



NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes Regular and Annual Meeting

January 27, 2022

at These Guys Brewing Company
78 Franklin Street, Norwich – an via Zoom

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Becka Alberts called the meeting to order at 8:05 am. A quorum was established.

Present: Rebecca Alberts, Chris Jewell, Robert Staley, John Salomone, Swarnjit Singh, Jason Jones, Chris LaRose, Rebecca Alberts, Angelina Gardner, Rev. Benjamin Green, John Mancini, Bryan Hayes, Lynn Perry, John Harris, Stacy Gould, Mayor Peter Nystrom. **Absent:** JP Mereen. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Mark Block, Mary Riley, Devin Schleidt, Suki Lagrito and Lee Ann D'Ambrosio. **Guests:** Robert Buckley, Kathy LaCombe, Michael Rauh, Mark Bettencourt, Deanna Rhodes, Paul Whitescarver, Henry Resnikoff, Melinda Wilson, Joseph DeLucia, Fawn Walker, Michael Aliano, Tracy Burto, Bill Kenny and Claire Bessette.

2. NCDC President Kevin Brown thanked everyone for coming.

3. Rebecca Alberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2021 and December 9, 2021 meetings.

MOTION #1: Chris Jewell made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 28, 2021 and December 9, 2021 meetings. Kathy LaCombe seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

4. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown gave the annual report on NCDC's accomplishments for the past year and discussed the priorities for 2022. He said that Norwich has been resilient since the pandemic began with NCDC helping sustain small businesses and to grow the grand list. He discussed the City's allocation of ARP funds to NCDC to help small businesses; the new development of the cannabis industry in Norwich; seCTer's Build Back Better Regional

Challenge grant; the City's \$740K Bond for the continued development of Business Park North; the ongoing development of 77-91 Main Street into apartments and the current state of the Reid & Hughes building.

Mr. Brown reported on the status of ARP (Norwich Revitalization Program) application process. He said that NCDC is currently vetting a contractor to oversee the ARP/NRP approved projects in conjunction with NCDC. The application will be open for 60 days beginning on or about February 11 and anticipate reviewing the first batch of applications on or about March 4.

Additionally, Mr. Brown discussed NCDC's planning for the next cannabis event tentatively scheduled for March 10 and will be held off-site at a larger venue to be determined. Ms. Ginne-Rae Clay, the state's current Executive Director of the Social Equity Council told Mr. Brown to expect a higher attendance at the next cannabis event which will be a technical assistance seminar around the state's cannabis application requirements.

Mr. Brown reported on the explosion taking place in the cannabis industry in Connecticut. Three of the top ten cannabis multistate operators have reached out to the City. They are very interested in Norwich. Right now, it is projected that Norwich could see up to 5 million square feet of canopy. The initial projections are that the state will issue only 6-12 licenses. Developers are looking for 3.5 acres of land or structures to rehab between 50,000 and 150,000 square feet of space. The cannabis industry will provide jobs and tax revenue for the City. Norwich is one of the top locations for cultivation, micro-cultivation, transportation and labs.

Mr. Brown moved on to the Business Park North project (Byron Brook Business Park) and said that the Build Back Better Regional grant application deadline for the federal government is March 14. He introduced Mr. Henry Resnikoff of RFP, Inc., the contractor working with NCDC to develop the business park.

Mr. Resnikoff thank Norwich Public Utilities and the City of Norwich for all their support and assistance with the development of the Business Park North. Mr. Resnikoff said the site is right off I-395 at Exit 18 and comprises 384 acres with 2.18 million square feet available to build. It is the same type of format as the new Costco site in East Lyme. He anticipates breaking ground at the site in the middle of 2023 and it will take approximately 3-7 years to fully develop the build out. The demand is very high right and the supply very low for industrial park space. Mr. Resnikoff stressed that the new business park will create jobs, create revenue for the City and create revenue for NPU. He is currently working with Mr. Brown on the necessary entitlements and several grants including the Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant through seCTer.

Mr. Brown continued with additional priorities for 2022 including the hiring of a number two person for NCDC, an assistant director to help build and sustain NCDC into the future. He also spoke about the Ponemah Mills Phase II progress and the ongoing negotiations with the

current owners of the Reid & Hughes building. Lastly, he spoke briefly about the City's Plan of Conservation and Development which encompasses the Chestnut Street Mill complex, Terminal Way and the Marina. His ongoing and future plans for NCDC include an audit, a Simple IRA Plan for employees, a multiple employer aggregate plan for Foundry 66 members, public relations and growing the grand list for the City.

5. **Global City Norwich Report:** Suki presented the Global City Norwich plan for 2022. She and Mr. Brown will be presenting the plan to the Chelsea Groton Foundation for approval. Under the plan she discussed the goals for community engagement, outreach and facilitating current and prospective small business owners to fill the empty store fronts in downtown Norwich. She thanked Michael Rauh for his support and vision. She gave a brief overview of the Working Lab and the Faces/Places/Spaces programs. Suki also reported on the First Friday events, upcoming outdoor festivals and improvement to city spaces with public art and outdoor lighting. Lastly, she thanked the Lord Foundation for their \$40,000 grant for the Vanilla Box project to help improve and revitalize the empty storefronts in downtown Norwich.

6. **Foundry 66 Report:** Mary Riley gave an update on Foundry 66. She reported that there has been a steady increase in membership at Foundry 66 along with an increase in use of the Foundry 66 space. Ms. Riley said she has been working to bring in new opportunities and resources for members including the Small Business Administration as well as LEAD (Latinos for Educational Advocacy and Diversity) and SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) to provide support and information. She also reported on a new initiative that she is working on in conjunction with Three Rivers Community College to bring new young members into Foundry 66.

7. Ms. Alberts congratulated the new Board members and asked for a motion to ratify the elected new members. Mr. Brown introduced the new Board members: Angelina Gardner, John Harris, Reverend Benjamin Green and John Mancini. The new Board alternates are Bryan Hayes and Lynn Perry.

MOTION #2: Stacy Gould made a motion to ratify the election of the new NCDC Board members, Angelina Gardner, John Harris, Reverend Benjamin Green and John Mancini. Michael Rauh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to ratify the slate of new officers elected to the NCDC Board of Directors.

MOTION #3: Stacy Gould made a motion to ratify the election of new officers to the NCDC Board of Directors; Rebecca Alberts, Chairwoman, Jason Jones, Vice Chairman, Chris Jewell, Treasurer and Robert Staley, Secretary. Kathy LaCombe seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

9. **Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Jewell reported that NCDC has come back from the pandemic and is stable and doing well financially. He noted that once the ARP/Norwich Revitalization Program gets started, NCDC will begin receiving the administration fees from the City and put NCDC in a stronger position by the end of the year.

10. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report.

MOTION #4: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Michael Rauh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Mr. Brown acknowledged that it was time to say farewell to the departing NCDC Board members: Robert Buckley, Kathy LaCombe, Michael Rauh and Frank Manfredi. He thanked each retiring Board member for their service and dedication and presented each of them with an award engraved with their years of service.

Following the awards, Michael Rauh presented Kevin Brown with a \$50,000 check from the Chelsea Groton Foundation. The check represents the foundation's grant to the Global City Norwich Program.

12. Chairwoman Alberts thanked Robert Buckley for his service and leadership as Chairman of the NCDC Board of Directors for the past six years.

13. Mr. Brown asked if anyone had any questions. He then thanked Fawn Walker for her service and leadership at NCDC during the period of transition following the death of Jason Vincent.

14. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION #5: Stacy Gould made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Nystrom seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:18 am.

Respectfully submitted:

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio
Executive Assistant