



MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS OF THE JERSEY CITY REDEVELOPMENT  
AGENCY HELD ON THE 15<sup>th</sup> DAY OF AUGUST 2023

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The Board of Commissioners of the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency conducted a regularly scheduled meeting, at 180 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Jersey City, New Jersey, on Tuesday, August 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Chairman Rivera called the Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and upon roll call the following answered **present**: **Douglas Carlucci, and Victor Negrón Jr Darwin Ona, and Daniel Rivera.**

And the following were **absent**: **Donald Brown, Erma Greene and Denise Ridley.** Chairman Rivera thereupon declared a quorum present. Also present at the Meeting were: Madam Executive Director, Diana Jeffrey; Duty Executive Director, Christopher Fiore; Secretary to the Board and Counsel, J. Nicholas Strasser Esq.; Secretary to the Board, Jesamil Lozano; Agency staff members; and members of the public.

Immediately following the Pledge of Allegiance, Duty Executive Director Fiore announced that, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and Guidance for Public Meetings issued by the Department of Community Affairs, public notice of today's meeting was posted on the Agency's website, posted at the Agency's offices and was sent to the City Clerk, the Star Ledger, and Jersey Journal for the public's review.

Chairman Rivera acknowledged the presentation on today's Agenda. Jennifer Mazawey, Esq. from the firm of Genova Burns introduced Criterion Group, LLC. Ms. Mazawey informed the Board that Criterion Group, LLC is seeking designation for the redevelopment of property located as Block 21509, Lot 1, commonly known as 22 Halladay Street, Block 21509, Lot 2, commonly known as 51-99 Pacific Avenue and Block 24301, Lots 7 and 10, commonly known as Caven Point Avenue. Criterion Group has previously redeveloped the vacant industrial building located at property located at 21 Caven Point into an operational studio facility for television and movie production. Matthew Giordano, architect of the project, illustrated

the proposed development will consist of a purpose-built Class A Film Studio. Which will be comprised of 76,749 square feet of sound stage, 27,141 square feet of office space and 25,000 square feet of supporting workshop space. In addition, the proposed development will act as an expansion of parking and basecamp space in conjunction with the 21 Caven Point Studio. Mr. Giordano referred the Kaufman Astoria Studios, based out of Queens, New York. The similar studio, created a positive economic impact in the community Mr. Giordano is anticipating that the proposed project will also create economic benefits to the City.

Chairman Rivera requested that the developer please meet with the community surrounding the project and noted that the residents were also present tonight.

Mr. Giordano agreed with the Chairman.

There being no more presentations, the Open Public Comment portion of the meeting was declared at 6:18 p.m.

Accordingly, the following voted "AYE": Commissioners Carlucci, Negron, Ona, and Rivera; and the following voted "NAY": None. Chairman Rivera thereupon declared the Motion carried and at this time Chairman Rivera asked if anyone from the public would like to address the Board of Commissioners.

Counsel advised that members of the public who wish to speak during today's meeting were encouraged to pre-register with the Agency's administrator or to submit comments by email in advance. If they did not pre-register, they would still be permitted to speak.

At this time, the Chairman Rivera acknowledged the first pre-register speakers. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Britton, 40-year-old residents of Garfield Avenue, who wished to address the Board regarding the designation of Friends of Quality Education, Inc. for the development of BelovED Community Charter School located on Block 23704, Lot 23 and Block 2431 Lot 1.01, commonly known as 20 Commercial Street and 65 Commercial Street. The development project is located directly behind Mr. and Mrs. Sam Britton's home. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Britton informed the Board that when they originally purchased their homes in the 80's, a railroad company, which failed to upkeep the land, owned 20 Commercial Street and 65

Commercial Street. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Britton dedicated time to preserve the land, making it safe for their children. Recently, they received a letter from Friends of Quality Education, Inc. stating that they have purchased the land and are requesting to reconfigure the property line due to encroachments issues. The noticed also stated that the redeveloper is intending to develop a retaining wall, dividing the properties. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Britton are extremely concerned that the retaining wall will create flooding issues for their property, "They are going to flood us out."

Director Jeffrey wished to clarify; the issue is not with the encroachment, rather, the development of the retainer wall.

Mrs. Sam Britton stated that was correct.

The next pre-register speakers, Thomas Tseng, wished to address the Board also regarding the development of BelovED Community Charter School. Mr. Tseng purchased his home on Garfield Avenue last year and shared that he purchased the home for the view of the New York City skyline. He noted, that he also received a noticed regarding the encroaching and the development of the school, which is directly behind his property. The development will obstruct his view.

Angel Zayas, requested to address the Board regarding the same issues as his neighbors. Mr. and Mrs. Zayas purchased their home 23-years-ago. When purchased, the home was newly built and included a retainer wall. The notice received on behalf of Friends Quality Education, Inc. stated that Mr. Zayas' property was encroaching into Mr. Schundler's by nine feet. Mr. Zayas informed the Board that he reached out to Mr. Schundler and requested a meeting to negotiate an agreement regarding the property line. Per Mr. Zeyas, Mr. Schundler agreed to having a meeting, however, he "needed all his property to develop his project." Mr. Zeyas informed Mr. Schundler that there is no need for a meeting if he was not willing to negotiate. Mr. Schundler was not trying to negotiate in good faith.

Chairman Rivera went on record and stated that he visited Mr. Zayas home and witnessed their testimonies.

Margarita Gonzalez also requested to address the Board to discuss the same issue. Ms. Gonzalez is concerned about the traffic the school will create in an already congested area. There has been a great deal of car accidents already on Garfield Avenue and this project will create more, making it unsafe. Ms. Gonzalez is also unhappy with the development interfering with her view.

Christopher Council also addresses the Board in support of his neighbors, stating that the community adopted the abandoned land and made it livable for their families. He also requested to negotiate an agreement with the developer.

Yardina Munoz also address the Board in support of her neighbor, stating that she has invested her money to persevere and maintain that land.

The Chairman reminded the residents to please email Agency Officials with any questions or comments they might have not mentioned during their time. Accordingly, Director Jeffrey shared her email address with the members of the public.

Lastly, Kimberly Artist addressed the Board. Ms. Artist fenced her yard because there is a large drop at the end of her property. She was asked via letter to remove her fence since it is encroaching onto the neighboring property. Ms. Artist is concerned that her yard will no longer be safe for her and her children.

At this time, the Chairman recognized Ward F Councilman Frank Gilmore.

Councilman Gilmore inquired about the land the residents have been discussing, asking if the properties in question were ever owned and redeveloped by the City.

Director Jeffrey stated that she was not aware that the resident's home were once owned by the City. However, 20 Commercial Street was previously owned by City.

Councilman Gilmore wanted to reflect that this area was not a desirable part of town and the residents have made into what it is now, a desirable area. It is unfair for our residents. In addition, requesting a common agreement where everyone's needs are met.

Chairman Rivera noted that this is the reason for this meeting, to discuss the residents' issues and find a beneficial resolution for everyone. The Chairman requested an additional meeting with the redeveloper and the community.

Mrs. Zayas inquired about the court order, would they need to comply?

Agency's counsel Mr. J. Nicholas Strasser noted that the Agency is not listed as a party to the suit.

Director Jeffrey informed the public that Mr. Schundler agreed to a 30-day extension to give the parties time to meet. However, if you do not receive something in writing, you should comply with the court order.

Chairman reassured the residents that they will be kept informed with any updates.

Commissioner Carlucci encouraged the residents to continue reaching out to Board Members and the Chairman.

Director Jeffrey once again shared her email address with the residents as well as Mr. Strasser's email.

Commissioner Carlucci thanked the residents for taking time to express their concerns and noted that the project was approved to better the community not to disrupt it.

Commissioner Negron expressed his support to the community.

No more members of the public indicated his or her desire to speak during Open Public Comment. Therefore, the period for Open Public Comment was closed at 6:59 p.m.

Accordingly, the following voted "AYE": Commissioners Carlucci, Negron, Ona, and Rivera and the following voted "NAY": None.

The Board of Commissioners then voted to enter executive session. The following voted "AYE": Commissioners Carlucci, Negron, Ona, and Rivera; and the following voted "NAY": None. Accordingly, the Board entered executive session.

Emerging from executive session at 7:27 p.m., Counsel made it known that discussions involving litigation, contract negotiations, personnel, and matters within the attorney-client privilege took place; no formal action was taken.

Chairman Rivera noted that the Commissioners should have received their agenda packages and asked if there were any questions, additions or comments.

There being no requests, comments, and/or questions about the agenda, Chairman Rivera called for a motion to establish a Consent Agenda for Items #1 through #17. The motion was moved, seconded and approved unanimously.

Accordingly, the following voted "AYE": Commissioners Carlucci, Negron, Ona, and Rivera; and the following voted "NAY": None. Chairman Rivera thereupon declared the Motion carried.

Accordingly, the following Resolutions were introduced and duly seconded: (attached)

Finally, Chairman Rivera called for a motion to implement the Consent Agenda. Accordingly, the following voted "AYE": Commissioners Carlucci, Negron, Ona, and Rivera; and the following voted "NAY": None. Chairman thereupon declared the Motion carried and the Resolutions adopted as introduced.

There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

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Secretary