

**EAST BRUNSWICK REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY MEETING
May 6, 2019 MINUTES**

Court Room
1 Civic Center Drive
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

8:00 PM

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Moment of Silence, and Roll Call

Mirah Adah Becker-√
Jason Friedman- √
Michael Lachs- √
Vice Chair Nagelberg- √
Councilman Stanley- √
Debbie Wynter- √
Chairman Wendell-√

Also present: Michael Hughes, Executive Director; Amy Denholtz Lewandowski, Agency Clerk; Walter Denson, Agency Counsel; Jim Kennedy, Redevelopment Consultant.

2. Statement of Notice of Publication, read by Chairman Wendell:

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided as required pursuant to the "Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act," P.L.1975, chapter 231, specifying the time and date, location, and, to the extent known, the agenda. A copy of this notice has been: posted on the Municipal Building Public Notice Bulletin Board located in the main lobby, provided to the *Home News Tribune* and *Sentinel* newspapers, posted on the Township's website, and filed with the Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency, in accordance with the law.

3. Reports

- a. Executive Director – mentioned working on the River Development agreement; the Coremark property closing is this week; and the Edgeboro resolution recommends the township award a PILOT.
- b. Clerk – None.
- c. Attorney – None. (Chairman asked about if anything was received from Ace Auto Wreckers; attorney responded not yet.)
- d. Planner – N/A
- e. Chairman – None.

4. Public Comments

Mr. Troy Bailey asked about the PILOT for Edgeboro and industrial property. Chairman Wendell responded that it's handled by the governing body. The agency does a financial study which gets circulated to council. The agency recommends property development needs abated tax to move forward.

Mr. Bailey asked about Ace Auto Wreckers. Chairman Wendell responded that the property owner requested to be considered redevelopment, light industrial.

Ms. Mary Pan described attending agency, redevelopment advisory, and council meetings about the library moving. People have concerns about the library move, traffic, safety. Why isn't this televised? Meeting minutes show lots of executive sessions. Signed confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements are required for participation on the Redevelopment Advisory Committee. Can there be more information, notice, and public involvement? Please share decisions and timelines. Can there be more transparency and sharing with the public? What about an update from the Executive Director to the Council?

Chairman Wendell responded that the agency can't divulge the plans yet since the agreement with the developer isn't signed and it's proprietary right now.

Mr. Hughes noted that the council is the legislative branch of East Brunswick. The agency was created by the council and appointed by the Mayor and is charged with executing the Redevelopment Plan. The agency only deals with the designated Areas in Need of Redevelopment. Closed session is narrowly crafted and revolves around negotiations with development and real estate transactions, budget, and attorney-client privilege. Advisory committee is public involvement, stakeholder engagement. The Mayor held a series of town halls. Conditional redeveloper designation is rapid and real.

Ms. Pan asked if the heads of the township departments are engaged. Chairman Wendell responded absolutely, but this agency doesn't have the understanding of what municipal services will move. The Mayor didn't say the library would move (Ms. Pan stated it's on facebook live). Yes, municipal services will move.

Commissioner Stanley said no one at the agency has spoken about the library and no discussion from the council about moving the library. It will be discussed with the redeveloper at some point. No municipal service will get moved without discussion. There is no executed agreement with redeveloper yet but many municipal services could be moved.

Chairman Wendell added that municipal services can be many things, including Middlesex County College. Nothing will happen to discuss filling the space till there is an agreement with the redeveloper.

Ms. Pan reiterated there is no reassurance about it being moved or not.

Chairman Wendell noted it was never discussed by council, only by the public.

Commissioner Stanley added that lots of things being said are untrue, and it's unfortunate when the body is trying to be as transparent as possible. There was a meeting at the Community Arts Center with over 200 attendees with great ideas. The redeveloper and planner will base it on feedback from the community. Look at some of the information. Negatives on facebook but East Brunswick is a great place and the Mayor's office is open to speaking with anyone. Right now is fact finding. The agency was prudent and adamant when picking the redeveloper and being in unison. We're all homeowners here and assure you that Mayor Cohen operates in a transparent manner.

Ms. Pan agreed that there have been some personal attacks. She asked for more information to dispel the misinformation and engage the public to help with that. Is it possible to have private one-on-ones be public instead? Not everyone can attend. Put

on the township facebook page and website. The agency website doesn't have much information and it's not timely.

Commissioner Lachs stated that people approve the downtown concept and can state whether they like it. We don't know a lot. We're engaged with a creative developer. These professionals can come up with something spectacular and redefine the town. That's the goal of this agency.

Wilbur Pan read a dictated portion from facebook and stated his concerns about the library moving from the geographic center. Listen to facebook. Is the redevelopment project contingent on the library moving?

Chairman Wendell responded that the redevelopment project is not contingent on any municipal service moving. The library won't move without the approval of the library board. The council won't move the library without library board approval.

Commissioner Lachs added that these are only floating ideas. How else do we find out if it's good or bad for the town if we don't discuss it? It may not be financially feasible, for the developer or the town.

Mr. Pan requested it be clearer that these are ideas.

Chairman Wendell replied that the idea is municipal services, but that encompasses a broad spectrum.

Mr. Hughes stated the decision on municipal services won't come from the agency.

Richard Walling of North Brunswick, son of the former Mayor for whom the civic center is named after, thanks members for volunteering to keep an open mind. Mr. Walling declared that perceived threats to the civic center came from the Mayor's own text, which stated it was a township goal – perhaps not by the council or agency – to move the municipal complex and library. Mr. Walling urged that the heart and soul of East Brunswick is the civic center, the geographic center of East Brunswick. Mr. Walling defended himself and indicated that everything on facebook came first from the Mayor.

Wayne Christie inquired about if the agency makes suggestions to or from the developer and what's the role.

Mr. Denson responded that the agency negotiates with the redeveloper. The agreement is between the redeveloper and the agency to implement the Redevelopment Plan. The plan can be changed by the council or Planning Board.

Mr. Wendell added that the plan was adopted by council.

Mr. Christie asked what's the purpose of the agency?

Mr. Hughes replied that it's narrowly charged with executing the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Denson noted that the agency is a permanent body reestablished by council. Any work has to be within the scope or parameters.

Mr. Christie followed by asking if it goes to council after, to which Mr. Hughes replied if it fits within the Redevelopment Plan. For the purposes of property acquisition, the bonds were sought by the township.

Mr. Wendell stated that the Planning Board reviews it for compliance. For a number of variances then the agency would request a change in the Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Denson clarified that the council has to direct the Planning Board to amend the Redevelopment Plan.

Commissioner Lachs added that in Montclair almost everything was in an amended Redevelopment Plan.

Mr. Wendell stated that the agency is here to work within the guidelines given to the agency by the council and Planning Board. The agency is charged with choosing a developer and implementing a plan to meet standards.

Commissioner Lachs added that the agency is here to make the town a better place. It's lacking things other towns have. Some places are rotting away. We'd love to make something great happen here. We can make the value of our homes higher too.

5. Agenda

- A. Approve the minutes from the Redevelopment Agency Meeting on April 15, 2019.

Motion to approve by Vice Chair Nagelberg; second by Commissioner Stanley

Mirah Adah Becker-√

Jason Friedman-√

Michael Lachs- Abstain

Vice Chair Nagelberg-√

Councilman Stanley- √

Debbie Wynter- √

Chairman Wendell-√

- B. Approve the Bill List (approval of bills owed by the Agency to various individuals, companies, and accounts).

Motion to approve by Commissioner Lachs; second by Commissioner Becker

Mirah Adah Becker-√

Jason Friedman-√

Michael Lachs- √

Vice Chair Nagelberg-√

Councilman Stanley- √

Debbie Wynter-√

Chairman Wendell-√

- C. Resolution Recommending that the Township of East Brunswick Award a PILOT to 39 Edgeboro Road Urban Renewal, LLC.

Clerk read an update to the last Whereas clause and Section 2.

Motion to approve, with update as read into the record, by Vice Chair Nagelberg; second by Commissioner Stanley

Mirah Adah Becker-√

Jason Friedman-√

Michael Lachs- Abstain

Vice Chair Nagelberg-√

Councilman Stanley- √

Debbie Wynter-√

Chairman Wendell-√

6. For the Good of the Cause

Commissioner Friedman requested to have better notice with regard to the PILOT documents since only having the weekend was not much time to digest. More discussion amongst the agency would've been appreciated.

Chairman Wendell responded it's a formality that's not required; it will be addressed going forward.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Stanley; second by Commissioner Lachs

Voice vote- all in favor, none opposed

Adjourned at 8:57PM