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CITY OF ATLANTIC CITY  
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MAYOR MARTY SMALL, SR.

City Hall  
1301 Bacharach Boulevard • Suite 706  
Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401  
Telephone 609-347-5400

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Andrew Kramer (Public Information Officer) – 609-226-3470; [AKramer@acnj.gov](mailto:AKramer@acnj.gov)

# Vast Improvements Announced at Historic Gardner’s Basin/Atlantic City Aquarium, Along with New Projects

**Atlantic City, N.J. (September 30, 2024)** – One of the most spectacular gems in all of Atlantic City, Historic Gardner’s Basin, has undergone a series of renovations and improvements during the past year thanks to the Mayor Marty Small, Sr. administration. Those improvements, along with the announcement of future projects and an update on the reopening of the Atlantic City Aquarium were highlighted during a news conference, this afternoon, on the Gardner’s Basin pier, across the street from Back Bay Ale House.

The City hoped to reopen the Atlantic City Aquarium this Summer after a four-year closure due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and much needed repair work. Unfortunately, supply chain and funding issues delayed the start of the exterior work and final stages of interior repair, including Phase II of HVAC replacement. City of Atlantic City Mayor Marty Small, Sr. was able to secure the funding needed for Phase II, which wasn’t part of the initial project. Exterior improvements were not part of the original scope of work, and Mayor Small determined the exterior needed to be fixed along with the interior before opening. The grand reopening has been pushed back at least a few months, with the hopes now being the Aquarium reopens before the year is over. To date, rehabilitation to the Aquarium’s interior, window and roof replacement, and Phase I of HVAC replacement have been completed while work on the building’s exterior (siding, trim, decks, railings, front entry doors and the addition of an entry area Mural), through various funding sources, including American Rescue Plan funds, is nearing completion. Visitors to the Aquarium can expect new, thrilling exhibits upon its reopening.

“The Atlantic City Aquarium is looking more beautiful than ever, and I promise when the doors finally reopen everyone will be in agreement this has been worth the wait,” said Mayor Small.

“We will never expedite something just to say it got done, that would be a disservice to our taxpayers. We’re working to make this the best Aquarium it can be, and it will be just that. The finished product will be able to compete with any other Aquarium in the entire country.”

During today’s news conference, Mayor Small also announced the City received \$1.4-million in grant funding to demolish the seawall bathroom attached to the Atlantic City Aquarium, where a brand-new bathroom facility will be constructed for public use. The seawall bathroom has not been open for several years. Reconstruction is expected to begin in the coming months with plans to fully reopen in time for the 2025 Summer season. Other completed projects at Gardner’s Basin in recent months include pier and piling replacement, dredging, new lighting and signage throughout the basin, improvements to the parking areas and sidewalks, and new EV charging stations. The City is also announcing further upcoming projects at Gardner’s Basin, including improvements to the maintenance building (new roof and painting), security camera improvements and trash enclosure construction adjacent to the maintenance building to centralize trash and recycle collection for the entire basin. These projects are all anticipated to get underway no later than this Spring.

The Atlantic City Aquarium is owned by the City and managed by the Department of Public Works. Gardner’s Basin management handles everything exhibit-related. Also participating in today’s news conference were City Business Administrator Anthony Swan, City Engineer Uzo Ahirakwe, City Council President, representing Atlantic City’s 1<sup>st</sup> Ward, Aaron ‘Sporty’ Randolph, Atlantic City Aquarium/Gardner’s Basin Nautical Park Manager Lisa Schall and Atlantic City Aquarium/Gardner’s Basin Aquarist Sarita DuCote-Stroud.

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