



NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes October 26, 2023

Via Zoom and at Foundry 66

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Rebecca Alberts called the meeting to order at 8:05 am and established a quorum.

Present: Rebecca Alberts, Chris Jewell, John Harris, JP Mereen, Chris LaRose, Bob Staley, John Salomone, John Mancini, Mayor Nystrom, Stacy Gould, Rev. Benjamin Green, Lynn Perry and Bryan Hayes. **Absent:** Swarnjit Singh. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Devin Schleidt, Lee Ann D'Ambrosio, Bobbie Braboy and Lucas Kaiser. **Guests:** Mark Block, Paul Whitescarver and Bill Kenny.

2. Chairwoman Becca Alberts asked the members to review the minutes from the September 28, 2023 meeting. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

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

3. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown gave an update on several ongoing projects. He reported that the documents required by the State DAS department for the lease renewal of the WCC Office in the Mercantile building were completed and the Norwich Marina deal was also completed with the closing having taken place. The new Marina owners are pragmatic without the deep pockets of other similar developers. The Mayor interjected that Mike Aliano had been very helpful with the new Marina owners.

Mr. Brown stated that there were no changes to his October/November Priorities List with expenditures or projects. Assisting the new owners of the Marina with a NRP grant was being discussed and will be brought before the NRP Business Board and will not be treated any differently than other NRP grants. Revitalizing the Marina and Waterfront is a strategic project for the City and there are ongoing discussions with the City Manager. The next most important step in revitalizing the Marina and Waterfront will be new fuel tanks. This could be a future CIF grant application. The Round Four CIF Grant Application period opened October 15 and will close on December 15. The State's CIF Committee told Mr. Brown to resubmit our previous CIF grant application for funding to revitalize and renovate the Marina and Waterfront.

Mr. Staley noted that in the past part of the issue with the Marina and Waterfront is that it is separated from downtown by the Thames Plaza. How do we connect the Marina to downtown? Mr. Brown stated that he attended a Chelsea Harbor/Downtown Norwich Mobility Study Meeting at the library last night and the Waterfront and Marina was part of the discussion. The survey is open until the middle of November and he is encouraging people to complete the survey.

He began his report with a review of his Priorities List and the Norwich Revitalization Program. He said that no additional monies will be awarded in order to plan for current projects cost overruns and delays. No NRP Business Committee meetings are currently scheduled. He reviewed the large projects currently taking place around the City including the Reid & Hughes Building, the Norwich Luxury Apartments (new name will be Water Street Lofts) and the groundbreaking at the old YMCA Building.

Mr. Brown stated that the NEPA and SEPA review process is underway along with the OSA process of the Business Park North Project. So far, he has only received 2 comments from DEEP. Currently there is a City Inland/Wetlands Committee meeting scheduled for October 5, 2023 with more to follow. He said he expects that by February all required reviews and decisions will be completed and that NCDC will be able to send out an RFP for a construction firm. Mr. Brown also noted that the Line of Credit established at Chelsea Groton Bank had been approved and was currently in place to start paying for BPN development expenses. He briefly reviewed the process that had been set up to record the invoices, process them for payment and finally reimbursement from DECD out of the Urban Act Grant funds.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the Business Park North Project. He has had numerous conversations with residents around the BPN site regarding lines and borders which have finally been settled. The next CCP meeting is scheduled for November 21 with a public comment period that will close in January. He anticipates that an RFP will be sent out sometime in the March/April 2024 time frame for construction of the road. Mr. Brown announced that several inquiries have come in to AdvanceCT regarding opportunities at the BPN site.

Mr. Brown noted that the Quinnipiac Valley Growth Partners had expressed interest in a cannabis retail site in Norwich but are currently undergoing an internal management shuffle.

Mr. Brown reported that the Ponemah Mill South Mill renovation abatement was complete. He noted that 59% of the units in the first mill building are affordable dwelling units and once complete the South Mill building will have 39% of the units set aside as affordable dwelling units. Mr. Brown also said that there has been increasing interest in the 77-91 Main Street development as well as Ponemah Mill. The model units at 77-91 Main Street should be ready at the end of November or early December.

Mr. Salomone noted that the City's public works department is doing a better job of maintaining the public garage across the street from the 77-91 Main Street development with different lighting in the garage to come.

4. **Foundry 66 Report:** With Mary Riley out on medical leave, Kevin Brown gave the Foundry 66 update. He reported that NCDC staff member, Lucas Kaiser had been covering Foundry 66 while Mary was out. Lucas signed up at least one new member and assisted a current member moving from the Sunlight Building to a glass cubicle on the second floor of Foundry 66. Mr. Brown also reported that Lucas and Mary have been working on designing new banners for the Main Street area. They will be the same colors and design as the window clings that will be going on the windows of the staircase in the City garage across from the 77-91 Main Street development project.

5. **Global City Norwich Report:** Bobbie Braboy gave an update on current Global City Norwich activities. She reported that GCN hosted an art grub crawl recently with 13 attendees. It was a great success. Ms. Braboy announced that the NorWitch Halloween Strut will be on Saturday, October 28. Additionally, she is submitting several grant applications. Ms. Braboy also noted that the Board DEI Subcommittee still needed to replace Jason Jones at the head of the committee. She would like to have a DEI Committee meeting sometime in December.

Mr. Brown said that the Executive Committee/Nominating Committee will take up the issue of Mr. Jones' replacement on the DEI Committee at the next meeting.

Ms. Braboy reported that the Downtown Partners want to establish better relationships with all the downtown businesses. Ms. Braboy announced that she would be submitting an application to the CT Main Street Center's current main street project called the Main Street Accelerator Program. The focus of the application will be to change the perception of downtown Norwich. If accepted, it will be a 6-month long project. Part of this project will coincide with the Chelsea Harbor/Downtown Norwich Mobility Study and filling vacant spaces in downtown Norwich. Her focus on the application will be to make downtown Norwich inclusive and inviting.

Mr. Brown interjected that Simone Oliva, the new PR person at Norwich Public Utilities will be working with Bobbie on a marketing plan for 2024 and that Bobbie is in contact with the different ethnic communities in Norwich to plan events for 2024. Lastly, Ms. Braboy announced that she is working on re-imaging the Working Lab program and would like to make the program a more tangible project for participants. She is looking at incorporating some type of STEM related project in conjunction with the National STEM Program.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Jewell gave an update on NCDC's financials. He noted that there have been some inconsistencies in the financial reports and that they are being worked out. He also reported on the dramatic drop in the cash balance due to the real estate taxes owed for the BPN properties but noted that NCDC will be reimbursed for this expense out of the UAG grant. He reiterated the importance of a long-range plan for NCDC's operating expenses.

7. Chairwoman Becka Alberts asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report.

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

Mr. Brown noted that NCDC budgeted for a federal audit but really did not think NCDC would reach the threshold triggering the required federal audit. However, it now looks like an audit will be required as the threshold is \$750,000 and NCDC is currently at \$743,000 before the salaries from the previous fiscal year are added in.

8. **New Business:** Ratification of Resolution 21-23. The resolution was read into the record by Chairwoman Rebecca Alberts:

Resolution 21-23: BE IT RESOLVED – The Board of Directors for the Norwich Community Development Corporation ("NCDC") authorizes the President, Kevin Brown as its representative, and on its behalf, to execute and deliver all contracts which it deems to be necessary or appropriate to carry out its business, and to do all things necessary or appropriate to carry out the terms of those contracts, including executing and delivering all agreements and documents contemplated by those contracts with the State of Connecticut and its Department of Administrative Services.

Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve Resolution 21-23.

MOTION #3: JP Mereen made a motion to approve **Resolution 21-23** as presented. Chris LaRose seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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

MOTION #4: Chris Jewell made a motion to enter into Executive Session. JP Mereen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 8:45 am.

10. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn the meeting.

MOTION #5: JP Mereen made a motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn the meeting. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:25 am. No votes were taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio