

SOUTH AMBOY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

MINUTES OF THE May 02, 2024 MEETING

Public Session

Kevin Meszaros called the meeting to order and led the Agency Commissioners, professionals and attending public in the Salute to the Flag. He then certified that this meeting had been advertised as prescribed by law.

ROLL CALL: Kevin Meszaro, Zusette Dato, Rachael Draudt, Gary Forshner, Tony Gonsalves

ABSENT: Camille Tooker, Christine Noble

Also, in attendance: Eric Chubenko, Executive Director
Craig Coughlin, Esq., General Counsel
Dan Balka, CFO

Kevin Meszaros introduced this evening's resolution. The Resolution Recommending City Council Remove Block 51, Lot 10 (211 First Street) from Broadway Main Street Redevelopment Plan.

A motion to approve this evening's resolution was made by Zusette Dato. Tony Gonsalves seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Meszaros – Yes; Dato – Yes; Draudt – Yes; Forshner – Yes; Gonsalves – Yes

Kevin Meszaros introduced the evening's bill lists and said the general bill list contained fees for monthly legal services, rent and utilities. (*Agenda Items no. 7.B.1.*) Eric Chubenko stated they are all standard bills for the monthly expenses.

A motion to approve this evening's bill list was made by Rachael Draudt. Gary Forshner seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Meszaros – Yes; Dato – Yes; Draudt – Yes; Forshner – Yes; Gonsalves – Yes

Kevin Meszaros called for a motion to approve the April 04, 2024, Agency Meeting Minutes (*Agenda item no. 12. A.*)

A motion to approve the April 04, 2024, Agency Meeting Minutes as presented was made by Gary Forshner. Rachael Draudt seconded the motion.

ROLL CALL: Meszaros – Yes; Dato – Yes; Draudt – Yes; Forshner – Yes; Gonsalves – Abstain

Eric Chubenko updated on various projects. There will be a presentation for 205 Main Street.

Gary Forshner asked when the building on Broadway is coming down, bids did come in, Mayor Henry stated they are working with transit.

Presentation for 205 Main St.

Kevin Meszaros opened the meeting to the public.

Brandon Russell – 327 Fourth St. - I hope these meetings can start on time; I don't come to a lot of them. The one I come to starts 10 minutes late, I get things happen, I have places to be too, I appreciate if they start the meetings as advertised. I do want to ask the attorney: are commissioners considered local government officials or employees?

Attorney Coughlin – Are you asking because of a letter that went out?

Brandon Russell - Answer the question first then I will get to my next question.

Attorney Coughlin - They are appointed commissioners, appointed by the council they are not employees.

Brandon Russell - Does that make them a local government officers?

Attorney Coughlin – I believe it does.

Brandon Russell – Local government law states that local government officers are not supposed to use or attempt to use their position for advantages for himself or others, I assume this applies to women as well. So, I am wondering if someone can justify why a letter did go out from one of the SARA commissioners endorsing a candidate from this year's primary and if anything is going to be done to rectify that. I think it is clearly an ethical violation.

Attorney Coughlin – This is your opinion. I think the letter went representing the persons title and she has the right to use her title. She didn't use agency letter head, so there is no confusion as to where it came from or written on stationary that would lead anyone to believe this was a statement of the agency and she is entitled to use her title.

Brandon Russell – What are you basing your opinion off of?

Attorney Coughlin – My experience, my opinion.

Brandon Russell - I would appreciate if we could put some type of procedure in place so this doesn't happen again, I trust that SARA does act independently and in the best interest of the city. I do think it is in poor taste for a commissioner to send out a letter using their title that they were appointed and lucky enough to get, to influence voters in any way she could have used her title as former council member. She chose one that she was given by the governing body. I really think SARA, the council and the mayor should look into this further and do something about it. It shouldn't happen again and it shouldn't have happened this time. I appreciate your opinion but we are going to have to agree to disagree on that because it is pretty clearly wrong.

Mayor Henry – The prospective developer has been very cooperative with the city; this would be good for the city.

Kevin Meszaros closed the public portion of the meeting.

Kevin Meszaros then requested a Motion to adjourn.

A Motion to adjourn was made by Zusette Dato.

Voice vote taken: All in favor.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:

Kelly Wolff