

Meeting: **Monday, June 22nd, 2020**
7:00 PM – Virtual Meeting Via Google Hangouts – 16 Attending

Agenda:

1. Call to Order and Introductions – 7:10 PM

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – Caren Fishman (CSSD) mentioned two changes that needed to be made to the previous meeting minutes from May. (1) The meeting to approve the Camden BID budget was Tuesday, May 5th (not Tuesday, May 6th as written). (2) CSSD is NOT cleaning playground surfaces currently (as written in the minutes). They are applying for grants in order to try to incorporate cleaning some of the playground surfaces in the future. Changes were made in the CGNA meeting minutes. *Motion to approve the previous meeting minutes by Bryon, seconded by Christopher Maier. Motion approved by members present.*

3. Treasurer's Report

a. The beginning balance for the month of June was \$23,182.00. There were three expenditures this month – one for a fee for our annual corporate filing of \$30.50, another expenditure for the annual financial compilation fee for the CGNA financial audit for \$225.00 paid to Paul Farrell, and the last expenditure for the insurance policy renewal for the CGNA Board members of \$1,111.89. The ending balance for this month was \$21,814.61. This balance includes the \$5,000 grant awarded from Cooper Foundation. *Motion to approve treasurer's report as presented by Bryon by Sonia, seconded by Christopher Maier, motion approved by members present.*

4. Neighborhood Safety and Security

a. Any recent issues? Multiple residents mentioned there have been numerous fireworks being shot off most nights in the past couple of weeks. State laws regarding fireworks have changed recently and people can buy certain types of fireworks in New Jersey stores. Jonathan will speak with Sgt. Levy about this issue. Another resident mentioned that several packages have been taken from outside his house on the 100 block of Penn Street. He related that two packages were taken at two different times several weeks ago. Jonathan found a bunch of packages broken up in Johnson Park and called Camden County Metro Police, who did investigate. Jonathan related the Sgt. Levy asked us to report missing packages in order for more patrols to be sent around the neighborhood. If there are any issues, including missing/stolen packages, resident can report to the police by either calling 911, the STOPit application, etc. Look out for your neighbors, it can be quiet at times in the neighborhood and people may take advantage. If you see something, say something!

b. Emergency Call 911 or 24hr Tipline: 856-757-7042 or STOPit Online Application (Code: CAMDENNJ)

5. Old Business

a. **NRTC Grant Funding** – There are two parts of this –

i. **PART ONE** - There was a survey about 5 years ago and we had a neighborhood action plan developed in conjunction with various stakeholders (at a cost of \$100k). The Neighborhood Action Plan for Cooper-Grant/Central Waterfront can be viewed [here](#). We are looking to update that plan in order to be considered by the state to write grants and receive funding for the community as the state wants us to do an update, which will cost us \$15k. We approved funding to update the existing plan in a recent CGNA meeting and we hired Interface to do the update. There was a kickoff meeting last Friday with stakeholders who were involved in developing the first plan. In order to update the plan, we need some input from the community, from anyone who lives, works, stays, etc. in the boundaries outlined in the plan. So now we need to collect as many surveys as possible. We need as many community members as possible to complete these surveys. The state will not accept our plan until we do the update. This updated plan needs to be completed in mid-July. The survey is due Wednesday, July 1st 2020. This survey will be e-mailed to the CGNA distribution list, with multiple reminders. Jonathan asked some community members to reach out to other areas listed in plan to ask them to take the survey and share with other residents, business owners, employees, etc. The survey can also be taken by phone either in English or Spanish. This survey will also be sent out to businesses and institutions as well. We need help reaching out to residents to ask them to take this survey – it doesn't matter if you are a homeowner, renter, student renter, etc. We want community input.

(1) Question – Can we ask the stakeholders involved in the plan to attend the meeting about the redesign meeting for Market and federal? Jonathan says yes. Increasing the walkability of the downtown area

will help the economy of that area. The walkability of Market Street is important within the previous neighborhood plan.

- ii. **PART TWO** We are writing a grant to the state to cover the costs for this update. We put the money up out front in order to get this plan moving forward for this year since the timeline was tight to be considered for this year. We want to improve the quality of life in this community. We reached out to Coopers Ferry to help us with the project of updating the plan.
- b. **WM Trash/Recycling Route Change 100 Block of Penn Street** – In order to get the trash collection moved to the rear of the 100 block of Penn Street, residents needed to sign a petition. 16 of 17 property/homeowners signed the petition to move the trash collection to the back of the residences (on Centennial) to help with the upkeep of the community. Trying to help with the unsightliness of the trash cans in front of the houses in a historical community. The garbage truck does fit down the back on Centennial. Right now, the trash is being collected from the front and the back of the houses. Jonathan doesn't have an exact date on when they will stop picking up trash from the front of the block. Jonathan is trying to work with residences/apartments that don't have access to the back of their houses. Trash collection has missed 5 out of 8 Saturdays for trash collection and Jonathan spoke with someone about it.

6. New Business

- a. **Community Social/Health Needs** – Any resources anyone wants to share? Any thoughts? Virtua is doing a survey to assess community needs for a mobile market (county-wide survey). The survey is listed [here](#). With multiple pockets of housing in the Cooper Grant neighborhood (11 Cooper, Victor Building, Pierre Building), we probably would have the population to support something like this. The survey asks what you would buy, what would you need, what would you like to see, etc. A resident mentioned it might be feasible in Johnson Park. This would help provide easier access of food, especially fresh food, to the community. Sgt. Levy gave Jonathan some masks, Jonathan still has a few masks left to distribute so e-mail him if you need them (president@coopergrant.org)
- b. **General Resources Available** - The District Council Collaborative Board (DCCB) run by Angel Osorio has a e-mail list that distributes frequent e-mails with extensive lists of things going on throughout the city and in the area. Very comprehensive and helpful lists for resources, events, etc. The email is sent out almost on a daily basis. If you would like to be added to the DCCB distribution list, send your email address by text message (Text CAMDENDCCB to 22828 to get started) or e-mail dccbangelosorio@gmail.com.
- c. **Covanta/County Microgrid Project** – Camden County through CCMUA handles county waste at the facility in Waterfront South. The facility is run by a company called Covanta. They have made some updates recently (like adding solar panels on the plant). They are looking to put in a microgrid system in order to help the plant when it loses power during an emergency event. Currently, if the plant currently loses power, the pump backs up and therefore sewage backs up and runs through the streets, especially after bad rainstorms. This facility has existed for about thirty years and is one of the older ones in the country. This facility doesn't have updated technology to help with air quality, etc. It pumps out lead into the community and the company hasn't installed updated filters. There have been issues with air quality for some time. It's one of the dirtiest trash incineration plants in the country, along with the facility in Chester, Pennsylvania. It was mentioned that this seems to be a case of environmental racism, implying that people don't want these type of waste plants in their own backyard so they put the plant in the city, which is an environmental injustice. If they're looking to update the plant with the Microgrid, we want them to update their energy source so there is less pollution in the area.
 - i. There are two bills coming through the state government which apply to environmental concerns. The first bill is S232 Bill, which is a Senate bill that concerns environmental permits in certain areas and requires DEP to evaluate environmental and public health impacts of certain facilities on overburdened communities when reviewing certain permit applications. This bill essentially prohibits the DEP from granting a permit for a new facility (or expansion of an existing facility) in an area in a "burdened community" unless the permit applicant prepared a report assessing the environmental impact, organizes and conducts a public hearing to all interested parties, as well as several other requirements. Basically, any time these types of projects come to certain communities, it requires the permit applicant to do a survey in the community, especially a burden community which is defined in the bill as a low-income area by the census. The second one is the A2212 Bill, which is an Assembly bill that also concerns environmental permits in burdened communities.
 - ii. City seems to be pushing through with this project with the microgrid but not providing a lot of details about certain aspects of the plan or asking for additional updates to be made to the existing facility to help with the environmental impact. There is a Facebook group (Camden for Clean Air) who has more information. Covanta already exists so the new bills may not apply to them.
- d. **Cooper Street Construction Update** – Cooper Street construction is moving along, being told that they're ahead of schedule. New curb line is being put in and they're updating the intersection corners on Cooper Street. Looking to install timed lights, better walkways, etc. to make it safer for pedestrians to cross and allow traffic to

flow. These updates do not include adding bike lanes, most likely due to the train tracks. There is a meeting Thursday, June 25th 1:30PM via Zoom about the redesign for Federal and Market Streets. Several options were presented for concept development. The first time they presented to CGNA, we gave them input and they updated their potential list of models for the redesign plan. It is important for community members to attend the meeting and have a voice. Anyone attending the meeting would need to register in advance by clicking [here](#). The stakeholders (businesses, institutions, etc.) which may have different needs than the residential community members. We are looking for small business activity to increase in these areas to help the community improve.

- e. **Arts Committee Report** – Christopher Maier presenting. COVID-19 has forced the end of live shows for CPR Music Invincible. They have done four virtual shows, including March in Musicals, April Isolation, May Be Madness, and Summer Solstice Party for June. They can now work virtually going forward, which is a nice surprise. Christopher creates the piano tracks and sends them to Vedra and Craig. There will be a change over of artwork in the Pierre Building art gallery space, with artwork being provided by Christopher Maier. His Victor Talking Machine show starring Eldridge Johnson was held in February but had to be cancelled in March and thereafter due to COVID-19. Christopher will be presenting the story of “His Master’s Voice” in the UK after his move. His adjusted launch date has been postponed due to COVID-19.
 - i. There is a large mosaic frieze on the front of Cooper Library in Johnson Park. Rutgers was notified about Christopher Columbus being one of the individuals depicted on the frieze. An article saying that Rutgers-Camden was going to cover the mosaic was written in TAPinto Camden (can read the article [here](#)). Graham Alexander (The Victor Company) also wrote about the frieze on his [website](#). There is also a slave marker in Johnson Park at the corner of Front and Cooper Streets, which was put in place to depict the raw story regarding slavery in the city. Bryon mentioned that the frieze has been brought up in the historical society meetings informally. It is not officially on the agenda but it will be discussed. The building itself is listed on the historic register, so Rutgers-Camden would have to present any changes to two different historical boards (local and state) before making any permanent changes to the building. Mentioned reaching out to the MARCH group from Rutgers, who have been helping us as a community regarding the preservation of Cooper Street. One of the Rutgers faculty members from MARCH had asked Jonathan to make official contact with Rutgers and ask them to keep us updated on the facts regarding the discussions about the frieze so that we are not only getting information from rumors. We want to have productive discussions and not be reactionary to articles. We want the information directly from Rutgers instead of finding out about it through various articles and rumors. Bryon mentioned the historical society meetings are rather informal now that they’re virtual but they are public meetings. The public is welcome to listening to the meetings, not sure if there is a public caucus component to these meetings for discussion and/or comments. The city’s website had instructions and the Zoom link for these meetings.
- f. **Planning Committee**
 - i. **Grants:** Bread & Roses, County Open Space, NRTC, Cooper Foundation
 - (1) Bread & Roses - \$20k awarded to CGNA and we received the first \$10k to use this year. May use this funding for advocating for Cooper Library access, as the library was built there for the community and we’re looking to have conversations with Rutgers about public access. This grant money is for public access to public spaces.
 - (2) County Open Space grant – We missed the deadline and the plan we wanted to implement may not be able to be completed in the timeline presented by the grant.
 - (3) NRTC – See above under Old Business.
 - (4) Cooper Foundation – \$5k awarded to CGNA. We are looking to work with CRA about using the space at 320 N. 2nd Street as a pop-up arts space and general community use space for events.
 - ii. 320 N. 2nd Street (see above in reference to Cooper Foundation grant)
- g. **Development Committee Report**
 - i. **ABC Barrel & DePetro Update** – The ABC Barrel Factory lot references the fenced in lot between Centennial/Linden and Front/N. 2nd Street within Cooper Grant neighborhood. It has been remediated. Looking for updates from the CRA, any progress/development seems to be frozen in time. Developer hasn’t really responded to requests/updates for information. The community doesn’t want an empty lot for the next 12 years.
 - ii. **M&M Partnership @ The Pierre building** – Community Room Access/ Agreement – Small community room which may be good for smaller meetings. Jonathan has been signing the tax certificates. We are due monthly funding of \$1k for about ten years to help fund projects within the community. Jonathan will get key fob from Christopher Maier to access art space.
 - iii. **Waterfront Development** – Residents have seen some activity at the base of the Triad 1828 Tower. The hotel construction had resumed. Triad 1828 name comes from the three resident companies’ owners/business leaders of the tower and the year the city was incorporated (1828).

- iv. **EMR – 201 N. Front Street** – Jonathan talked to their attorney a few times, who related that they can't get permits to build out their parking lot. They lost their power a few weeks ago and had to use their generator for several days; generator was pretty loud. The damage was towards the west side of the 100 block of Penn Street, which was fixed. We have one of the most redundant power systems in the area so we're pretty lucky within our neighborhood. They said they're willing to be a good neighbor. A concern was brought up about the commercial traffic down Ferry Avenue in Waterfront South as there is a lot of truck traffic using Ferry Avenue. Resident noted how many trucks were coming down on a daily basis. Wondering if we can talk to EMR about their industrial site and cut down some of the truck traffic going down Ferry Avenue. We realize they don't account for all of the truck traffic but if we can speak to them about asking them to reroute their trucks to go down Atlantic Avenue instead of Ferry Avenue, since Atlantic Avenue is the designated trucking route. Jonathan will speak with them. Resident asked about their construction on the corner of Front and Cooper Street – they can't get any permits right now so we're not sure what's being done inside the building there. Resident noticed fresh activity inside that corner space, maybe they are working on the café? Another resident asked about them restoring the exterior of the building? That was part of the historic preservation conversation as well as community benefits conversation. Bryon said EMR presented last year and they had said they would be working on the exterior this year. Construction is happening throughout the state now. Maybe it's worth asking them about an update about this.
- h. Bryon brought up that indoor gatherings are permitted for up to 50 people or 25% capacity of the space. We asked for feedback about hosting meetings in person in the future, maybe with a virtual component as well. Jonathan did talk to Rutgers about this previously, in regards to using the Alumni House for meetings. Academics takes priority at Rutgers, and they look to New Brunswick for guidance with COVID-19 restrictions/policies/etc. We do not anticipate accessing that space anytime soon. Suggestion of holding the meeting outside in the park (with social distancing).
- i. Jonathan brought up an article about homelessness in Camden, specifically along Kaighn Avenue, which was published in the Courier Post. Thought it was a pretty comprehensive article, talks about displacement, especially since the methadone clinic moved from 5th/Market to Atlantic. COVID-19 had impacted the social services available to individuals with drug addiction, mental health issues, etc. To view the article, click [here](#).

7. Announcements (See the CGNA calendar for more updates)

- a. Virtua Farmer's Market on Wednesday - 11AM-12PM at Osborn Family Health Center (Walk-Up) and 1PM-2PM at Virtua Health and Wellness Center (Drive-Thru)
- b. Street sweeping on the first full week of the month
- c. Trash collection is now twice a week (Wednesdays and Saturdays)
- d. Seeking volunteers for the Arts, Development, Events Planning Committees & other projects. Contact Secretary if interested.
- e. Next CGNA Meeting will be held **July 27th, 2020** at 7:00 PM (location TBA)

8. Adjournment – 8:23 PM. *Motion to adjourn the meeting by Christopher Maier, seconded by Bryon. Motion approved by members present.*

The area served by CGNA: "Cooper-Grant" is defined as the area contained within the following boundaries: Northern Boundary – the Ben Franklin Bridge; East - Friends Avenue (extended) south to Cooper Street, extending east to the West side of Fourth Street; South - the south side of Market Street; Western Boundary: the Delaware River.

For more information, e-mail CGNA Board at info@coopergrant.org

*****This is our 38th year as an organization*** Cannot attend the CGNA Meeting? Want updates, meeting minutes and agendas? Email: secretary@coopergrant.org & like our Facebook page: search cooper-grant www.coopergrant.org**