regaining a sense of normalcy in the face of COVID-19.
- e) Limited indoor dining is now available as well as limited indoor capacity at movie theaters and gyms.
- f) Stated that she has dined indoors in Atlantic City and noted that people are happy to be back to work.
- g) Recognized that Atlantic County and Atlantic City have been hardest hit by the pandemic from an economic perspective.
- h) With most places reopened, taking personal responsibility needs to continue if New Jersey is to control the spread of the coronavirus. This includes young people.
- i) Personal responsibility means getting tested for COVID if you have symptoms or have come into close contact with someone who has the virus.
- j) If you test positive, it means going into quarantine and working with contact tracers to limit the spread.
- k) It also means keeping up with social distancing, wearing a face mask, washing your hands, and getting a flu shot.
- l) Now is the time to get a flu shot, which is especially important this year to help New Jersey communities avoid a “twindemic” of both the flu and the coronavirus this season.
- m) State continues to roll out programs using federal CARES Act funding.
- n) Later this week, DCA will officially announce three initiatives, including a Main Street New Jersey COVID-19 Relief Program, which aims to promote the recovery of traditional Main Streets and business districts.
- o) Talked about the Small Landlord Emergency Grant Program through the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA). There will be a second application round for the program. Encouraged people to go to the NJHMFA website for more information.
- p) Mentioned the Neighborhood Preservation Program COVID-19 Relief Program and Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit COVID-19 Relief Program, which are the other two new DCA initiatives.
- q) Said will pass along information about the new programs to the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office to provide to Executive Council members.

- r) Talked about how the City of Atlantic City received a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health to help study patterns of drug overdose deaths in Atlantic City and the larger region to better inform preventive and drug recovery initiatives.
- s) The City's health department will utilize the grant to create an Overdose Fatality Review Team that will analyze and better understand the circumstances surrounding fatal overdoses.
- t) Said the grant award is great news and will go a long way in helping local health officials in Atlantic City and Atlantic County find innovative ways to address the opioid epidemic and prevent future overdoses.
- u) Called attention to the Chelsea Economic Development Corporation's application to DCA's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program to help renew the Chelsea neighborhood and to the Atlantic City Housing Authority's application to HUD to help redevelop Stanley Holmes Village and the surrounding neighborhood.
- v) State wants to prioritize getting residents of the city and region back into the workforce.
- w) Said she is looking forward to the concrete initiatives that result from the Atlantic City Restart and Recovery Working Group and their collective efforts.

2) REMARKS FROM ATLANTIC CITY INITIATIVES PROJECT OFFICE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MIKE EPPS

- a) Thanked all Executive Council members for reaching out to him via card and call while he was out of the office. Said he appreciated all the expressions of people wishing him well and the prayers that he return to good health.
- b) Said that the Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office (ACIPO) hopes to get back to in-person events soon. For example, the Citizens Advisory Board is eager to get back to work.
- c) Encouraged people and organizations to take advantage of some of the new DCA programs that the LG mentioned.
- d) Reiterated that he is glad to be back and hopes to hit the ground running and contribute to whatever projects are going on.

3) REMARKS FROM ATLANTIC CITY INITIATIVES PROJECT OFFICE DEPUTY DIRECTOR INDIA STILL

- a) Reported that ACIPO hosted on August 26th a quarterly meeting for social services organizations. About 30 representatives attended. The main goal was to introduce the organizations to Dr. Wilson Washington, the City's health director and Dr. Kifle Mihrete, the City's health officer. At the quarterly meeting, Atlantic City Police Chief Henry White and Atlantic City Fire Chief Scott Evans talked about what they've observed as an uptick in homelessness in Atlantic City and a potential uptick this fall and winter.
- b) Said that this coming Thursday there will be a kick-off meeting for the Atlantic City cohort of the New Jersey STEM Network. Atlantic City Electric, AtlantiCare, Ørsted, South Jersey Industries, Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City, and Atlantic Cape Community College will participate in the meeting. The first thing the cohort will do is create a community assets map to identify STEM assets in Atlantic City.
- c) Joe Jingoli, co-owner of Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Atlantic City, added that he and partnering community organizations will coordinate with Atlantic City Electric and Exelon to take about 20 Atlantic City youth from the summer youth employment program where they

served as mentors and put them into a job training program for electricians, carpentry, administrative jobs, etc. He explained these young people went from at-risk youth in the summer of 2019 to mentors in the summer program in 2020 to job training.

- d) Lt. Governor Oliver thanked Mr. Jingo for focusing in on the young people of Atlantic City. She said helping the youth of the city helps the city as a whole and commended him for positively affecting young people's lives.

4) ATLANTIC CITY UPDATE: MAYOR MARTY SMALL

- a) Thanked Mr. Jingo for supporting the Atlantic City Dolphins youth football/cheerleading organization. Hard Rock agreed to host the Dolphins organization banquet, which was socially distanced and held last week.
- b) City hosted a memorial for Micah Tennant Park last week and will hold another one on Memorial Day weekend 2021 for the second phase of the park.
- c) City is allocating \$2.4 million for the Atlantic Avenue pump station, which will mitigate flooding from the bay; this is in addition to the \$20 million the City received from DCA for storm resiliency projects.
- d) City held a ceremony remembering the September 11th terrorist attacks.
- e) City honored the youth who participated in the Vision 2000 summer employment program for at-risk youth in the city.
- f) City is trying to strengthen its relationship with Atlantic County and is discussing options for partnerships and programs.
- g) The City's Small Business Academy was scheduled to start March 21 pre-COVID. Now that things are reopening, the City is talking with Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC) to see if the academy can meet in person.
- h) Stated that he is talking with ACCC about an 8,000-square-foot vacant building at Kentucky and Artie avenues for use as an African American museum, recording studio, photography space, art studio to help Atlantic City youth who are interested in the arts. The mayor wants to see if the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) would be interested in supporting this type of project.
- i) Said his administration's focus is on anti-violence, promoting diversity, and promoting the city.
- j) Thanked people for putting together a peaceful protest on Labor Day weekend that included painting Black Lives Matter on MLK Boulevard. Said his administration believes in supporting the police and believes that all lives matter.
- k) Met with the crew that will demolish Trump Plaza on January 29th. The City intends to be extremely aggressive in getting that property redeveloped. It is going to be a joyous day when the vacant casino comes down.
- l) City will meet with local businesses about how to prepare for the implosion. He said the parking garage will not be demolished.
- m) City is about to launch a new website.
- n) City employees will be back in City Hall on September 28.

5) COMMUNITY OUTREACH UPDATE: BERT LOPEZ

- a) Went through what the community outreach subcommittee of the Atlantic City Restart and Recovery Working Group has been discussing and doing.
- b) There needs to be more outreach on services that are available for youth, health, drug addiction, and homelessness.
- c) Programs are needed to help renters become homeowners.
- d) Need more energy assistance for households affected by the pandemic.
- e) Needs to be a dedicated effort to build a community collaboration database in Atlantic City. It has been a stop and go effort in recent years and he thinks it really needs to get done. Said Collaboration Trenton is a good example.
- f) The city should also explore purpose-built communities as a possible initiative to bring to Atlantic City.
- g) Mike Epps said ACIPO is committed to working with Mr. Lopez on projects like the community collaboration database.

6) ATLANTIC CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION: ELIZABETH TERENIK

- a) Need organizations to partner with that can support the Chelsea neighborhood plan that was recently awarded funding through DCA's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program (NRTC).
- b) Completed the neighborhood plan earlier this year with input from about 500 people. People's number one issue is the condition of the neighborhood. People said it needs to be clean and to fix and beautify what already exists. Other important issues include youth activities and the creation of move-in ready housing for people.
- c) Did open house event to showcase available homes on the market in Chelsea and an empanada challenge to showcase restaurants in the neighborhood.
- d) Learned from businesses that they aren't aware of programs and resources open to them. Also learned that they want to own their buildings and not rent. Businesses do a lot of renovations and then the rent increases on them.
- e) Observe that people don't believe positive things are going to happen. Trying to show that we are doing things and things are happening.
- f) Chelsea can apply for a block captain program to create more safe, tightknit neighborhoods and create beautification efforts.
- g) Want to apply to do a program that moves people from renters to homeowners.
- h) Need organizations very soon to partner with because these projects are due soon.
- i) Really encourages other city groups to do similar work.

7) GENERAL DISCUSSION

- a) Joe Ingemi, secretary of the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA), said that through the help of the New Jersey-Israel Commission, the State learned of a grant opportunity through the BIRD Foundation to develop a statewide consortium on cyber security in the utility industry, which could bring South Jersey into a prestigious grant application process and potentially lead to higher-level jobs in Atlantic County. Mr. Ingemi said he sees critical infrastructure as the next big thing in the region.

- b) Lori Herndon, president and CEO of AtlantiCare, said the health system is down to five (5) COVID-19 patients, which is the lowest number in months. She applauded the efforts of the casinos and the Casino Association of New Jersey to put employees' safety first when reopening the casinos. She said the success of this approach is demonstrated in the low numbers of patients with COVID-19 in AtlantiCare hospitals and other area hospitals.
- c) Carol Ruffo, president of the Chelsea Neighborhood Association, said the association has moved its meetings online. The association did manage to send out newsletters every single month since March. She said civic associations in the city are still out there and trying to keep memberships together.
- d) Brian Jackson, chief operating officer of the Atlantic City campus of Stockton University, said the fall semester 2020 is off to a great start and things are going very well. He said enrollment at the Atlantic City campus is up 1% over last year. He noted that Stockton recently ranked 7th in the Northeast by US News and World Report.
- e) Matt Doherty, executive director of the CRDA, said the Halle Berry-directed movie that filmed largely in Atlantic City was just purchased by Netflix and will air soon. Executive Council members asked if Halle Berry could endorse Atlantic City as a good movie location, which could lead to more films being made in the city.