



NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes April 27, 2023

Via Zoom and at Foundry 66

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Jason Jones called the meeting to order at 8:06 am and established a quorum.

Present: Jason Jones, John Harris, Chris LaRose, Bob Staley, JP Mereen, Chris Jewell, John Salomone, Mayor Nystrom, Stacy Gould, Lynn Perry, Angy Gardner, Swarnjit Singh, John Mancini and Bryan Hayes. **Absent:** Chairwoman Rebecca Alberts, Mark Block and Rev. Benjamin Green. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Mary Riley, Devin Schleidt, Lee Ann D'Ambrosio and Bobbie Braboy. **Guests:** Scott Lessard, Claire Bessette, Paul Whitescarver and Matt Grahn.

2. Vice Chairman Jason Jones asked the members to review the minutes from the March 23, 2023 Meeting. Mr. Jones asked for motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION #1: Chris Jewell made a motion to approve the minutes. Stacy Gould seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown reported that NRP Business Board approved 3 more projects for a total of 15 projects. There is enough money left for the NRP Business Board to meet one more time and approve any additional applications.

Scott Lessard of Leading Edge Contractors and NRP Consultant reported that of the total committed NRP dollars, \$2.1 Million has been committed with \$640,000 remaining. The remaining funds would cover 1 or 2 large projects or several small projects. He is working with NCDC to get the funds out the door. Currently \$123,000 has been paid out. Five projects are inactive or completed, 8 are in the design phase and 2 are in flux due to real estate transactions.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the BPN Project and discussed the current timeline for development of the site. The next couple of months should see the permitting completed. The \$500,000 Urban Act Grant is being used to cover project expenditures such as real estate taxes.

The property located at 16 School Avenue on the BPN site is to be demolished with these funds. The next step is for DOT, DEEP and the Army Corp of Engineers to file paperwork in order to move forward on the Exit 18 reconfiguration. Mr. Brown noted that the announcement on the RAISE Grant recipients should be announced in June.

He expects all permitting and design work to take place this year and being marketing the property. Just one parcel sale would put NCDC in the positive. Advance CT has identified the BPN site as one of the top 5 sites in the state to be developed.

Mr. Brown has had discussions with a company located in Massachusetts called Forge. They are looking to establish a presence in Connecticut. They could be potential tenants for BPN. Mr. Jones asked if Advance CT would fund the marketing of BPN. Mr. Brown responded that they would pay 50% and NCDC would pay 50% of the marketing costs.

Mr. Brown reported that he and Devin Schleidt attended a wind event on April 12 hosted by Advance CT. They made some good connections with potential businesses in the offshore wind industry. Connecticut needs to move forward with prepurchasing energy agreements. Mr. LaRose said that the City authorized Norwich Public Utilities to purchase energy a number of years ago and currently does with SEMAC.

Mr. Brown gave a brief update on the cannabis industry in Norwich. He said he has not given it much attention in the last 30 days with the exception of submitting support letters to the State on behalf of the cannabis growers already committed in Norwich. He said that one potential grower is looking at Nippy's Driving Range as a potential location. The opening of the first cannabis retail store on West Main Street is being held up by permitting.

Mr. Brown discussed the current CT CIF Grant Program. The state has given out a total of \$175 Million so far. There have been 196 applicants; 51 municipal applications; 145 applications from non-profit organizations and 80 applications for renovating public spaces. The state added a new category to the CIF Grants which includes planning studies, engineering, architectural plans and community engagement. The funding cap in this category is \$250,000.

4. **Foundry 66 Report:** Mary Riley gave an update on Foundry 66. Overall, Foundry 66 is doing well. There is a 100% occupancy of private offices on the first floor. The second floor lost one private office member due to the inconsistency of the Wi-Fi. Ms. Riley also noted that conference room usage is up by 39%. She reported that she is planning a second business series. Foundry 66 will now have a time management specialist and a business development specialist on site for a few hours each month.

Mr. Brown reported that the Foundry 66 revenue has bounced back from the pandemic. He also noted that the CAM expenses cause Foundry 66 to lose money over time but a known loss leader of about \$50,000 a year because Foundry 66 is an incubator for new businesses. Overall Foundry 66 is doing well. Mr. Staley asked what was going on with the old gym space.

Ms. Riley reported that she has shown the space to a number of people. The total square footage of the space is 4,500 sq. feet.

Mr. Jones asked about the Wi-Fi issue at Foundry 66 on the second floor. Ms. Riley said that the Staples Company group wants to come back to Foundry 66 once the Wi-Fi issue is fixed. Mr. Brown said that we need to invest in enhancing the Wi-Fi throughout the Foundry 66 building. Once that is completed, it will bring in more businesses and revenue. The members discussed the ongoing Wi-Fi issue and options to fix it.

5. **Global City Norwich Report:** Bobbie Braboy gave an update on the Global City Norwich program. She said that GCN is off to a great start. GCN attended the welcoming ceremony for the Amistad when it came to the Norwich Harbor. She said there was also a flag raising and march from the waterfront up to Jubilee Park behind Castle Church. Three Norwich Police Officers participated in the march. Ms. Braboy also reported that there will be a ceremony at Jubilee Park on May 6 to celebrate James Lyndsay's bid for freedom.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Chris Jewell gave the Treasurer's Report. He reviewed the current income statement and profit and loss report for NCDC. He noted that the current land value of the BPN site was \$594,210. He said that NCDC continues to be profitable and that the community benefit of Foundry 66 outweighed the income loss every month. Mr. Jewell also noted that NCDC was looking ahead to the completion of the NRP admin fees early next year and looking for ways to offset the loss of those funds.

Mr. Brown noted that NPU had approved \$250,000 in funding for NCDC in the next fiscal year starting July 1st and thanked them for their continued support. He also said that he expects the audits (both state and federal) later this year will cost between \$12,000 to \$15,000.

7. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report.

MOTION #2: JP Mereen made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Mayor Nystrom seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

8. **New Business:** The members discussed the establishment of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. The members agreed the committee should be made up of NCDC Board members and members of the community. Mr. Jones asked for volunteers from the Board. Mr. Singh volunteered to be on the committee. Mr. Jones stated that for now the DEI Committee will be a Subcommittee of the Board. The Board agreed to consider adding community members at a later date.

MOTION #3: Chris Jewell made a motion to nominate Jason Jones as the Chairman of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Mr. Singh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

MOTION #4: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to approve Mr. Singh as a member of the DEI Committee. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown asked the Board to approve extending the contract with RFP, Inc. to manage the BPN project on behalf of NCDC and the City. The Board members reviewed the draft contract extension. Mr. Jones and Mr. Jewell asked what the expected costs were going to be to extend the contract with RFP, Inc. Mr. Brown responded that NPU has covered the expenses over the last 30 months in the development of the BPN project. We have a funding stream to continue the costs associated with extending the contract with RFP, Inc. About \$184,000 remains out of the total investment funding.

9. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to approve the Contract Extension Agreement with RFP, Inc.

MOTION #5: JP made a motion to approve the Contract Extension Agreement with RFP, Inc. to continue the BPN project on behalf of NCDC and the City. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously

10. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

MOTION #6: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to enter into Executive Session. JP Mereen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:14 am.

11. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to exit Executive Session.

MOTION #7: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to exit Executive Session. Mr. Singh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:37 am. No votes were taken.

12. Mr. Jones asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION #8: JP Mereen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:38 am.

Respectfully submitted:

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio
Executive Assistant