

# Garfield Redevelopment Agency

September 9, 2019  
Minutes of Public Meeting

Vice Chairman Peter Amadio called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Vice Chairman Amadio announced compliance with the Sunshine Law.

Notice of the time, date and place of this meeting has been provided at least 48 hours in advance (1) by publication in The Herald News and in The Bergen Record both of which are official newspapers of the City of Garfield; (2) by posting of the Notice of meeting on the Community Bulletin Board at the municipal building and (3) by filing a copy of the Notice with the City Clerk.

The following Commissioners were present: Vice Chairman Peter Amadio, Commissioner Joseph Delaney, Commissioner Raymond Simione, Commissioner John Easom and Commissioner Anna Sciacca. Chairman Arthur Andreano and Commissioner Daniel Rigoglioso were absent.

The following individuals were also present: Thomas Duch, Executive Director, Santo T. Alampi, Esq. – Attorney to the Agency; Roy Riggitano – Chief Financial Officer; and Beth Calderone – Certified Court Reporter.

## **The First Agenda item was the September 2019 Bills presented for payment.**

The September 2019 Bills were presented for payment. Commissioner John Easom introduced a motion pay all the September 2019 Bills of the Agency, which was seconded by Commissioner Raymond Simione and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

## **The Next Agenda Item was a request to cancel Agency Check #1233.**

Mr. Riggitano requested that the Agency approve the cancellation of Check #1233. Commissioner John Easom introduced a motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Sciacca and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

## **The Next Agenda Item was the adoption of the June 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes.**

The minutes of the June 3, 2019 were presented to the Board. Commissioner John Easom introduced a motion to adopt the June 3, 2019 Minutes as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Sciacca and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

## **The First Agenda Item was Old Business.**

Mr. Duch provided the Agency with an update regarding Meridia Transit Crossing, LLC, the property commonly known as the Schley Site. Mr. Duch indicated that there were rumors regarding the water leak and water meter at the Schley Site and that he felt it appropriate to inform the Board of the situation. Mr. Duch informed the Board that he has been well aware, involved and monitoring the situation. That there was a water leak at the Schley Site that the City immediately addressed as it was an emergency. The City has been discussing the matter with Meridia representatives. The City will be submitting the bill to Meridia and the responsible party will pay the bill. Mr. Duch then informed the Board that the City discovered on August 30, 2019 that one of the two Meridia buildings at the Schley Site did not have a water meter. Mr. Duch immediately had various meetings with development heads, PVWC and Mr. Willard to address the issue. The water meter was subsequently installed and Meridia will be back billed to the date of the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

### **The Next Agenda Item was New Business.**

The first item of New Business was the request by Meridia, LLC to designate a Condition Redeveloper for the properties commonly known as 100 Passaic Street and 95-109 Passaic Street. Dennis Lilioa, Esq., appeared on behalf of Meridia, LLC. Mr. Duch explained that the currently designated Redeveloper, Greater Bergen Community Action, Inc., has entered into a contract to sell the properties to Meridia, LLC and that Meridia would have to be designated by the Agency in order to purchase the properties. Mr. Lilioa expressed his client's desire to be designated. The Board then asked Mr. Lilioa about the issues at the Schley Site. Mr. Lilioa expressed that Meridia is looking to address the issues at the Schley Site, that it is their current position that the leak may have been caused by a third party contractor but that they are still investigating it and that they intend to address it appropriately. The Board asked what the potential development on the Passaic Street site could look like, how many stories and units. Counsel for the Agency opined as to the process and advised the Board that even with the designation, the redeveloper must go to the Planning Board for Site Plan Approval and the approval must be within the requirements of the redevelopment plan for the property. Meridia expressed that they believe they can develop the property within the requirements of the redevelopment plan, that they intend to file with the planning board within the requirements of the redevelopment plan and that they are familiar with the City as they have been previously designated as a redeveloper in the City. After discussion, Commissioner Easom made a motion to designate Meridia LLC as a conditional redeveloper for the property which was seconded by Commissioner Sciacca and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

The second item of New Business was the request by Paragon, the contract holder of a Memorandum of Understanding and a Option to Purchase, to assign the memorandum of understanding and option to Meridia, LLC for the property commonly known as the Kalama Site. Dennis Lilioa, Esq. appeared on behalf of Meridia, LLC. Counsel for the Agency reminded the Board that the last time Mr. Schaevitz, the principal of Paragon, appeared before the Agency seeking extensions under the Memorandum the Board questioned what would happen if the extension was not granted. Paragon stated that the memorandum would be terminated. Counsel for the Agency advised that the property would continue in its existing condition and that, in Counsel's opinion, without a redevelopment designation, the site may never get developed.

Paragon has now requested that its legal rights be assigned to Meridia. Mr. Lilioa stated that Meridia was aware of all the issues with the Kalama site and that Meridia understands the challenges and is looking forward to redevelop the property. After discussion, Commissioner Easom made a motion to authorize and approve the assignment which was seconded by Commissioner Simione and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

**The Next Agenda item was Public Participation.**

Commissioner Anna Sciacca made a motion to open to public, which was seconded by Commissioner Raymond Simione and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

Mayor Rigoglioso spoke and thanked the Board for its service. He stated that he felt that Meridia was always responsive and has always done the right thing.

Joan Banez of 20 Hepworth Place spoke regarding the water meter at the Schley Site. She felt the meter was an issue and that something else should have been done.

James Farias of Passaic Street spoke against new buildings on Passaic Street being more than 3 stories.

Mike Denistram of 104 Palisades Avenue spoke regarding the dangers of gas mains and global warming.

No other member of the public appeared.

Commissioner Raymond Simione made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner John Easom and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote.

Commissioner Raymond Simione made a motion to close the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner John Easom and voted unanimously by those eligible to vote. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m. Next meeting is October 7, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,

Santo T. Alampi