

The Board of Commissioners of the City of Camden Redevelopment Agency held its Monthly Caucus on Thursday, December 4, 2014, at Camden City Hall, Suite 1300, Camden, New Jersey.

Chair Marilyn Torres called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 PM. Board Clerk Carla Rhodes called roll.

**Present:** MT, KH, MN, JR, and JV  
**Absent:** VB, EG

**Attendees:** Saundra Ross Johnson, Mark Asselta, Carla Rhodes, Johanna Conyer, and Olivette Simpson, CRA

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

#### Review of Minutes

Dates of Meetings- October 2, 2014, October 8, 2014, October 29, and November 6, 2014

**Motion:** Ayes:

**Nays:** Abstentions:

**Comments:** Chairperson Torres asked all Commissioners if they had an opportunity to review the minutes. There were no comments or questions.

#### Executive Director's Report

Date of Meeting-December 4, 2014

**Motion:** Ayes:

**Nays:** Abstentions:

**Comments:**

Chair Torres introduced Commissioner Javier Ramos. Executive Director Saundra Ross Johnson noted that an orientation will be scheduled for both him and Commissioner Mirta Nieves.

In addition to the previously submitted written report, Ms. Johnson also provided an update on projects in two redevelopment areas: Lanning Square and Poet's Walk. An RFP for Poet's Walk will be issued within the next six (6) months. The Lanning Square area will be smaller than initially proposed and it will be issued in the first quarter of 2015.

Commissioner Jose Vazquez inquired about sources of funding and the extent of remediation anticipated at Poet's Walk. CRA's Housing Development Director Olivette Simpson provided background.

Ms. Johnson also reported on the progress of applications for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development/CHOICE grants. Details pertaining to environmental work at the Kroc Center/Harrison Avenue redevelopment site were provided.

The Commissioners were advised of walk-ons that are to be presented at the Regular Monthly Meeting on Wednesday, December 10, 2014. One resolution will ratify a contract for a time-sensitive appraisal and the others will accommodate time-constraints imposed via the Economic Opportunity Act.

Ms. Johnson also reported several items pertaining to CRA that were considered by the Camden City Council during the meeting of Tuesday, December 2.

**Resolutions for Review and Action**

The Board agreed to take action on all available resolutions during the Caucus, so full attention can be devoted to the anticipated walk-ons during the Regular Monthly Meeting. Board General Counsel Mark Asselta affirmed that action can be taken because notice of such was given in the posting of the annual meeting schedule. Note: All resolutions will be revised to reflect the date of December 4, 2014.

**12-10-14A Resolution Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with Mercadien, P.C. for Financial Auditing Services for FYE 2014 for a Total Cost Not to Exceed \$39,128.00**

**Motion:** JV, KH                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

Chair Torres asked how much was paid to the auditor last year. CRA's Finance Director reported Mercadian was the only responsible bidder for the 2015 contract and that its bid was lower than the prior year.

**12-10-14B Resolution Authorizing an Application for and Acceptance of a Grant from the Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund in an Amount Not to Exceed \$269,035.00 for Remedial Action on a Portion of Block 62, Lots 17, 21, 22, and 23 of the City of Camden Tax Map (the ABC Barrel Site)**

**Motion:** JV, KH                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

There were no comments or questions.

**12-10-14C Resolution Authorizing an Agreement of Sale with the City of Camden to Acquire Certain City Owned Properties Located in the Centerville and Whitman Park Neighborhoods for Redevelopment**

**Motion:** JV, MN                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

There were no comments or questions.

**12-10-14D Resolution Authorizing an Amendment to a Professional Service Agreement With Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC for the Provision of Planning Services for the Whitman Park Study Area Which Expands the Scope of Work Under the Agreement**

**Motion:** JV, MN                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

Commissioner Kenwood Hagamin inquired about the scope of work relating to the removal of an existing building in the area and the possible impact on the park where children play. He also expressed concern regarding a leaning water tower.

Ms. Torres inquired about the cost.

**12-10-14D (cont'd)**

CRA's Housing Director explained the review process and the purpose of the study. It is expected to cost an additional \$8,000 (this is within procurement standards). In light of recent challenges in North Camden and Cramer Hill, CRA intends to certify that Whitman Park meets the statutory requirements of a redevelopment area. Board Counsel Mark Asselta noted resolutions C and D are related, as properties are required to complete the anticipated redevelopment.

Commissioner Mirta Nieves asked if neighborhood concerns will be taken into consideration. The Housing Director noted Mayor Dana L. Redd's Executive Leadership Team has been collaborating with WRT since the initial study commenced.

**12-10-14E Resolution Authorizing the Adoption of a List of Pre-Qualified Lawyers for the Year 2015**

**Motion:** MN, JV                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

There were no comments or questions.

**12-10-14F Resolution Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with Brown and Connery for the Provision of General Counsel Legal Services**

**Motion:** JV, KH                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

**Comments:**

CRA's Finance Director Johanna Conyer advised this resolution will be revised to reflect the Total Not to Exceed amount of \$100,000. Mr. Asselta thanked everyone for their renewal of the contract and noted the fees have been flat for the last six years; these are substantially less than private client fees. There were no further comments or questions.

**Public Comments**

None

**Old Business**

It was reported that the server has been repaired, and an updated Finance Report was presented. CRA is awaiting approval of the 2015 budget by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and is hopeful it will be returned prior to December 10, so a Special Meeting will not be required.

Commissioner Hagamin inquired about the status of payment from the City of Camden's Parking Authority. Ms. Johnson noted financial challenges connected to emerging development opportunity spurred by the Economic Opportunity Act. City Attorney Marc Riondino commended CRA for its good work and noted new opportunities are forthcoming.

**New Business**

A motion was made and a vote was taken for all 2015 meetings to be held on Wednesdays.

**Motion:** JV, MN                      **Ayes:** MT, KH, MN, JR, JV

**Nays:**                                      **Abstentions:**

*Following this action, Commissioner Javier Ramos departed for a previously scheduled class.*

**Chairperson's Remarks and Observations**

Chair Torres thanked all staff for a job well done. An inquiry was also made about the impact of the spring 2014 tour Mayor Dana L. Redd and CRA hosted for Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia conference attendees. CRA's Executive Director expounded on the tour's influence on decision-making among bankers.

**Executive Session**

None

**Adjournment**

On a Motion made by Commissioner Vasquez, seconded by Commissioner Nieves, and affirmed by all in voice vote this meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 PM.

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