



NCDC Board of Directors Meeting

Meeting Date: May 22, 2025, 08:00 am

Foundry 66 and Zoom

Attendees:

Chris Jewell, Chairman
John Mancini, Treasurer
Bob Staley, Secretary
JP Mereen
Bryan Hayes

Peter Nystrom, Mayor
Shiela Hayes, Councilwoman
Swarnjit Singh, Councilman
Cathy Special

Absent:

Angelina Gardiner
Chris Larose
DeVol Joyner

Lynn Perry
John Salomone
John Harris

Others in attendance:

Kevin Brown, President NCDC
Mary Riley
Lucas Kaiser

Mark Block
Devin Schleidt
Bobbie Braboy

Overview

- **Art Funds Utilization:** \$25,000 art fund details: \$5,200 spent, \$7,600 pending, \$12,000 to extend downtown sign program. \$1,000 pledged to Rose Arts for window panel project (28 windows secured for artists).
- **Business Park Progress:** Construction manager contract finalized. Re-subdivision plan submitted to reduce lots from 12 to 10, increasing open space to 38 acres. Key public meetings scheduled for June and July, aiming for full approvals by August 1.
- **Community Engagement Strategy:** Need to promote patience against opposition to development. Development seen as essential for tax reduction and correcting misinformation on industrial park space occupancy.
- **Cannabis Industry Update:** Operational micro-cultivator producing over 1 megawatt; new retail location soft opened. Municipal cannabis tax revenue steady at ~\$11.5k/month, projected at \$200k/year to support city positions.

- **CIF Grant Application:** Lower Broadway prioritized for CIF Round 7 grant (due June 6), project budget at \$11.8M, requesting \$8M. Chestnut and Flatiron projects deferred but remain in plans.
- **REID & Hughes Project:** Near completion; ribbon cutting rescheduled for July to align with state officials potential availability. Retail tenant negotiations ongoing; solution for downtown trash collection discussed, emphasizing owner engagement.
- **Waterfront Development:** Demolition underway at American Wharf with live public feed.

Extended Notes

Art Funds and Sign Program Update (DELETE REDUNDANT)

- \$25,000 art fund update: \$5,200 spent, \$7,600 in queue, \$12,000 to be reallocated to extend sign program for downtown cohesiveness.
- \$1,000 pledged to Rose Arts for the downtown window panel project, with 28 windows secured for artists.

Business Park Industrial Center Progress

- Construction manager contract finalized after legal review; kickoff meeting imminent.
- Re-subdivision plan submitted to Inland Wetlands Commission and CCP due to merging of three lots (reducing from 12 to 10 lots) and road reorientation, yielding 38 acres of open space.
- Key public meetings: Inland Wetlands (June 5), CCP (June 17), with public hearings in July and goal for full local approvals by August 1.

Community Engagement and Naysayer Strategy (DELETE REDUNDANT)

- Board encouraged to promote patience and process to counteract vocal opposition to development.
- Emphasis on the need for development to reduce taxes and address misinformation about industrial park occupancy.

Cannabis Industry Developments

- 115 Forest micro-cultivator operational, producing over 1 megawatt; 5 8th Street expected to add another megawatt.
- Second and third retail sites progressing; one had a soft opening, ribbon cutting planned next month.
- Municipal cannabis tax revenue stable at ~\$11.5k/month, with potential for \$200k/year; revenue used to support city positions (e.g., senior center receptionist).

CIF 2030 and Lower Broadway Grant Application

- Lower Broadway prioritized for CIF Round 7 grant (due June 6); project includes Jubilee Park, Fair Haven building apartments, commercial activation at 4 Broadway, and Norwich Art Center facade improvements.
- Total project budget: \$11.8M; \$8M requested from CIF, with private and prior grant match.
- Chestnut and Flatiron projects deferred due to timing but remain future prospects with multiple potential investors engaged at both sites

REID & Hughes Project and Downtown Trash Solutions

- Reading Hughes nearing completion; ribbon cutting moved to July to align with state officials' visit and strategic city discussions.
- Model apartment ready; retail tenant negotiations ongoing.
- Downtown trash collection remains a challenge; in-ground solutions and planning grants discussed, with need for owner engagement and lessons learned from other developments.

American Wharf and Waterfront Updates

- Demolition and fuel pump installation underway; live feed available for public viewing and engagement.
- Public info session scheduled for June 6 at the marina; aim to have demolition complete by July 4 for fireworks event.
- Encanto ice cream shop at marina hired 11 people; pergola nearly complete; early survey results show demand for more family-friendly waterfront activities.

Thermos Grants, Grant Management, and Rose City Learning Center

Thermos grants facilitated for Integrated Day Charter School and Homeowners Association for brownfield remediation and classroom expansion.

- NCDC continues grant writing, invoicing city until permanent grant writer is hired.
- Rose City Learning Center expanding, with demand for Creole/Spanish-speaking behavioral health professionals; partnership with Jewish Federation Services growing.

Foundry 66 and Working Lab Updates

- Foundry 66 membership steady, ahead of budget by \$33,000; internal office moves and price increases for vacancies.
- Business review board to meet for three Downtown Bond Revolving Loan Fund applicants.
- Working Lab graduation set for June 3; all seven students to graduate, with strong demand for future sessions and potential for expanded business support programming.

Global City Norwich and Multicultural Events

- Event season active: Cape Verdean festival, Summer Sounds multicultural festival (May 31), and expanded Rose City Learning Center evening sessions.

- Summer Sounds to feature diverse performers, food trucks, and family activities; shift to multicultural festivals to broaden community engagement.

Downtown Development and Signage

- Sunlight building signs installed; next nine signs pending weather.
- Parklets being installed at key locations; awaiting Reading Hughes development for further installations.
- NAR grant application submitted for portable event structure, lighting, and turf for Lower Broadway.

Treasurers Report and Budget Planning

- Financials strong: income ~\$46,000 ahead of plan, surplus maintained, cash balances sufficient despite use of grant funds.
- Draft budget presented for review; increased MPU funding (\$300k), stable city funding, and balanced budget achieved.
- Final budget approval scheduled for next board meeting.