

**Meeting: Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 7:00 PM**

– Virtual Meeting > Join <https://meet.google.com/yvj-egqr-zdf> (US) +1 409-698-0145 PIN: 387292368# - 21 Attending

Agenda:

**1. Call to Order and Introductions – 7:04 PM**

**2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting** – Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting by Bryon, seconded by Ben. Motion approved by members present.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

- a. The beginning balance for the month of March was \$5,343.54. There was one despot from Neighborhood Solar for \$300 through our partnership with them. There were two expenditures: one for \$1,250 to our consultant (Montrell Sanders) for the Bread and Roses Grant and one expenditure of \$78.00 for our NJ annual report registration fee, leaving an ending balance of \$6,297.04. Motion to approve treasurer's report by Ben, seconded by Jonathan L. Motion carried by members present.
- b. **NOTE:** *The above treasurer's report was later corrected by Bryon via CGNA email to state that the starting balance was \$5,343.54. There was one deposit from Neighborhood Solar for \$750 through our partnership with them. There were three expenditures – two expenditures of \$1,000 each to Montrell Sanders as our consultant for the Bread and Roses grant, leaving an ending balance of \$4,093.54.*

**4. Neighborhood Safety and Security**

- a. Any recent issues? You must call 911 and get a report number for an incident be officially reported.
- b. Emergency Call 911 or 24hr Tipline: 856-757-7042 or STOPit Online Application (Code: CAMDENNJ)

**5. Old Business**

**a. Infrastructure/Roadway Projects (Cooper /Market/Federal/7<sup>th</sup> St/ North Camden)**

- i. **Market/Federal** - looking to redo both Market and Federal Street, as various alternatives have been presented to the community. The county funds are coming in. Waiting for the transition will the new mayor before moving forward with this project. They will talk about the alternatives with new mayor, then bring to the community to discuss.
- ii. **Cooper Street** – Dividing fence in the median already got hit. A few change orders went before city council. The project is basically finished.
- iii. **North Camden** – Deadline was 3/16/2021 and there will be a ribbon cutting in the spring
- iv. **7<sup>th</sup> Street** – Starting in the spring, it was delayed for several reasons.
- v. **Port access project** – Kaighn Ave., Atlantic Ave, Ferry Ave. They have engaged a consultant to talk about doing some paving and fixing those roadways.
- vi. Additionally, they are starting to put together the plans for the promenade project connecting the park to the brick walkway underneath the Ben Franklin Bridge. This project and its various options were presented pre-COVID.

b. **Community Solar** – Discounted PSEG Electric Billing [www.neighborhoodsun.solar/cgna](http://www.neighborhoodsun.solar/cgna) - Looking to get more people signed up. CGNA gets \$200 donation and the resident gets \$100 for signing up. This link is good until March 31<sup>st</sup>. Great for renters or anyone who is unable to put solar panels on the roof. This opportunity is open to anyone who lives in Camden, Burlington, and Mercer counties.

c. **Public Presentation by Camden County Officials:** Campbell's/Rutgers Field Update on the Community Access –

- i. Former Mayor Dana Redd (currently CEO of Rowan University/Rutgers-Camden Board of Governors), Camden County Commissioner Jeff Nash, Director Chris Orlando – Presenting an update in regards to the Campbell/Rutgers Field as well as an update for the community access agreement for this park/field. Since we last met last month during the February CGNA meeting, the stakeholders have been meeting on a regular/daily basis to hammer out the points in the Community Benefits Agreement. Hoping that this presentation tonight will provide the community more clarity for some of the concerns brought up by the community.

- ii. Camden County Commissioner Jeff Nash – It's been more than a year since the community meeting at Rutgers University and this meeting flushed out some of the issues and concerns that the community had. This meeting was the foundation for putting together the Community Benefits Agreement. This space will be a part of the Camden County permits system to ensure fair access and use for this park. The county is engaged in a large multimillion dollar project to improve multiple parks within the county. They recently approved \$14M for improving seven parks, not including this one. There is a general recognition that parks play such an important role in the community.
- iii. Director Chris Orlando (Camden County Improvement Authority) presenting the PowerPoint put together by Former Mayor Redd. This will be a county-owned park in partnership with Rutgers-Camden. The project site is adjacent to Rutgers-Camden campus, which was formerly Campbell's Field. Facilities consist of a baseball field, multi-purpose playing field, multilane track, portable viewing stands, lighting and field house/support building. Construction has been moving along, they are actually ahead of schedule right now. Project is still on schedule for a late Summer/Early Fall completion (looking at late August and early September). Camden County will have primary responsibility for project management and operations through the Camden County Parks system. They are in the process of finalizing the management agreement between Rutgers University and Camden County will allocate responsibility and cost-sharing (turf gets worn out, etc.). Maggie McCann (Camden County Parks System) mentioned to Chris last week that they are in the process of purchasing new software/online permit application system, which will be available to the public specifically for this park. This software will eventually be used for other parks in the county.
  - a. Statement of Purpose – Obviously Rutgers University is a significant contributor of this project, putting up 50% of the capital needed to make this project a reality. Purpose is to provide for the needs of RU Camden athletics fields, expand access to playing fields, with emphasis for the residents of Camden, including interscholastic programs, club and intermural programs as well as the general public. There will also be an emphasis on health sciences research and educational programs that will utilize the facility as well. Rutgers athletics teams and activities have priority use (based on their schedules, which will be provided in advance. Camden County-sponsored and coordinated events will be second priority, then public is third priority. Once the new online permit system is up and running, they will let the public know so they can get comfortable with it.
  - b. Security – Camden County will provide security except during the time that Rutgers University uses the space. This means Camden County Metro Police and Park Ambassadors will generally provide security and Rutgers PD will provide security for Rutgers University events. Day to day will be park/campus security, Camden Metro Police, and Camden County parks department
  - c. Parking/Traffic Control – Camden county will regulate in coordination with Rutgers. County engineer is going to put traffic calming into the plans; they are coming up with plans – recognize that there will be a lot of foot traffic and therefore they need more well-lit and well-signed walkways due to the anticipated amount of pedestrians
- iv. QUESTIONS from residents:
  - a. Timeline for opening? End of August. Construction end date is first week of Sept. but they are ahead of schedule.
  - b. Will the CBA be shared? When will that be ready? It will be shared as soon as its signed and approved. Chris said it should be signed soon. They are working through the last details. They are details important to Rutgers and the County but not so much the local community.
  - c. What does open access look like? Anticipate the park being open from dusk to dawn. For prescheduled events such as Rutgers practices/games, the public will have to vacate the fields but otherwise the park will be open to the public.
  - d. Ped access/bike access? When will that merge into this project? Anticipate that the parks will not be opened if there are unsafe conditions for pedestrian access to the field. That should be completed as they're wrapping up the project.
  - e. Flood zone – water catchment for this project? Jim Lex (CCIA) – Not a stormwater expert but there is an underground system – the whole site has been elevated. There is a stormwater detention system that will hold the water until it can flow into the system instead of just dumping it into the river. There was significant mitigation and the field was raised to help with the flooding issues.
  - f. Green Acres designation? Is that part of the plans? Chris says it could be in the future but at this time, this project is going to be a park without Green Acres designation.
  - g. Can residents use the new Camden County parks permit system to schedule time on the current Green Acres fields? Mike Sepanic mentioned they are talking about this to move forward. They're not discounting this idea. Rutgers needs to speak with the incoming acting mayor about this. Jeff Nash mentioned that they want to see how the permitting system works first before integrating the current fields. They don't want to take on more than they can handle at the onset of this new online program.

- h. Has there been engagement with the local sports organizations? Former Mayor Redd – CGNA is the first group that this PowerPoint has been presented to. They will present the same presentation to the Little League teams, local sports organizations, etc.
- i. Will Rutgers be taxed differently since they now have facilities on this valuable piece of land? – this is a partnership between Rutgers and the Camden County parks, so no.
- j. Felisha Reyes Morton – With past experiences, specifically the existing park, is there any possibility of the County Park Police being reestablished? There is an extensive waterfront park system and the shared facilities, which previously have been a gray area between Rutgers and Camden County Metro.
- k. There is a security plan in place for the new park. Chief Rodriguez has been working with senior leadership at Metro as well as other county entities to put together this plan. They've been engaged for several months to develop this plan to ensure safety in this area and for the residents. Jonathan is hoping to see the plan sooner rather than later and hoping to see more Metro walking beats in the area.
- l. Can there be a separate presentation about the stormwater/flooding issues and show how this park is contributing towards solving that issue? This went through the DEP permitting process, which took a significant amount of time. The flooding has been addressed to the best of its ability (in relation to the capacity of the space) to help mitigate the stormwater. It won't completely solve the problem but it will help. Resident mentioned that Delaware Avenue and Penn Street have deteriorated over the years due to water sitting in that area. This is still a long-term concern for residents who have houses that are not elevated above the flood plain.
- m. Resident wondered if the stakeholders can reach out to the Camden Parking Authority since there is a constant issue of parking issues and lack of parking enforcement for students and others parking in residential parking zones. Hoping they can talk to the Camden Parking Authority about this? Parking Authority will be having a community meeting regarding the parking zoning changes so Felisha suggested bringing this issue up at that meeting. There are only 25 parking spots in the corner of the field/parl.
- n. If anyone has any questions or concerns, they can reach out to the Camden County Parks Department and contact Jeff Nash by email [jeff.nash@camdencounty.com](mailto:jeff.nash@camdencounty.com) or by phone 609-744-6226.

## 6. New Business

- a. **ABC Barrel Factory Lot RFP – Director Simpson from the CRA** (<http://camdenredevelopment.org/Real-Estate/RFPs.aspx>) – Olivette Simpson (CRA Director) attending the meeting – Released an RFP for the development of the Cooper Grant mixed income housing project at the old ABC Barrel Factory Lot. It is a former brownfield site. It's roughly one acre. Unfortunately, since the RFP was issued in February, they cannot go into the content of the RFP. She can come back at an appropriate time to discuss the content of the RFP. 40% of the site is deed-restricted. 59% of the acre is able to be developed. So many planning documents point to developing this site (CGNA Neighborhood Development Plan among others). In general, housing prices are going up so this is an opportune time for this RFP to be issued. It is geared towards residential development. For the proposal timeline – The RFP was issued on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. They received one question regarding the site and RFP (questions were due by March 15<sup>th</sup>). The RFP proposals are due by April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The target decision date for the proposals received is May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Board Action will be taken at the June 11<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - i. Last time they released RFPs, it was a very productive and energetic process. Olivette hopes to have a similar process this time as well, to include the Cooper Grant Neighborhood Association for community input with the board.
  - ii. Distributed to NJ EDA contacts as well as local and regional developers in NY and NJ. Reached out to NJ Future, Greater by Design, WRT, among others, so they can send out to their contacts. Hoping they will get proposals before the submission date of April 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - iii. **QUESTIONS:**
    1. Assuming there is a successful appropriate proposal that is approved – does she have an idea when they would break ground on this project? Olivette related that since funding and financing is dependent on the developer, it is difficult to answer this question.
    2. Are there other market rate mixed income projects in the city that the CRA is involved with? Any projects like this one? Olivette does not believe so. Hoping that this project will be the tipping point – they would like to see more residential housing in the city. Hoping this project will meet some of the demand for home ownership within the city.
    3. Have any of the employers on the waterfront engaged the CRA about housing? Michaels Organization did talk about it (They would provide a set amount of money for employees to live in Cooper Grant Neighborhood). There have been some conversations about this. Resident mentioned that these incentives would be great, especially with COVID and people working from home. More people seem to be working remotely so it would be great for these private business to encourage their employees to live in the area. Resident mentioned that years ago, the city had a program to encourage workers to live in the city – this program is not around right now but

Olivette thinks there is a strong possibility of this coming back. Some individual companies/entities still provide incentives for employees to live in the city. Rowan still offers employees \$1500 a year property tax credit if they live in Camden. This space in Cooper Grant is one of the best sites in the city according to an appraiser, but it does have its challenges. Homeownership has been a constant challenge in this city.

- 4 Resident asked about 320 N. 2<sup>nd</sup>? Olivette doesn't have an update on this site. They are talking to Mr. Chang (owner of Friend's Café) but she cannot go into too much detail about that. CRA still needs to file certain forms with the DEP but they're not there yet.
  - 5 Question about Radio Lofts graffiti – People starting putting graffiti on the inside of the second floor. There is also graffiti on N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street but that would be the responsibility of the church or Friend's Café.
  - 6 Resident mentioned that the fence around the Radio Lots has been moved around so it's probably more accessible now and is a safety issue.
- b. EJ Challenges: [EMR Fire](#) / Covanta / [Camden for Clean Air](#) / [1-877-WarnDEP](#) Looking for different ways to engage the community and trying to see how we deal with it. There are several workshops through Rowan - [go.rowan.edu/airworkshops](http://go.rowan.edu/airworkshops) to sign up. Good chance to win a free home air monitor
- i Mr. Balzano of EMR had an awesome presentation several weeks ago about all the things they're committed to doing and working with the city. Part of their RFP talked about the water runoff. They will have a liaison position, which will be great for people in the neighborhood to have someone to communicate with. They will be starting their parking lot meetings to start construction on April 5<sup>th</sup> if all goes well. They are interested in the CRA information and plan to participate in those conversations.
- c. Community Health: [COVID Vaccines](#) / [Food Access – COVID vaccines](#) – KROC center is still going. BB&T had something a little while ago. Anyone who has issues, please e-mail Jonathan and he will try to help people get vaccination appointments. Rocky Wilson fell and broke his hip a week and a half ago. Please keep him in your thoughts and help him keep an eye on his property.
- d. Arts Committee Report (Vacant Chair Position) / C-G Book Ark (free book library in the Community Garden) – We received a Book Ark from Camden Pop Up Library and Marcelle painted it. Marcelle and Jonathan M. placed it in the garden and filled it with the book donations received from Camden Pop-Up library.
- e. Planning Committee (Grants: Bread & Roses, NRTC, Cooper Foundation)
- i Bread and Roses – We are a year in. We are up for another 10k in funding. We owe them a report, which is currently being reviewed by the CGNA Board. It talked about public access to multiple spaces.
  - ii NRTC- We are trying to get this submitted. Cooper's Ferry has not committed the time to help with this piece. We are trying to fundraise through Community Solar donations to get the money to get a consultant to move forward with the NRTC application.
  - iii Cooper Foundation – 5k grant that is postponed. We were planning to use this grant in reference to 320 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street but we haven't been able to do anything due to COVID.
- f. Development Committee Report
- i. ABC Barrel Lot RFP Posted - (Refer to above)
  - ii. M&M Partnership @ The Pierre building (<https://hestaliving.com/thepierre/>) Doing pretty well. They do have some rental units. We need to figure out their payment schedule. There is a resident there who wrote a letter about their concerns with the Camden Arts Garden. The Camden Arts Garden used to be a sleepy beer garden and it seems to be turning into a club and playing music late into the night (2am in the morning) over the course of the pandemic.
  - iii. Waterfront Development – Seems to be in a holding pattern. See above about development of old Campbell's field space.
  - iv. [County Microgrid Project](#) - Update - they are NOT going to rely on the incinerator. Looking for a report in six months.

## 7. Announcements

- a. [Hilton Garden Inn](#)/Water Street Grill 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday Live Jazz Nights – Great spot at the hotel to listen to some music. Let's patronize these businesses that are open to help keep them open!
- b. [Virtua Farmer's Market](#) Tuesdays: 12-1:30pm 520 Market St(Roosevelt Park)
- c. Immigrant Family Survey ([https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dma94PLxzJ7JSCx](https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dma94PLxzJ7JSCx))
- d. Free Tax Return Prep Assistance: <https://cwfp Philly.org/> ; (215) 454-6483
- e. Rutgers-Camden Community Fields are scheduled to be open to the public on Sundays from ~~10AM-4PM~~. Not 10AM-4PM anymore, Jonathan will try to get an update from Mike Sepanic.
- d. 2021 Zone 1 Parking Passes are available [www.camdenparking.net](http://www.camdenparking.net)
- e. Street Sweeping April 7<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup> 8am-12pm Please Move your Vehicles!
- f. Next CGNA Meeting will be held **Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021** at 7:00 PM (online)

**8. Adjournment** – 8:31 PM. Motion to adjourn the meeting by Bryon, seconded by Sonia. Motion carried 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](mailto:info@coopergrant.org)

**\*\*\*This is our 39th year as an organization\*\*\* Cannot attend the CGNA Meeting?**

**Want updates, meeting minutes and agendas? Email: [secretary@coopergrant.org](mailto:secretary@coopergrant.org) & like our Facebook page: @coopergrantneighbors  
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