

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL (DRAFT)

August 1, 2023, Meeting 10 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Robertson welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order 10 A.M.

2. Attendance

Julianne Avallone
Andréa Comer
Avery Gaddis
Michael Jefferson
Melvin Medina
Marc Pelka
Paul O. Robertson
Edwin Shirley
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Kevin Walton
Subira Gordon

Absent:

Corey Betts, Ojala Naeem and Andrea Hawkins.

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director, SEC; Karen Colebut, Paralegal, SEC; Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager, SEC; Komla Matrevi, Staff Attorney, SEC.

Approval of July 6th Meeting Minutes

Paul Robertson asked for a motion to approve the July 6th meeting minutes.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson
Second – by Andrea Comer
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed.

3. Executive Session

- a. Discussion on Pending Litigation involving the Council.
- b. Annual Executive Director Performance Review

Paul Robertson asked for a motion to move to Executive Session.

Motion – by Andrea Comer

Second – by Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

4. Chairman Robertson took attendance upon return from Executive Session.

Attendance:

Julianne Avallone

Corrie Betts

Andréa Comer

Avery Gaddis

Michael Jefferson

Melvin Medina

Marc Pelka

Paul O. Robertson

Edwin Shirley

Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Kevin Walton

Subira Gordon

5. Vote on Workforce Development Plans

Chairman Robertson asked for a motion to accept CohnReznick’s recommendations to approve Workforce Development Plans submitted CT Pharma Norwich LLC (AMHF 008258), Curaleaf Milford LLC by (MMDF 0018), Nutmeg New London JV LLC (ACRE 0015657 and Fresh Perspective CT LLC (ACDS 000953).

Motion – by Andrea Comer

Second – by Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

6. Vote on Equity Joint Ventures

Chairman Robertson asked for a motion to accept a recommendation to approve Equity Joint Ventures submitted by Sweetspot, West Hartford LLC (AMHF 008269).

Motion – by Andrea Comer

Second – by Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions - Julianne Avallone

Motion – passed.

Chairman Robertson asked for a motion to accept a recommendation to deny Equity Joint Ventures submitted by Central Connect LLC (ACME 008478). For failing to meet the criteria established by the council and failing to comply with EJV creation process established by RERACA.

Motion – by Edwin Shirley

Second – by Michael Jefferson

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

7. Certification of the 2023 DIA Map

Chairman Robertson stated that in previous years the council was required to use either historical conviction rate or unemployment data as criteria to certify the DIA Map and this led to several communities being temporarily left out of the opportunities provided by this program. To help solve this problem and fulfill the promises of equity of the RERACA the council introduced legislation this session that uses poverty rate and historical conviction. data to create a more inclusive DIA Map that provides better opportunities for our constituents that were mostly disproportionately impacted by the war on drugs The map we're voting to certify today is a major improvement from the previous ones because it includes additional fifty-one census tracts and covers nine more towns in total of the 2023 map shows two hundred-thirty seven DIA census tracts with a twenty-four point nine percentage of the state's population and some basic information as to demographics.

Chairman Robertson asked for a motion to certify the proposed 2023 DIA Map as presented.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Andrea Comer

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

Chairman Robertson stated the proposed 2023 DIA Map has been certified and this DIA Map will be posted on the Connecticut Center Website for public viewing. All public inquiries regarding this DIA Map should be directed to our staff via at SEC@ct.gov.

8. Resolution on the Review and Approval of Grant Applications

Chairman Robertson motioned to accept the resolution authorizing the executive director to review and approve of the community grant recommendation; by taking this resolution, the council is authorizing the executive director to review and approve or deny in writing all recommendations for funding submitted by the community grant managers the approval or denial of this funding request by Executive Director shall constitute a final decision of the social equity council.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Andrea Comer

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

9. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Clay stated that the Administrative Assistant position was being reposted. An offer was made for the Reinvestment Program Manager. We're going to be making a recommendation for the Outreach Program Manager to Human Resources we have a finalist that we want to recommend, and I will chat with Chairman Robertson on that recommendation.

The Accelerator Program will host its first graduation ceremony for its first cohort on September 6, 2023. Approximately eighteen students will be graduating and of those eight participants will be pitching to investors. Council Members will receive a save-the-date notice. The ceremony is open to the public.

Executive Director Clay stated that the Social Equity Council is still waiting for one final approval for the Cannabis Business Revolving Loan Fund and regarding our Community Reinvestment Program, all the Grant Makers have made announcements on the availability of funds. They are currently in the application period.

Prosperity Foundation held a press conference on July 21, 2023, in New Haven and it was very well-attended. I also visited the New London community and had some conversations with the folks in Southeastern Connecticut. I attended an event in Waterbury talking about one of our partners' re-branding themselves, but the community grants were all abuzz over that event and the events that I continue to follow up on.

Executive Director Clay stated that she has a check-in with all the Grant Makers this Thursday, to update them on the approval process that was just put in place so that they may begin to make their recommendations.

Executive Director Clay also stated that the Social Equity Council is awaiting approval from the Attorney General's office, but the council has selected trusted messengers for Hartford, New Haven, and Waterbury and she has been in touch with the folks in Bridgeport and Southeastern Connecticut as well as Stamford.

What's new.

Executive Director Clay stated that the Social Equity Council is finally on Facebook and asks to please follow us. A special thanks to staff member Kristina Diamond, who has been working diligently on updating our website and ensuring that our social media is moving in the right direction.

For our August goals, we have already certified the DIA Map, which had to be done by today. Congratulations and thank you We are going to finalize our 2024-2025 goals and we have a draft. Staff has been meeting and working but as a result of vacations and schedules we will have to circle back next week to finalize goals and acquire a final review with the chairman. We are also preparing our back-office work for the second round of the lottery.

Executive Director Clay stated that the council voted to reduce its committees from six to four. This will require us to send out new meeting dates and other materials that will be forthcoming soon. August Our first committee meeting is scheduled in August to confirm the goals and meeting schedules of those committees.

Executive Director stated that the council has begun to consider its initiatives and goals for the 2024 legislative session. We are working with the Cannabis Chamber of Commerce as it is organizing a Cannabis job fair that is tentatively scheduled for September 14, 2023. Meeting invites will be sent to all council members and posted on public meeting calendars as well as the Social Equity website.

Outreach Committee is schedule to meet on August 11, 2023

Reinvestment/Workforce Committee is scheduled to meet on August 16, 2023

Governance/Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on August 17, 2023.

Finance Committee is scheduled to meet quarterly. Its first meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2023. Note – we now have the capability for calling in for those council members who experience technical difficulties with accessing the meeting online.

Executive Director Clay stated that an in-person Social Equity Council meeting is scheduled for a date in October.

Discussion ensued.

10. For the Good of the Order – New Business, Updates and Information

None

11. Adjourn

Chairman Robertson asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Andréa Comer

Second – by Michael Jefferson

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 A.M.

