

Minutes of March 7, 2012
Regular Board Meeting

The Board of Commissioners of the City of Camden Redevelopment Agency met on Wednesday, March 7, 2012 at Camden City Hall, Suite 1300, 520 Market Street, Camden, New Jersey.

Chairman Vance Bowman called the meeting to order at 5:48 PM. In remembrance of former Mayor Melvin Randolph Primas, Jr., a moment of silence followed. Board Clerk Carla Rhodes called roll.

Present: VB, GP, LQ and JV
Absent: KH, BM, MS
Attendees: Saundra Ross Johnson, CRA; Mark Asselta, Esq., CRA; Carla Rhodes, CRA; James Harveson, CRA; Olivette Simpson, CRA; John Fuentes, CRA; Colandus "Kelly" Francis, NAACP; Frank Fulbrook, 211 Penn Street; Chris Perks, 202 Cooper Street, and Laverne Williams, 218 Branch Village

Ms. Rhodes advised the Board that, pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice had been posted in the Courier Post and the Philadelphia Inquirer as well as in the Office of the City Clerk.

Review and Action for Minutes

Meeting Date	M	A	N	AB	Comments
February 1, 2012	JV GP	VB GP LQ JV			The Minutes of the February 1, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Camden Redevelopment Agency's Board of Commissioners were previously provided to the Commissioners On motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes were approved.

Executive Director's Report

Meeting Date	M	A	N	AB	Comments
March 7, 2012	LQ JV	VB GP LQ JV			The Report of the Executive Director was previously provided to the Commissioners and there were no comments. On motion duly made and seconded, the Report was approved.

Resolutions for Review and Action

		M	A	N	AB	Comments
03-07-12A	Resolution Commending John Fuentes for Distinguished Service Upon His Retirement from the Camden Redevelopment Agency	LQ JV	VB GP LQ JV			Mr. Fuentes reflected on memories of Former Mayor Primas. He was inspired by his example and stated, "the challenge remains...The business of revitalizing Camden is never finished." On motion duly made and seconded, this Resolution was approved.
03-07-12B	Resolution Authorizing the Camden Redevelopment Agency to Enter into an Agreement with Management Associates Plus for the Provision of Staff Strategic Planning Sessions	GP LQ	VB GP LQ JV			On motion duly made and seconded, this Resolution was approved.
03-07-12C	Resolution Ratifying an Amendment to a Professional Service Agreement with Title America for the Provision of Title Search Services in Lanning Square	GP LQ	VB GP LQ JV			On motion duly made and seconded, this Resolution was approved.
03-07-12D	Resolution Authorizing an Amendment #1 to the Service Agreement with Pennoni Associates, Inc. for Professional Engineering Design and Construction Administration Services for Phase 1 of the Roosevelt Plaza Park Redevelopment	GP JV	VB GP LQ JV			On motion duly made and seconded, this Resolution was approved.

03-07-12E	Resolution Authorizing Change Order #1 to a Contract Between the Camden Redevelopment Agency and Command Co., Inc. for the Construction of Roosevelt Park Phase I	GP LQ	VB GP LQ JV			On motion duly made and seconded, this Resolution was approved.
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Public Comments

Chairman Bowman asked for public comments at 6:02 PM.

Ms. LaVerne Williams of 218 Branch Village inquired about Resolution E. She asked "How much was the original contract?" And "Is the change order in compliance with the purchasing law?" Economic Development Director James Harveson confirmed the change order is in compliance with state law. Ms. Williams questioned the cause of the price increase. Mr. Harveson explained there was a change in specifications for park benches.

Regarding Resolution C, Ms. Williams inquired as to how long it will take for the title search to be completed. Housing Director Olivette Simpson explained the work has already been completed; the Resolution addresses a change in the amount for the closing..

Regarding Resolution B, Ms. Williams questioned for whom the training would be provided. Executive Director Johnson noted this Resolution pertains to a one-day retreat for staff.

Mr. Frank Fulbrook of 211 Penn Street asked for clarification on the design change of the park benches. Mr. Harveson explained the original plan called for monolithic concrete square benches. The new plan is to install decorative metal benches that matches the trashcan design with an arm in the middle to discourage sleeping. Mr. Fulbrook asked "how close is the project to completion?" Mr. Harveson informed that the project is 30% complete and the park will open before summer.

He also inquired about the status of the Pierre Building. Mr. Harveson reported an RFP had been issued that it is available on the CRA website. There has been considerable interest.

Mr. Colandus "Kelly" Francis of the NAACP reminded the Board of the civil and criminal liabilities of ownership of the properties at Lanning Square. Vice Chair Gloria Pena asked Mr. Francis to describe what the properties look like. He explained the homes were built without firewalls and most of the homes have been gutted. Vice Chair Pena advised that she would like to see what they look like.

Mr. Francis circulated an article concerning a recent fatal fire in Philadelphia. Commissioner Jose Vazquez noted the importance of firewalls running up to the roof. Vice Chair Pena stated the CRA should demonstrate a high regard for safety.

Chairman Bowman inquired about the plans for the CRA-owned properties at Lanning Square. Ms. Simpson explained: CRA insured the properties at the time of their acquisition. Negotiations are underway with a local non-profit organization pertaining to maintenance of the properties. Demolition(s) will be contingent upon the results of a structural report that will be commissioned sometime in the near future.

Vice Chair Pena wants to ensure the properties are properly secured until a final determination is made regarding the redevelopment of Lanning Square. Chairman Bowman inquired about whether or not fencing can be posted around the properties. Ms. Simpson reported the properties are not contiguous.

Director Johnson offered to forward photographs of the CRA-owned properties for the Board's review. Ms. Simpson will arrange a tour for Vice Chair Pena as well.

Mark Asselta recommended the structural assessment include a risk analysis.

Ms. Williams encouraged the Board to consider relocation of current residents prior to demolition and/or redevelopment activity.

Commissioner Louis Quinones questioned why residents are still living in the units when the Certificates of Occupancy were withdrawn sometime ago.

Mr. Francis speculated the occupants don't know their rights and added they were low-income homeowners. He noted the three inspectors who were responsible for detecting the fatal defect were prosecuted by the State; they were fined and forced to retire.

Chairperson's Remarks

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Executive Session

On a motion made by Commissioner Louis Quinones, seconded by Commissioner Vazquez, an Executive Session commenced at 6:30 PM.

At 6:54 PM a motion was made to re-open the meeting by Commissioner Vazquez, seconded by Vice Chair Pena.

Adjournment

On the motion of Commissioner Vazquez, seconded by Vice Chair Pena, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.

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