



NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes November 30, 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, Jason Jones, Chris Jewell, John Harris, Chris LaRose, Bob Staley, John Salomone, Rev. Benjamin Green, Mayor Nystrom, John Mancini, Stacy Gould, John Harris, Lynn Perry, Angy Gardner and Bryan Hayes. **Absent:** JP Mereen and Swarnjit Singh. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Mary Riley, Devin Schleidt, Lee Ann D'Ambrosio, Bobbie Braboy and Lucas Kaiser.

Guests: Scott Lessard, Mark Block, Paul Whitescarver, Claire Bessette and Bill Kenny.

2. Chairwoman Becca Alberts asked the members to review the minutes from the October 26, 2023 meeting. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

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

3. Chairwoman Beck Alberts reported that the Nominating Committee ne: Executive Committee met to discuss filling the Vice Chairman vacancy following the resignation of Jason Jones from the Board. The Committee agreed to nominate Chris Jewell to replace Jason Jones as the Vice Chairman and John Mancini to replace Chris Jewell as Treasurer. Rebecca Alberts will remain as Chairwoman and Robert Staley will remain Secretary.

Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the nominations for the officers of the Executive Committee.

MOTION #2: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to approve the slate of officers of the Executive Committee and Board. Chris LaRose seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Alberts stated that the Nominating Committee also approved moving Lynn Perry from a Board alternate to a voting member of the Board to replace Jason Jones. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve Lynn Perry as a voting member of the NCDC Board of Directors.

MOTION #3: Chris Jewell made a motion to approve Lynn Perry as a voting member of the NCDC Board of Directors. John Mancini seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

4. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown began his report by asking the members to consider candidates for the vacant alternate position on the NCDC Board of Directors. He asked that any suggestions be passed on to Ms. Alberts.

Mr. Brown reported that NCDC has been very busy recently with NRP, Occum Industrial Center and cannabis. 98% of the NRP funds have been allocated. There are currently 5 or 6 projects that NCDC will not be able to fund. NCDC needs to figure out what to do.

The BPN/OIC line of credit with Chelsea Groton Bank process has been established and 25% of the UAG has been used. OSTA has done the first step in their study. NCDC continues to work with Cushman & Wakefield on marketing and designing an OIC logo. AdvanceCT certified the BPN/OIC site's readiness. The members discussed promoting our local utilities and reliability on the AdvanceCT site.

Mr. Brown reported on the Committee on the City Plan. He gave them a presentation on BPN/OIC last week. He presented a good subdivision plan and it has already passed all the City required regulations. The public comment period will close on December 19. Mr. Brown noted that if the Committee denies the plan, NCDC is prepared to appeal.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the cannabis industry in Norwich. Mr. Bigs is currently renovating the building at 5th Eighth Street. Renovations at the 115 Forrest Street site have been stalled due to interior strife at the company. Mr. Brown noted that if the company ends up walking away from the site at 115 Forrest Street, someone else will take it. The members discussed the State's current moratorium on cannabis retailers advertising which affecting their sales. No word yet from the City on the municipal tax revenue.

Mr. Brown also reported that the State's Social Equity Council dropped the ball on the RFQ grant to promote social responsibility early in the summer. The Social Equity Council recently picked the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut to become the trusted messenger. He noted that GCN Director Bobbie Braboy will be the Norwich Messenger and Rev. Green is working with the Pardon Program on same.

Continuing his report, Mr. Brown gave an update on the Waterfront and Marina. He said that the next CIF Grant Application – Round 4 – due on December 15 would again request funding to renovate and upgrade the Marina and Waterfront.

Mr. Brown discussed the priorities for renovations at the Marina, specifically the docks needing to be replaced by the restaurant. New gas tanks will be put in but they will be above ground and not underground as previously. He also noted that he has been in discussions with the City Planner on expanding the Heritage Trail which goes through the Waterfront. Mr. Whitescarver stated that seCTer hired a company called the Golden Shovel and he will reach out to them about the Waterfront and Marina.

Additionally, Mr. Brown reported that he and the City are currently working to recover the old dump on Hollyhock Island and install solar farm on the island's 3 acres. Discussions are also under way on redoing Chelsea Harbor Drive. The members discussed further financial options for the Waterfront and Marina.

Mr. Brown gave a quick update on the renovations taking place at the Reid & Hughes Building. He also reported that model apartments at the Water Street Lofts are done. The ground level retail spaces will not be completely renovated until at least February. He is looking into a partial COO for the apartments even if the retail spaces are still being renovated.

Mr. Brown noted that things are moving along at the Ponemah Mill Phase II. The roof work has been completed as well as the interior abatement. The developers are now looking for contractors to build out the apartments. NCDC is also working on an RFP for an architect/builder to carry out the Yale Urban Design Workshop plan for Jubilee Park.

The three properties previously owned by the Stackstone Group on Broadway finally have a new owner. The new owner came to Foundry 66 recently and met with Mr. Brown and Mary Riley. As an aside, Mr. Brown suggested that the CIF Grant Application – Round 10 will focus on affordable housing and the pocket park next to these properties. Mr. Brown noted that Lucas Kaiser is currently working on the esthetics of the Main Street Garage across from the Water Street Lofts.

5. **Foundry 66 Report:** Mary Riley gave an update on Foundry 66. She reported that the last retail space in the Sunlight Building had been rented as well as the last private office on the first floor. Ms. Riley said she is working on new window signage and new, bigger signs for the parking lot. She reported that the second floor of Foundry 66 has a 63% occupancy rate of the private offices and the building owner, Tim Owens, is planning to create a large private office in the atrium area. Ms. Riley also gave a brief update on recent events at Foundry 66.

Scott Lessard gave a brief update on the Norwich Revitalization Program. The NRP Business Board met the week before Thanksgiving. The program began 20 months ago; there have been 68 formal inquiries, 18 projects funded, 10 projects paid out and under Code Corrections -16 projects were funded and 5 have been completed. Some of the bigger projects such as the Reid & Hughes Building are taking longer than expected. Mr. Lessard also noted that the Ventura Barber Shop, the first NRP Applicant before the program officially kicked off has expanded since opening in October 2021.

And the Eyes on Main Street Project is about ready to start construction. Mr. Brown interjected that there are several other potential NRP projects including the Reid & Hughes Building, the Flat Iron Building and the building at 1 Wisconsin Avenue which needs rehabilitation; the Mini Melts location at 225 Asylum Street, 71 Franklin Street and 206-210 Main Street. Mr. Lessard noted that several projects have gone over budget which was discussed at the NRP Business Board meeting.

The Mayor asked if NCDC was taking more NRP applications. Mr. Brown answered that if some of the NRP funds are returned to NCDC then that would allow more funding for more projects. The next NRP Business Board meeting will be in March 2024.

6. **Global City Norwich Report:** Bobbie Braboy gave an update on current activities in the Global City Norwich Program. She reported that GCN submitted an application to the CT Main Street Center's Accelerator Program and it was approved. The kickoff for the program is December 7. Ms. Braboy reported on the finances for the Global City Norwich Program since she became the Director in April. She noted that she expects to start applying for some grants beginning in January 2024.

Mr. Brown noted that the ARP funds from the City for the Global City Norwich Program has paid for GCN and Bobbie's position directing the program.

7. **Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Jewell thanked everyone for their reports. He said that NCDC's current budget is heading in the right direction. He anticipates some funding in the range of \$100,000. Mr. Jewell also reported that NCDC's long time bookkeeper, Patricia McManus had resigned and the new bookkeeper position will affect the budget but overall will provide a smoother process.

Mr. Jewell stated that NCDC's proposed budget will be due to the City in a couple of weeks and noted that without funding, it would be difficult for NCDC to stay on course. Lastly, he noted that the revenue reported from Foundry 66 is a little bit inflated due to a new member paying for a full year up front.

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. John Salomone seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Mr. Brown and Ms. Alberts briefly discussed the resolutions being presented to the Board for approval.

Ms. Alberts read **Resolution 22-23** into the record:

Resolution 22-23: BE IT RESOLVED - that the Norwich Community Development Corporation (“NCDC”) authorizes the President, Kevin Brown, as its representative, and on its behalf, to comply with all rules conditions and obligations as required by the State of Connecticut’s Department of Economic and Community Development (“DECD”), for the financial assistance provided NCDC through the State’s CIF Grant, for the purpose of improving Exit 18 off Interstate 395 to support the development of the Business Park North Project and not to exceed \$11.391 million. Additional information and other documents as may be required by the State of Connecticut, including but not limited to a Financial Assistance Proposal, and Assistance Agreement will be provided in accordance with the terms set forth in the CIF Grant. The President is further authorized to execute and accept the Financial Assistance Proposal and Assistance Agreement, and such other documents as may be required under the terms of the Financial Assistance Proposal and Assistance Agreement. The Secretary of the Corporation is further authorized to execute a resolution in form as may be required by DECD, the terms of which are consistent with this resolution.

Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve **Resolution 22-23**.

MOTION #5: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to approve **Resolution 22-23**. Mr. Mancini seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Alberts read **Resolution 23-23** into the record:

Resolution 23-23 (Ratification): BE IT RESOLVED - that the Norwich Community Development Corporation (“NCDC”) authorizes the President, Kevin Brown, as its representative, and on its behalf, to engage Matsuda & Associates, LLC to prepare a 2024 USDOT RAISE Grant application on behalf of NCDC for improvements to the Exit 18/I-395 interchange including development of a benefit-cost analysis, a comprehensive and complete application, including strategic advisement and engagement plans, and acknowledgment that this grant writing effort will be funded through the CIF Grant.

Ms. Alberts noted that this resolution was approved by the Executive Committee and asked for a motion to ratify **Resolution 23-23**:

MOTION #6: Mayor Nystrom made a motion to ratify **Resolution 23-23**. Mr. Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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

MOTION #7: Chris Jewell made a motion to enter into Executive Session. Mayor Nystrom seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:39 am.

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

MOTION #8: John Salomone made a motion to exit Executive Session. Mayor Nystrom seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:57 am. No votes were taken.

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

MOTION #9: John Salomone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:58 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio