



NCDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes March 28, 2024

Via Zoom and at Foundry 66

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** Chairwoman Rebecca Alberts called the meeting to order at 8:04 am and established a quorum.

Present: Rebecca Alberts, Chris Jewell, John Harris, JP Mereen, Chris LaRose, Bob Staley, Angy Gardner, John Salomone, John Mancini, Mayor Nystrom, Shiela Hayes, Rev. Benjamin Green, Lynn Perry, Swarnjit Singh, and Bryan Hayes. **Absent:** John Harris. **Other Attendees:** Kevin Brown, Mary Riley, Devin Schleidt, Lee Ann D'Ambrosio, Bobbie Braboy, Lucas Kaiser and Scott Lessard.

Guests: Mark Block, Paul Whitescarver and Claire Bessette.

2. Chairwoman Becca Alberts asked the members to review the minutes from the February 22, 2024 meeting. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

MOTION #1: Chris LaRose made a motion to approve the minutes. Swarnjit Singh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

3. **President's Report:** Kevin Brown began his report with a review of his Priorities List and the Norwich Revitalization Program. He reported that the NRP funds had been 100% allocated. The goal for the next month would be to have all the funds obligated.

Mr. Brown stated that he and the NCDC staff attended a recent CT Main Street Summit on Vacancy and Blight. They highlighted these issues in Norwich, Berlin and Hartford. The Summit had a sold-out crowd.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the Occum Industrial Center (formerly Business Park North). The City's Committee on the City Plan recently approved the subdivision plan and it was also approved by the City Planner. The CIF Grant of \$11.4 Million is now open and NCDC can now start work on the Exit 18 interchange off I-395 and billing against these expenses. The OSTA Step One is Completed and the OSTA Step Two is in process.

Mr. Brown provided a brief update on cannabis. He noted that 16 legitimate groups have paid the required \$3 Million and received their license from the State. Five of these are looking at Norwich. The State may allow some of the cultivators to become micro-cultivators because they are not in a position to pay the \$3 Million fee for the license. The State Legislature is currently considering outdoor growing with a hard structure green house that can withstand all types of New England weather. The State government is also looking at changing the requirements of the 8 census tracts in Norwich to make it easier for these groups to find a suitable location. As of right now, there is no second licensing round in Connecticut.

Mr. Brown announced that the Norwich Waterfront had been awarded a \$2 Million CIF Grant from the State. They had asked for a total of \$11 Million to address the top issues of the electric grid and fuel tanks. Right now, we are focusing on a splashpad and ice cream stand at the Waterfront and Marina. He has not received any out brief from the DECD CIF Committee. NCDC may resubmit the Waterfront Grant Application in the next round.

Shiela Hayes asked if the City is not being competitive enough with the CIF Committee by not having hired professionals lobby on behalf of Norwich. She noted that you have to pay to play. Mr. Brown reported that the CIF Waterfront and Marina grant included a stage, splash pad and skating rink area. Ms. Hayes asked if a concert shell would work better than a stage.

Mr. Brown reported that the OPM Director that oversees the State's NRZ program came to Norwich recently. The Hartford Asylum Hill NRZ has been the most successful of the State's designated NRZ neighborhoods because Aetna is their sponsor.

Mr. Brown gave an update on the Reid & Hughes building and the 77-91 Main Street Development. He noted that the Water Street Lofts developer is still struggling with the trash issue. They have asked the City for a temporary COIO until a permanent solution can be found for the trash issue. So far 6 tenants have been approved for the apartments. The developer of the Reid & Hughes building was approved for a construction loan and there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony later in April.

Lastly, Mr. Brown stated that Fin O'Neil is in the process of finalizing a construction loan for the Ponemah Mill Phase II development. That should be done in the next month or two. The Chestnut Street Mill is being considered for a public-private partnership and could potentially be the December CIF Grant application.

4. **Foundry 66 Report:** Mary Riley gave an update on Foundry 66. She reported that there are 5 new members and 100% of the private offices and dedicated desks on the first floor are occupied. New signs are coming for Foundry 66 including a directory accessed by a QR Code. Additionally, she noted that there will be some capital improvements taking place in the next couple of months. There will be a new session on funding opportunities for small businesses coming up in the next couple of months.

Also, Ms. Riley noted that she is getting a couple of Smart Workboards in the two conference rooms on the first floor and one in the second-floor conference room. Mr. Jewell asked about improvements to the Wi-Fi service at Foundry 66. She stated that NPU will be installing new access points throughout Foundry 66 in the next couple of months.

5. **Global City Norwich Report:** Bobbie Braboy gave an update on current Global City Norwich activities. She reported that a Greek Flag Raising was held on Sunday, March 24 and it was well attended. She was interviewed by NFA for Black History Month and separately participated on a recent housing panel. Ms. Braboy discussed the ongoing Main Street Accelerator Project. She is planning a Tactical Urbanism Demonstration in conjunction with the Downtown Mobility Study and hopes to schedule it sometime next month. Ms. Braboy also discussed GCN's plans to integrate wayfinding signage in downtown Norwich.

The Board members asked Ms. Braboy to elaborate on the Tactical Urbanism Demonstration. Ms. Braboy said it is temporary community installations to affect traffic and pedestrian change. There is a meeting taking place this afternoon with City officials – the City Manager, Police Chief, Director of Public Works, Mr. Brown, the City Planner and the Fire Chief to discuss the demonstration of the Tactical Urbanism plans.

Ms. Braboy stated that the painting at some of the street intersections in Greeneville need to be refreshed. Additionally, Ms. Braboy said she is planning a public comment meeting to present and discuss the Main Street Accelerator Project.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** John Mancini gave the Treasurer's Report. He discussed NCDC's current financials and said that the organization was slightly ahead, year to date. He noted that the budget is very solid entering the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Mancini reported that the new bookkeeper is still learning the ins and outs of all NCDC's processes and procedures.

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. JP Mereen seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Brown noted that NCDC's former bookkeeper, Patty McManus, is available to come in for a bit to help the new bookkeeper get more comfortable and a better understanding of NCDC's finances.

Mr. Brown reported that the Stratford, Connecticut Shakespeare Theatre was recently kicked out of its location in Stratford and is looking for a new site. They will be coming to Norwich next week for an exploratory visit. They are visiting Norwich and a few other places.

RESOLUTION 24:24

Resolution 24-24: WHEREAS the Board of Directors of the Norwich Community Development Corporation ("NCDC") approved Resolution 14-23 on April 27, 2023 forming the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee ("DEIC") to govern and assist the Global City Norwich ("GCN") activity planning and execution; to ensure community outreach in NCDC activities and the integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all NCDC efforts, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of the Norwich Community Development Corporation does hereby rename the “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee” as the **“Global City Norwich Subcommittee” (“GCNS”)**, which shall continue with the same goals and composition.

The Board discussed Resolution 24:24 regarding the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Chairwoman Becka Alberts discussed having more inclusivity from the Board with the DEI Subcommittee – act on and fill out the Subcommittee. Mr. Brown stated that NCDC established the Global City Norwich Program (“GCN”) previously before DEI came into the public consciousness. GCN is by its very existences is a DEI initiative with a different name.

8. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve Resolution 24:24 as written.

MOTION #3: JP Mereen made a motion to approve Resolution 24:24. John Mancini seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Braboy and members of the Board discussed the role and title of the DEI Subcommittee. Ms. Braboy suggested that once the committee meets, they can discuss setting goals and objectives. Mr. Jewell stated that it is important that the members of the Board participate in the GCN Subcommittee; that it is not enough to volunteer beyond the members’ basic participation in the NCDC Board of Directors. He noted that we want all Board members more actively involved.

Mr. Brown suggested that the Board table the GCN Resolution 24:24 on hold until the GCN Subcommittee can meet and review the resolution and then report back to the Board with their recommendations. Mayor Nystrom noted that when the Global City Norwich Program was first organized, it assisted many of the minority owned businesses succeed in Norwich.

Ms. Alberts stated that the DEI-GCN Subcommittee original members were Swarnjit Singh, Jason Jones, Angy Gardner and Bobbie Braboy. She noted that it was important to create a system that is more balanced. Ms. Braboy noted that the DEI-GCN Subcommittee has not met and so it is not doing the work it is intended to do.

9. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to table the Resolution 24:24 until the Board has a chance to discuss further the expectations and role of the DEI-GCN Subcommittee.

MOTION #4: JP Mereen made a motion to temporarily table Resolution 24:24. Shiela Hayes seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Following the motion, Mayor Nystrom volunteered to serve on the DEI-GCN Subcommittee. Ms. Alberts asked if there was anyone else interested in serving on the DEI-GCN Subcommittee. She asked everyone to consider serving on the subcommittee and get back to Bobbie Braboy within 30 days if they were interested. Rev. Green said he would look into possibly participating on the DEI-GCN Subcommittee. Ms. Alberts also reminded everyone that there were other committees the members could serve on including the Nominating Committee, the Finance Committee, the OIC Committee and the Governance Committee.

Mr. Brown reported that Mill Development CT LLC, the developers of the Hale Mill site approached him about NCDC acting as the financial and legal pass-through entity for their historic tax credits from the State of Connecticut in the same way that NCDC has acted for the Ponemah Mill Redevelopment Project. NCDC received a 0.1% administrative fee for acting as the pass-through entity for Ponemah Mill and would receive the same for the Hale Mill project. The Hale Mill project will be receiving \$8 Million in historic tax credits and NCDC has agreed to act as the pass-through entity for Mill Development CT LLC. The Board discussed Resolution 25:24 including the required bookkeeping and administrative fee for NCDC's role. Mr. Brown stated that Mark Block will iron out the details for the legal agreement.

RESOLUTION 25:24

Resolution 25-24: BE IT RESOLVED, that the Norwich Community Development Corporation ("NCDC") finds it advisable and in the best interest of the Corporation, to assist the Hale Mill Project in maximizing the benefits of the State's Historic Tax Credits; in order to receive the State's Historic Tax Credits from the Project, will sell such credits to an entity such as NCDC; the organization's President finds it advisable and in the best interest of the Corporation and the Project to do so, and furthermore, to loan the proceeds from such sale to the Project.

The President of the Corporation, Kevin Brown, is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to enter into any and all such documents and agreements, including any operating agreements, as required in accordance with or to carry out the foregoing. Any compensation to be paid by the Hale Mill Project Developer to NCDC for any NCDC professional or administrative fees or expenses will be in connection with providing such assistance as described above.

10. Ms. Alberts asked for a motion to approve Resolution 25:24 as written.

MOTION #5: JP Mereen made a motion to approve Resolution 25:24. Chris Jewell seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

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

MOTION #6: Shiela Hayes made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Swarnjit Singh seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously at 9:46 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann D'Ambrosio