



## NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Meeting Minutes May 25, 2023

Via Zoom and at Foundry 66

#### MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Rebecca Alberts called the meeting to order at 8:10 am and established a quorum.

**Present:** Jason Jones, John Harris, Chris LaRose, Bob Staley, Chris Jewell, John Salomone, Mayor Nystrom, Lynn Perry, Angy Gardner, Swarnjit Singh, John Mancini and Bryan Hayes.

**Absent:** JP Mereen, Rev. Benjamin Green, John Harris and Stacy Gould. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Mary Riley, Devin Schleidt, Lee Ann D'Ambrosio and Bobbie Braboy.

**Guests:** Scott Lessard, Claire Bessette and Matt Grahn.

2. Chairwoman Becca Alberts asked the members to review the minutes from the April 27, 2023 Meeting. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

**MOTION #1:** Chris Jewell made a motion to approve the minutes. Jason Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown began his report with an update on the Mercantile Building. In a previous meeting, DECD asked NCDC and MPTN to wait out the terms of the lease agreement. More discussions to come on potential outcome and negotiations with MPTN.

Mr. Brown reported that 80% of the funds in the NRP are obligated. There is \$637,000 remaining. Of that \$637,000 NCDC will keep a 10% reserve to cover any contingencies. The NRP Business Board will discuss this in the upcoming meetings. Scott Lessard reported that there are currently 15 active projects, 7 in the pre-design phase and 10 are getting stale; among other reasons NCDC is waiting on documents.

Mr. Jewell asked how fast NRP could use up the remaining funds. Mr. Brown noted that NCDC could direct the funds quickly if necessary and could also get aggressive with other properties in Norwich.

Mr. Jones asked Mr. Brown for an update on the CIF grants. Mr. Brown noted that NCDC is evolving its strategy in the grant process.

Mr. Brown also said that the next CIF grant application deadline is June 30. The focus for this grant application will be the Norwich waterfront. He is hoping to hear within the next two weeks about a brownfield grant for the Capehart Mill site.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the BPN Project. He said that he is currently working with the City Planner and others to plan the next steps. There have been 3 or 4 meetings, attorney to attorney to file the condominium documents for the 17 parcels declared; documents will soon be filed to start building the road.

Mr. Brown moved on to an update on the cannabis industry in Norwich. He noted that Norwich lost one cannabis retailer. There is some hesitancy coming from other cannabis retailers; NCDC will start looking for a second retailer to locate to Norwich. He also reported that a 3rd cultivator is still active. Mr. LaRose asked about the social equity licenses. Mr. Brown stated that there are not any more available and the State is not planning to have a second round. Many of the licensees are still hunting for financing.

Mr. Brown stated that the State recently sent out an RFP for a business or company to run the “Cannabis Conversations” in the State. He submitted an application and the State requested a 20-minute interview with him that is scheduled for Friday, May 26. The awardee will be required to conduct 1-5 cannabis conversation events. He requested a \$25,000 admin fee.

Mr. Brown announced that NCDC had recently received an award from the Connecticut Main Street Center for the Parklet Program and murals. CMSC is sending a team to video tape a segment on the Norwich tomorrow.

Mr. Brown had recent discussions with Mattern and they hope to continue work in the fall on the old YMCA building. All the permitting is completed. He also reported that he had some recent discussions with the developers of the 77-91 Main Street project about a cowork space and retail.

4. **Foundry 66 Report:** Mary Riley gave an update on Foundry 66. She reported an increase in membership with 6 new members with two renting the glass offices on the second floor. Recently, she hosted a patio party and the mural approved for the side of the Sunlight Building is in progress. Ms. Riley also reported that she is hosting an event on Tuesday, June 13 with seCTer on access to capital for small businesses.

5. **Global City Norwich Report:** Mr. Brown reported that the DEI Committee has met a couple of times already with Bobbie. Mr. Jones said that the committee has met twice and is currently trying to get organized. He said next month they will meet to discuss the GCN budget. Ms. Alberts and Mayor Nystrom expressed interest in attending that upcoming DEI

Committee meeting. Mr. Jones also reported that the DEI Committee is also working on a mission statement for GCN. He also noted that they have a huge undertaking with such a limited budget this year.

Mr. Brown said that NCDC and GCN are continuing to work on the path of community partnerships. They had recently reached out to CorePlus Credit Union. Mr. Jones said that the City website has a list of everything that needs to be done in order to have an event in Norwich. The DEI Committee is working with Bobbie to develop an information packet for any group wanting to work with GCN to have an event in Norwich. Mr. Jewell thanked Bobbie for her report and stated that it was exactly what the Board was looking for.

Ms. Alberts asked Bobbie about the location for the Cape Verdean Festival. Bobbie said that the festival will be taking place in Brown Park. Mr. Jones noted that GCN will have a budget for each event and the expectation is that community groups will have to adhere to the budget given to them. Mr. Brown told the Directors that Bobbie is doing a great job and that there are no plans yet for the Working Lab Program.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Chris Jewell gave the Treasurer's Report. He noted that April was a good month for cash flow. The Executive Committee will review the Draft Budget for the next fiscal year and that there will be the increases from NPU and the City totaling \$50,000. He also noted that Mary Riley has been doing a great job for Foundry 66.

Mr. Brown reminded the Board that the grant for the Reid & Hughes building will be coming in soon. Mr. Jewell also noted that the Chelsea Groton Bank Foundation will be announcing the grant awards next week.

Additionally, Mr. Jewell said that NCDC will be looking at some capital improvements for the Wi-Fi with the potential to piggyback onto the NPU upgrades in the City. He also noted that NCDC will be spending less on consultants in the next fiscal year as the NRP starts winding down. The final budget will be up for a vote by the Board at the June meeting.

Lastly, Mr. Brown said that he would like to discuss changes in NCDC's investment fund with the Executive Committee at next month's meeting.

7. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

**MOTION #2:** Jason Jones made the motion to enter into Executive Session. Chris LaRose seconded the motion and the motion carried at 9:08 am. The NCDC staff exited the meeting at this time for the Board to review the staff positions and salaries.

Following the Board's discussion on the staff positions and salaries, the NCDC staff returned to the meeting.

8. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to exit Executive Session.

**MOTION #3:** Chris Jewell made a motion to exit Executive Session. Mayor Nystrom seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:34 am. No votes were taken.

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

**MOTION #4:** Mr. Singh made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jason Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:35 am.

Respectfully submitted:

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio  
Executive Assistant