

Meeting: Monday, September 27th, 2021 7:00 PM

– Virtual Meeting > Join <https://meet.google.com/yvj-eggr-zdf> (US) +1 409-698-0145 PIN: 387292368# - 20 Attending

Agenda:

1. Call to Order and Introductions – 7:05 PM

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

3. Treasurer's Report

- a. The beginning balance for the month of September was \$13,286.65. There was one deposit for \$3,000 from our partnership with M&M, leaving an ending balance of \$16,286.65.
- b. Still have not identified an accountant to do our annual financial compilation. If anyone has any recommendations for an accountant we can use, please let us know – we are required to do this as an organization to be compliant. We have reached out to several accountants in the city but have not had much response. It's not a huge undertaking to do this compilation. If anyone has any suggestions/recommendations, please contact Jonathan L. (president@coopergrant.org) or Bryon (treasurer@coopergrant.org).
- c. Motion to accept the treasurer's report as presented by Mr. Yoder by Sonia, seconded by Jonathan L. Motion carried by members present.

4. Neighborhood Safety and Security

- a. Any recent issues? You must call 911 and get a report number for an incident be officially reported. – Sgt. Levy of Camden County PD present. Sgt. Levy is the Community Outreach supervisor and works in North Camden. Doesn't have too much to present from the last meeting. Any questions or comments for Sgt. Levy?
 - a. Camden County PD did a great job for the Arts Festival and the CGNA Block Party - we appreciate CCMPD coming out to participate on a Saturday, hanging out with everyone, and being part of the event. Also thank you to CCPD for providing the Mr. Softee truck that afternoon. CCPD helped with traffic control and safety for the events and it was much appreciated.
 - b. There was a question about an incident at the end of Penn Street over the weekend, looked like a car came up the wrong way and struck a vehicle and a street lamp? Several neighbors were asking about the incident. Sgt. Levy said it was a DUI incident and it was handled.
- b. Emergency Call 911 or 24hr Tipline: 856-757-7042 or STOPit Online Application (Code: CAMDENNJ)

5. Old Business

- a. **Infrastructure/Roadway Projects (Port Roads/Market/Federal/7th St)** – Jonathan L. did talk to Kathy Cullen about some updates.
 - i. 7th Street project – which is 7th & Linden, they are working on the approval process through USEDA for the contractor, which should be awarded next month. They've been working on this project for a while. They are hoping to move forward and start soon.
 - ii. Cooper Street repaving – they recently repaved the intersection of Cooper Street and Haddon Avenue. They are looking to find additional funding for repaving other parts of Cooper that need paving. They are concerned with that underground infrastructure so they don't want to repave it right now if they need to rip it up to repair the infrastructure at a later time.
 - iii. Market & Federal – There's been multiple presentations and conversations on this for several months. Right now, there's a concept that they're looking to finalize – Concept #7, which looks to keep Market Street a two-way into the city. There have been a contingent of small business owners on Market Street that are hoping for Market Street being a two-way road but there's still time for those conversations. Hoping to make Market Street a business corridor and foster small business growth. This project seems to be moving along. This is a county

project with Coopers Ferry Partnership and this is county dollars. But not everyone is aware of the project on different levels so if anyone has any questions or comments on this project, please let us know.

- iv 2nd Street Port Roads – this project plans to cover the area on 2nd Street from Clinton to Atlantic Avenue to Ferry Ave. They are looking to redo a lot of the streetscape. This project is for trucks and concert/waterfront traffic. Again. This is another county-run and funded project.
 - v Resident asked about why traffic lights are continually flashing after peak hours on Cooper Street? Sgt. Levy asked about that and the purpose was to help the flow of traffic during peak hours but for some reason, the lights are being left on? Sgt. Levy mentioned that he's not sure if CCMPD controls the lights on that particular road full-time? They do control the lights in other areas. He will follow up and find out why these are still flashing. 2nd/Cooper and Front/Cooper are still flashing after peak hours. It's an issue for pedestrians trying to cross the street.
- b. **Campbell's/Rutgers Field Progress** – No official answer yet. Rutgers did not give any updates to Jonathan L. so he wrote Mike Seganic an e-mail asking for an update. There is a Rutgers Alumni-run event on Thursday (September 30th?) including an official walk-through of the fields with a dinner/drinks event at the hotel. Jonathan L. and CGNA neighbors personally feel a certain type of way since we're being told that they're not ready to share updates or information but yet they're having a full-on Alumni event directly related to this project to showcase the field. It feels like the fields aren't for the community if they're excluding the community from events like this.
- i Resident asked what we can do if we're going to be excluded from the field walkthrough event? Residents suggested writing a letter to the DEP about lack of public access to existing community fields, write a letter to city/Rutgers, write an op-ed piece, show up to attend the Rutgers Alumni event, etc. Resident mentioned that it's unfortunate because we've been trying to work with them [Rutgers] for years but they never formally responded to a community benefits agreement and really haven't made much effort.
 - ii Resident suggested pursuing legal action because of the violations to the GreenAcres funding that is being used for these parks? We won the Bread & Roses grant based on the lack of public access to public spaces within the city. We can only try so much to work with them [Rutgers] but they don't want to work with us so we may have to think of other mechanisms. We're in the second year of the Bread & Roses grant (first year we hired a graduate student to research public access to public spaces). Does anyone know a good advocacy group that we can hire or an attorney to help with this issue? We don't have a ton of money but there is some money from the Bread & Roses grant that could be used for this purpose. It's at the point that CGNA may need to hire someone to assist with this issue. It's physically and mentally draining for residents to go to all the meetings and help with input for these projects and continuously being ignored. No CBA has been finalized or signed for these fields yet.
 - iii Justin Dennis from Trust for Public Land is present– he's aware of what's going on at the existing fields and his opinion is that it's egregious. He's been trying to get information and no one seems to have information that they're willing to share, even to other organizations. His personal opinion is that CGNA should look into the Green Acres funding aspect and see what can be done. It seems like Rutgers has the city in the palm of its hand. Trust for Public Land obviously wants to see access provided to residents.
- c. **Block Party/ Arts Festival Debrief (Sept 11th 2021)** – Cynthia Primas is present. As part of the Bread & Roses grant with GreenAcres funding – we figured out that Greenacres funding was used for Johnson Park and the building, particularly the restrooms and ADA accessibility to the building from ground level in the back. The Arts Festival was held in the park, with the CGNA block party behind it on Penn Street. The fountain was turned back on (after Rutgers turning it off due to issues with a few individuals hanging out in the area and using it). We asked for access to the bathrooms for the event and we got that. We showed how the park could be used as a shared space and it seemed to be a popular event, which was great.
- i Ms. Primas was able to meet the new Chancellor, who stayed for the jazz show. One of the things that she mentioned to him is that Camden was never really a city that focused on having access to art and culture and this is an opportunity to use this festival and other opportunities, such as night movies and bring kids to these events. She essentially asked why shouldn't the neighborhood be able to do things in the park and in the building. Why can't we go find funding to fix the building up and make it more accommodating? The mayor also showed up. The IDEA center had a meeting and they talked about next steps – want to get Cooper Grant's input and get some programming so that kids in the community can use the digital center. Cynthia is stating that it's not fair that this public space isn't shared with the community.
 - ii While we generally speak about Rutgers as a whole institution, there are some groups within Rutgers that advocate for community outreach, such as MARCH. Overall great day, great weather. There were about twenty vendors. Rutgers had a good showing. There was a lot of stuff for kids, Mr. Softee on the backside. This event was planned within six weeks or so. There was some food on the backside on Penn Street from the Cooper Grant block party.

- iii Jonathan Morin (secretary) pre-purchased the food for the CGNA block party (\$179.63) as well as purchased ice for the block party (\$24.50). Block permit purchased by Jonathan L. for \$25.00 and there was about \$30.00 spent on miscellaneous items such a propane and things. This was well under budget of what CGNA planned to spend as part of the Bread & Roses grant. Jonathan L. forwarded these receipts to Bryon for reimbursement. We want to start planning this event sooner and get started with planning for next year, seeing how the Arts Festival and CGNA block party combination was such a success. Cynthia mentioned that they need more food vendors next year.
- iv Anthony Wright (IDEA Center?) mentioned there will be more workshops, such as digital event workshops, that they'd like to invite CGNA to. These will start happening next month, they don't have dates yet but they will pass along that information as soon as they do. He wanted to extend the invitation to the community to attend these events (digital animation, virtual reality, etc.)

6. New Business

- a. **Recruiting new CGNA board members (all positions) President, VP, Treasurer & Secretary** – Elections in November 2021
 - i We'd like to start recruiting other community members for the CGNA Board. While we did not have to do as much in the past year due to the pandemic, life does on. We have some new neighbors moving in. We're looking for some new energy and all of the positions are open for election, which will happen in November. We're looking for a new president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. We're looking for other people to get involved and we're not a complex organization but we do a lot of volunteer work. We do have professional income for the organization from some places. If anyone's serious about getting involved in CGNA, speak don't be shy and speak up!
- b. Last Mile Transportation Survey: [Last Mile Solution Survey \(qualtrics.com\)](https://www.qualtrics.com) – Ray Romo is present. Ray is a project manager with Camden Community Partnership. Ray mentioned that they were able to attend the Arts Festival and ask community members to take the transportation survey. Dr. Jalayar from Rowan University is also present. Ray is here to present the Last Mile Solution Survey, which is a public transportation study that focuses on improving health and access to transportation for candidates in more vulnerable populations. This study is being done in collaboration with South Jersey Transportation Authority. The first and last miles of a trip are often perceived as the most time consuming, uncomfortable, and least reliable parts of anyone's trip or commute. The first mile of trip refers to when you step outside your door and how long it takes or how far it is to get to public transportation center and the last mile of trip refers to once you get off at the transportation center, how long it takes to get from there to work or the grocery store. It refers to those parts of the journey that are more difficult because they're not on a bus or a train. This often presents barriers to health, access to transportation, education, and safety. People taking other transportation causes more pollution.
 - i As part of this project, they are looking at the current options for the last mile within the city of Camden. Trying to find solutions for more efficient and equitable transportation options. They are also looking at studies from other states to identify other first and last mile problems and solutions. This study will also take on an extensive community and business outreach program, which is one of the things they're here today to do as part of the presentation. They want to develop a last mile plan that they're able to take action on. They want to develop a solution that improves the health of the residents and improve access to health facilities. There are three different major pieces that they are taking into account: efficiency, equities, and affordability of the system. As far of modes of transportation, they will be looking at options such as shuttles, taxis, ride-sharing programs, etc. They are looking at the basic aspects such as sidewalks conditions, crosswalks, and the lighting. This project will also look at more innovative technologies , such as bike-sharing (electric or regular) programs and scooter sharing programs that seem to be prevalent in larger cities. They just want to really make sure we're doing our best efforts to explore what is available and how we can kind of find the best fit for the city of Camden. Every city is different and some options may work for some but not others.
 - ii As part of the community outreach, there is a survey for anyone living, working, or going to school in the city of Camden in order to collect data from anyone who travels within the city:
 - 1 First question: what transportation mode do you use for your daily trips?
 - 2 Second question: how frequently do you use transit systems - NJ Transit bus system, Light Rail (RIVER Line), or speed rail (PATCO)?
 - 3 Third question: What is your main concern about using transit system?
 - 4 Fourth question: How do you get to the transit stations?
 - 5 Fifth question: What is your main concern about your trip to the transit station?
 - iii Resident mentioned that taking a short trip on the RiverLine can be a hassle. The transportation schedule is inconvenient, the Walter Rand transportation center sometimes have safety issues (even with patrols present),

then she still has to walk a few blocks to her destination. There's also seating issues, especially with the vulnerable population.

- iv The link to the survey is here: https://rowan.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0SCrnyzUogr7822 They are looking to get at least 450 responses from people who live, work, and/or attend school in the city. Those who complete this short survey will be entered into a contest for a chance to win a gift card. Please share this survey with anyone who travels within the city!
 - v Jonathan L. added that this transportation study ties into the neighborhood plan we submitted for NRTC funding and trying to have better access to transportation to help the community and small businesses.
- c. Purple Air Monitor Crowdsourced Project: <https://map.purpleair.com/> - Camden for Clean Air and several other groups – Purple Air Monitor is a crowd sourced project with little monitors that monitor the air quality throughout the country, including the city. Purple Air has a map on their website that shows you the air quality wherever the monitors are set up. Ben set one up in Cooper Grant a little while ago, which shows the air quality in the community. The website also indicates what it means if the air quality is in the green, yellow, or the red. The past week or so, the air conditions haven't been too bad and they're been green and low. When we were getting residual air from the fires in California and the warm temperatures this summer, the air quality in the community was poor. CFET has one in waterfront south. As a neighborhood association, CGNA ordered five of these to place throughout the neighborhood. We used funding from a Cooper Foundation grant that we were awarded. We want to get a broad area of Camden – hoping to place one in North Camden with Lutheran housing, East Camden (Cramer Hill), in Parkside, in Morgan Village, possibly Fairview, and maybe one or two outside the city. These monitors tell you all sorts of things, such as weather temperatures and humidity. The website is a free, public site that you can look at the air quality data from the monitors that are already hooked up. We live in one of the worst zip codes in the state as far as air quality – a lot of it comes from the prevailing winds west from Philadelphia since it's a major city with industrial aspects. Not all the poor air quality comes from Camden but we do have some challenges in the southern part of the city. This is a good project to learn more about the air quality in the city in order to help improve it. Ben mentioned to Ray and Dr. Jalayar of Rowan University that the website and data are public access so they can use this information for their transportation project.
- i Ben mentioned that you can sign up for air quality alerts through the DEP. These monitors are hyper-local and focus on the area that they're in. Air quality can be drastically different block by block within the same city. If there are certain stationary pollutants, such as trash incinerators or a fire, these monitors can give you some data to see what the air quality is like in your neighborhood.
 - ii Justin Dennis is hoping to talk with Jonathan L. and Ben offline and kick around some ideas of what to do with the data collected. The more monitors that we put up around the city, the better the data collection, and the more comprehensive data set we have. This data can help determine the source of some of the pollutants. Sometimes there are businesses who we considered the emitters but they would claim that it wasn't them and blame other polluters in the area. We really didn't have a way one way or another to know for sure. While we probably still can't, we have a better idea of the air quality issues from the air monitor data. Different prevailing winds and environments (a city vs. a park) can impact the air quality. It seems like trees are constantly being uprooted in the city and some are dying, which isn't helping the air quality in the city. Trees impact the air quality in the area and that's part of the reason we've been asking for trees to be replanted in the city and in our neighborhood. Jonathan L. and Ben sat on the Shade Tree Advisory board for a while and they really try to stress the importance of tree presence in the city and other areas. Jonathan L. mentioned that the people that were exposed to poor air quality and lived in areas/neighborhoods with poor air quality, who had air issues or lung issues, seemed to be hit by COVID in greater rates. Trees do matter for flooding and air quality. Our neighborhood is situated next to a highway with cars coming and going and there are industrial areas nearby. The ash trees on Linden and Point are dead and dying and it feels much different walking down that street today than it did several years ago before the trees died. It seems like some companies and individuals aren't making the connections of how important trees are to the air quality and health issues there are in the area, especially once the COVID-19 pandemic hit.
 - iii Some representatives from Tobacco Free NJ are present – Jonathan L. invited them to the meeting because it ties into the clean air. There are plenty of businesses and schools that have no smoking zones (such as L3 and Rutgers campus) but that displaces the smokers to a public corner, which may be a residential area, a park or somewhere else. There's a lot going on in the city so there really isn't enforcement for people smoking in the parks and in residential areas. There are businesses and institutions that tell people they can't smoke on their property because they're health conscious but they don't consider the impact to the surrounding community's air quality when those smokers have to go across the street or stand on a public sidewalk to smoke. Then there's now smokers who are leaving their cigarette butts on the sidewalk and other people who have to breathe in the secondhand smoke. Representative from Tobacco Free NJ mentioned that they see this with hospitals who tells people they can't smoke on their property so those individuals will go across the street to a neighborhood and

those houses have open windows so other people are exposed to that smoke. It should be noted that the Camden County Parks and all state parks and beaches are all smoke free. Tobacco Free NJ constantly hears the question from smokers about where they're supposed to smoke. They are not targeting the smokers themselves or telling them not to smoke; they're just trying to limit secondhand smoke for families, friends, fellow employees, etc. They are working with companies and colleges to develop smoke-free policies. One of their initiatives is helping with enforcement for smoke-free areas. This also incorporates any vaping or marijuana laws when it comes to allowing smoking in certain areas. It is an issue of figuring out where people can go to smoke. One of their primary incentives is trying to eliminate secondhand smoke and they are more focuses on this issue – especially for health and wellness. Jonathan L. invited them to come back and present at another meeting.

- d. Arts Committee Report/ (Vacant Chair Position) – Jonathan L. is asking Cynthia Primas to be the official CGNA Arts Committee person and want to talk more about hosting events in the neighborhood and surrounding areas. We can then offer the space in the Pierre Building to Cynthia and the IDEA center to use for their events through our partnership with M&M. We don't own the art gallery in the Pierre Building but we have rights to it. Cynthia is happy to help since she does a lot of this work for the IDEA center currently.
- e. Planning Committee (Grants: NRTC, Cooper Foundation)
 - i. Bread & Roses Update / Phase 2 of Grant – Looking at that now. A little bit of the money went towards the CGNA block party. We need to figure out what we want to focus on the challenges we have as far as access to public spaces, such as Campbell's field, within the next year for the second part of this grant.
 - ii. NRTC Updates – Jonathan L. did talk to someone from the state. They promised us a month or so ago that the \$25,000 award letter that we're getting hasn't been put together yet. We did get a letter from our local council people stating we were awarded this money. We were awarded the \$25,000 grant for updating the neighborhood plan for the NRTC funding. Jonathan L. and Bryon did an interview to talk about our neighborhood plan as part of this application process. He has not heard back yet. If we are accepted, we wouldn't be able to apply until next year. It would be big money, if we were awarded NRTC funding. CGNA has been involved in this process for several years now.
 - iii. Cooper Foundation – We were awarded \$5,000 and we spent \$1500 on the air monitors. We'll see how that goes and see if we should buy more.
- f. Development Committee Report
 - i. ABC Barrel Lot – Not have not been able to build housing on it thus far. It's very frustrating that there hasn't been any development. We just missed another real estate bubble with low interest rates that would have been a good opportunity to bring residential growth into the neighborhood. We have to ask the city to cut the grass every couple of weeks. Maybe we have a conversation about other options for that one-acre space.
 - ii. M&M Partnership @ The Pierre building (<https://hestaliving.com/thepierre/>) - We have access to the space, hoping to have an art installation at the gallery since we haven't had anything in there since last September.

7. Announcements

- a. Trash is twice a week until October 1st, 2021 – Wednesday (recycling also) and Saturday AM. Trash will resume to once a week (Wednesdays) starting October 1st, 2021. There seems to be recycling troubles in the city. Recycling hasn't been picked up the past couple of weeks. You have to call Waste Management and City Public Works to report that. Multiple neighbors have noticed it and complained to Public Works, who needs to address it with Waste Management.
- b. Rutgers-Camden Community Fields Access: 856-225-2470 Monday through Friday from 10 AM – 6 PM. Need to call the phone number to get access.
- d. 2021 Zone 1 Parking Passes are available / Enforcement happening www.camdenparking.net. Jonathan L. did meet with Parking Authority about updating the ordinances to get ready for the new year with the new parking permits – also they are ticketing now that school is back in session. The ticket for not having a residential parking pass is now \$75.00. Jonathan L. did invite Councilperson Felisha Reyes-Morton but it doesn't seem like she's at the meeting.
- e. Street Sweeping first full week of the month (Wed. 10/6 and Fri. 10/8) – please move your vehicles or be ticketed!
- f. Next CGNA Meeting will be held **Monday, October 25th, 2021** at 7:00 PM (online)

8. Adjournment – 8:20 PM. Motion to close the meeting by Bryon, second by Cheryl. 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

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

**Want updates, meeting minutes and agendas? Email: secretary@coopergrant.org & like our Facebook page: @coopergrantneighbors
www.coopergrant.org**