

# ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Stockton University,  
Atlantic City Campus

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

- a) Highlighted DCA's Neighborhood Preservation Program, or NPP. The Department announced earlier this month the designation of 20 new communities to join NPP, effectively doubling the size of the program to reach more neighborhoods across the state.
- b) Noted that one of the new communities is Ducktown in Atlantic City.
- c) NPP program is designed to strengthen the economic health of threatened but viable neighborhoods and to encourage private investment in these communities.
- d) The Ducktown District will receive \$125,000 in grant funding to help it achieve its neighborhood preservation and revitalization activities. Ducktown will also receive an array of technical assistance and training from the NPP program to support efforts by the City, nonprofit groups, and Ducktown District stakeholders to build a foundation that sustains revitalization efforts over time in the neighborhood.
- e) The Ducktown Community Development Corporation will manage the NPP program in Ducktown. Will focus efforts on improving the exteriors of residential and business properties in the neighborhood with the goal of attracting people to its restaurants and public facilities.
- f) Lt. Governor Oliver believes that strong neighborhoods lead to sustained prosperity for the individuals and families who live and work in these communities.
- g) DCA is excited to have Ducktown and the other 19 communities join the NPP program and benefit from the assistance, guidance, and funding provided.
- h) Noted the new collaboration between the City of Atlantic City and the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority (NJRA), which is an agency affiliated with DCA.
- i) NJRA and City worked together to launch a small business emergency grant program earlier this month for microbusinesses in Atlantic City.
- j) Businesses in storefronts of 2,000 or less square feet are eligible for \$1,000 in grant funding, and those with storefronts of 2,001 to 3,000 square feet are eligible for \$2,000.
- k) Super small businesses were often left behind by other pandemic recovery programs. City wanted to find a way to reach and assist these businesses and partnered with the NJRA to help.
- l) NJRA is providing the online portal where business owners can apply for the funds. The portal is providing information in several languages.
- m) DCA is happy to see its affiliated agencies step up and find ways to effectively collaborate with the City of Atlantic City on worthwhile programs that can make a difference.
- n) Called attention to efforts to bring a Shoprite supermarket to Atlantic City.

- o) Last month, the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) board approved a site plan for the project. Later today, the board will vote on a contract with Village Supermarket for the operation of the Shoprite.
- p) Atlantic City cannot reach its full potential without a full-service supermarket.
- q) Thanked CRDA for the hard work it has done to get the supermarket project to this point.
- r) The city is on the cusp of having its own supermarket in more than 15 years.

**2) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: GREATER ATLANTIC CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Michael Chait, President**

- a) Three main initiatives of the Greater Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce: connect, inform and advocate.
- b) 60-member board of directors, 15 members are on the Atlantic City Executive Committee.
- c) Chamber has four committees (membership, events, economic development, and public policy).
- d) Chamber was happy it was able to hold the Air Show this summer. Estimate between \$50 million and \$75 million in economic benefit from air show. Thanked AtlantiCare for helping Chamber plan for COVID-safe practices during the air show.
- e) Chamber advised that fixing ramps to get across the boardwalk is important to do because the quality of the ramps adds to the cost for groups doing events on the beach.
- f) Chamber's public policy committee reviews legislation and recommends action to the Chamber of Commerce's executive committee.
- g) Chamber's policy agenda:
  - i. Sent more than 50 letters to advocate for safe reopening of Atlantic City during pandemic.
  - ii. Collaborate on NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulation.
  - iii. Legislation supportive of esports.
  - iv. Worked with elected officials on legislation impacting live events industry; Atlantic City market thrives on events.
- h) A5683 – legislation about Garden State Growth Zone; could be enormous opportunity for the city.
- i) Started the Atlantic County Eats program during the pandemic to promote delivery and takeout options in the county. Has grown to 22,000 members and created a Facebook group. Have had more than 634,000 points of engagement.
- j) Chamber's economic development agenda:
  - i. AC Rail Line Coalition partnered with Atlantic County Economic Alliance to focus on improvements regarding access to and service along the Atlantic City Rail Line.
  - ii. Offshore wind.
  - iii. Partnering with Chelsea Economic Development Corporation to revitalize Chelsea neighborhood.
  - iv. Evolving the F-35 Coalition into a group that advocates and liaises to develop and maintain an environment that supports military projects in the Atlantic County region.

- k) Career Exploration Program – create a talent pipeline of locals as Chamber provides the platform and environment to integrate employers with schools and students.
- l) Collaborate – engage with employers and educators.
- m) Develop – career events, activities and resources and be aware of those that exist.
- n) Communicate – inform and educate people about the opportunities.
- o) Workforce – increase access to internships, employment, skilled labor, and advanced education opportunities.
- p) CRDA Deputy Director Rosa Farias said she wants to make sure CRDA partners with the Chamber on workforce development initiatives; Chamber President Michael Chait said he would call Ms. Farias to discuss the Career Exploration Program.
  - i. Mr. Chait said the Chamber wants to start this program early at the elementary school level and bring business leaders into the school to talk about careers and career opportunities. He referenced a program that is happening in Pittsburgh.
  - ii. He believes the program can grow organically over time because Atlantic City has a lot to keep people here – beach, diversity, culture, art, history – but needs young people to see career opportunities that are in the area.
- q) Carol Ruffo of the Chelsea Neighborhood Association said that Chelsea has a number of grammar schools; the association would be interested in seeing those grammar schools involved in the Career Exploration Program.
- r) Mr. Chait said the Chamber is looking to get all the schools in Atlantic County involved.

**3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: CASINO REINVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, Rosa Farias, Deputy Director**

- a) CRDA has been working over the last year to revamp its website. The focus was to streamline services and makes services easy to find.
- b) Tourism District tab. CRDA made it very simple for developers to come to website to find forms and applications for development. This information is under the Tourism District tab of the website.
- c) Engage AC tab. CRDA wants this website tab to become the data platform for Atlantic City and encourages any Atlantic City Executive Council member to provide relevant data so that there is one place where people can find Atlantic City-related data for policy initiatives.
- d) Connect AC tab. This stems from the Atlantic City Transition Report, which describes the need to have one spot for the community to advertise all types of events in the city. This is now a CRDA responsibility and city groups can submit event information and flyers to get it posted on Connect AC webpages. It is completely free to the community.
- e) Highlighted other calendars on the Connect AC webpage.
- f) Atlantic City Initiatives Project Office (ACIPO) Executive Director Michael Epps said the key is to have everybody take advantage of this tool to post their events and activities. He said it is good to have an anchor institution in the city house and maintain this tool.

**4) CIVIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT: ATLANTIC CITY ARTS FOUNDATION, Joyce Hagen, Executive Director**

- a) Atlantic City Arts Foundation started in 2015 to bring arts to city residents and neighborhoods rather than focus on large art installations.
- b) Chalk about AC: artists come to the city to do and display their artwork on city sidewalks. Do chalk artwork with children in city parks in October.
- c) 48 Blocks AC: goal is to create accessible public art; try to bring the talent out of the city's neighborhoods.
- d) The Arts Foundation worked with high school students during the summer on arts projects, including two new murals.
- e) Every healthy community has a vibrant arts scene; provides definite boon to the quality of life.
- f) This year the Arts Foundation started working with the Chelsea Economic Development Corporation to bring art to store windows. Goal is to get a lot of business owners participating so that the streets look like an art gallery. The Arts Foundation is hoping neighborhoods like Ducktown will also embrace it.
- g) Artists are paid stipends to participate in Arts Foundation programs and projects. The Arts Foundation gets funding through grants and fundraising.
- h) Showed a number of examples of art in the city that was supported by the Atlantic City Arts Foundation.
- i) Talked about sand sculptures and how the city used to do them. The Arts Foundation wants to rejuvenate the sand sculptures competition.
- j) ACIPO Executive Director Michael Epps said there is a desire to work on a theater/performing arts program during the summer for city youth. Looking to work with the Atlantic City Arts Foundation and other organizations like the Boys and Girls Club of Atlantic City to make this happen.

## 5) GOOD OF THE ORDER

- a) Bert Lopez, president of the Hispanic Alliance of Atlantic County, gave a brief summary of how the Atlantic City Latino Festival did in September.
- b) Yolanda Melville, an attorney and vice president of the NAACP Atlantic City chapter, provided remarks on behalf of Atlantic City Councilman Kaleem Shabazz, president of the NAACP Atlantic City chapter.
  - i. July 14-22, 2022 will be the NAACP national convention in Atlantic City.
  - ii. NAACP Atlantic City chapter supports the Shoprite supermarket project in the city. The project advances equitable food justice for everyone in Atlantic City and decreases food insecurity. She read from parts of a supporting resolution.
- c) ACIPO Executive Director Michael Epps said the Atlantic County Economic Alliance (ACEA) is looking to do a Build Back Better grant and ACIPO Deputy Director India Still is helping with that.
  - i. Deputy Director Still said ACEA has come up with six cluster projects.
  - ii. All the projects would affect Atlantic City if ACEA gets the grant.
  - iii. Have been looking for letters of support for planning grant application.
  - iv. Deputy Director Still is working on a letter of support on behalf of the Atlantic City Executive Council to explain that what ACEA is proposing is in alignment with the

Executive Council's mission and goals and in alignment with the Atlantic City Transition Report. The letter of support is due today.