

ATLANTIC CITY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

Stockton University – Atlantic City Campus

1) REMARKS FROM GOVERNOR'S SPECIAL COUNSEL JIM JOHNSON

- a) Brief out of Atlantic City Town Hall that took place on January 29th. Approximately 500 people attended and, of those, 150 participated in the working groups.
- b) First meeting of Citizens Advisory Board last week. The Atlantic City Police Department is interested in the newly-formed Board's views.

2) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- a) Atlantic City Initiatives Office team is working on the Implementation Plan.
- b) Jim Johnson plans to host a conference call with members of the Executive Council before the Plan is issued to the public so they know what is in the Plan and what they will be responsible for doing.
- c) Jim Johnson will reach out to members of the Executive Council to gauge members' interest in being one of the lead agencies for initiatives in the Implementation Plan.

3) TOWN HALL SUMMARY

- a) Atlantic City Initiatives Office is still getting positive feedback about the Town Hall.
- b) The Initiatives Office took information from the working groups and culled it down to salient bullet points.
- c) The intent is to review the bullet points further and determine how to include them in the Implementation Plan.

4) BLIGHT AND FORECLOSURE INITIATIVES

- a) Mayor Gilliam briefed council on tour City and State officials took on February 15 to look at blighted properties the City has taken in property tax foreclosure. The plan is to tear down the properties that need to be demolished and auction off or work with redevelopers on other properties.
- b) Rosa Farias, deputy executive director of the Atlantic City Initiatives Office, said Atlantic City and Atlantic County have the highest foreclosure rate in the state. She talked about a bill that would create a dedicated funding stream to help property owners remediate their properties and mediate their foreclosure situation. She continues to research what can be done about foreclosure in the city.

5) PROMOTING THE CITY (ECON AND MARKETING INITIATIVE)

- a) Richard Tolson, director of BAC NJ, said that to effectively market the City's positive momentum in such areas as the airport, aviation tech park, Stockton University, K-12 education, casinos, and new housing the silos in Atlantic City have to break down. Marketing should be tied together so families know they can live in the city, raise kids in a safe neighborhood and get a great education.

- b) Howard Kyle, chief of staff to the Atlantic County Executive, said a focus has to be on attracting smart city youth to stay in Atlantic City after high school and college graduation.
 - i) Need jobs in aviation industry that can be done offshore
 - ii) Need to make better use of Garden State Growth Zones and Opportunity Zones
 - iii) Need to coordinate a regional economic development approach

6) NEW JERSEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

- a) Presented information about the Grow NJ grant
- b) Bob McDevitt, president of Unite Here Local 54, said efforts must be made to encourage people to move to Atlantic City and added growing the city's population will lead to new and revitalized businesses and business districts, a supermarket and family-friendly entertainment.
- c) Mayor Gilliam said new housing will help attract new people to live in the city. He said the age of the current housing stock averages more than 55 years. He said the city needs to grow to 70,000 people.
- d) Jim Johnson said the city has a new planning director. With the new planning director on board, the goal is to issue a master plan in June 2019.

7) CALENDAR COLLABORATION AC

- a) The Atlantic City Initiatives Office is working on creating a database so all residents, business owners and stakeholders know what is going on in the city. The database will serve to erase communication lapses between communities within the city.

8) ATLANTIC CITY COMMUNITY FUND

- a) Evan Sanchez, a local entrepreneur, briefed out on the Atlantic City Community Fund.
 - i) Driven by city residents and businesses.
 - ii) To date raised \$30,000; trying to raise \$1 million over the next three years.
 - iii) April 1st grant application; \$500 to \$5,000 for community projects

9) PROPOSED FORMAT FOR NEXT MEETINGS

- a) Move away from input orientation and towards results orientation where there are real results to share.
- b) Bring in neutral observers to talk about how Atlantic City is doing compared to other cities.
- c) Have working groups that meet right after the council meeting to tackle specific challenges.

10) GOOD OF THE ORDER

- a) Harvey Kesselman, president of Stockton University, said a focus needs to be on improving public transportation to and from Atlantic City to attract people who don't want to own a car but want to live near the beach. Right now these people are going to Asbury Park and Long Branch because those cities have better transportation options.
- b) Jim Johnson encouraged council members to figure out opportunities for paid summer internships for city youth.
- c) The next Atlantic City Executive Council meeting is March 19th.