



## Social Equity Council

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SPECIAL MEETING OF THE SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL (DRAFT)

July 28, 2022, Meeting 10 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Andréa Comer at 10:05 a.m.

Members present:

Corrie Betts, Andréa Comer, Avery Gaddis, Subira Gordon, Michael Jefferson, David Lehman, Ojala Naeem, Marc Pelka, Christine Shaw, Edwin Shirley, Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Council members absent:

Ramón Arroyo

Marilyn Alverio

SEC/DECD Staff present:

Ginne-Rae Clay, SEC; Jennifer Edwards, SEC; Komla Matrevi, SEC; Kristina Diamond, SEC; Jennifer Stevens, SEC; Kyle Abercrombie, DECD.

Chairwoman Comer welcomed the Council and the public. She discussed that the meeting would focus primarily on voting on the six retail applications selected from the lottery and 14 equity joint venture applications. Chairwoman Comer provided information on the definition of Equity Joint Ventures and outlined the process and criteria by which applications were reviewed and recommendations were made to the council for consideration.

Chairwoman Comer explained that because the statute requires that a full complement of confirmed applications be submitted to the Department of Consumer Protection before, they proceed with the process, the names of applicants that meet the social equity criteria for retail lottery will not be released until the full complement is achieved.

Chairwoman explained the option for lottery applicants deemed to not have met the social equity criteria.

Chairwoman Comer also announced the council would hear a presentation from the finalist for the workforce development plan, review, and receive an update regarding the annual recertification of the determination of disproportionately impacted areas.

Chairwoman Comer also restated the Council's role is not to judge applicants' partners, but rather to the extent permissible in the legislation to further equity and hinder predatory practices. The Council's role is to also lay a foundation that engages communities most harmed by the war on drugs so they can inform the community reinvestment that will result from generated cannabis tax and revenue

Executive Director, Ginne-Rae Clay introduced CohnReznick to present their recommendations for Lottery Retail Social Equity Applicants, and Equity Joint Ventures.

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Geoffrey Magon, Sr. Manager with CohnReznick stated that of the six lottery retailer applications that they reviewed for approval, five of those were approved and one recommended for denial. For the Equity Joint Venture applications that we reviewed, 14, were recommended for denial based on either ownership and control in some cases, or not having met the income requirements.

Councilman Jefferson made a motion to approve the recommendation for the five Social Equity Retailers.

- Second – by Avery Gaddis
- In Favor – All
- Opposed – None
- Abstention – None

Motion passed.

Chairwoman Andréa Comer asked for a motion to approve the denial of the one Social Equity Retailer.

- Motion – by Michael Jefferson
- Second – by Avery Gaddis
- In Favor – All
- Opposed – None
- Abstention – None
- Discussion – Subira Gordon

Motion passed

Councilwoman Gordon wanted clarification on why the single Social Equity Retailer application was denied.

Chairwoman Comer asked for a motion to approve the recommendation to deny Equity Joint Ventures based on income.

- Motion – by Michael Jefferson
- Second – by Avery Gaddis
- In Favor – All
- Opposed – None
- Abstention – None
- Discussion – None

Motion passed

Chairwoman Comer's asked for a motion to approve the recommendations for denial for the Equity Joint Ventures based on failure to meet ownership and control criteria.

- Motion – by Michael Jefferson
- Second – by Avery Gaddis
- In Favor – All
- Opposed – None

- Abstention – None
- Discussion – Subira Gordon

Motion passed

Councilwoman Gordon requested a clarification on the option of the denied EJV's to correct and resubmit their application. The denials today on ownership and control are not hard denial, they do have a process of appeal that is separate from the other conversation that we had last time. It was confirmed that equity joint ventures do not have a specific time limit to submit or resubmit application. Councilwoman Gordon felt this process was problematic. Discussion ensued.

Chairwoman Comer asked Workforce Development Committee Chairwoman Vallieres to introduce CohnReznick as the 3<sup>rd</sup> party workforce development plan reviewer.

Chairwoman Valleries provided an overview of the process by which CohnReznick was being recommended. Workforce Committee met and reviewed the proposal. The Committee chose CohnReznick to review the plans in a very similar process to what the council is doing with the SE applicants. Discussion ensued

Councilwoman Vallieres asked a motion to accept the proposal to review up to 50 workforce plans.

- Motion – by Michael Jefferson
- Second – by Edwin Shirley
- In Favor – All
- Opposed – None
- Abstention – None
- Discussion – Christine Shaw

Motion passed

Councilwoman Shaw, could you provide information about the contract scope in terms of the cost? Reference was made to the number of plans that potentially could be reviewed. But is there a cap dollar cap on the engagement? The contract cost is expected to be approximately \$183,000.

Geoffrey (CohnReznick) provided greater detail on the proposal. Chairwoman Comer reminded the Council that the full CohnReznick proposal with budget details was provided to the council prior to the meeting.

Patrick Hulen, Associate Policy Director, briefly spoke about the process being used to recertify the disproportionately impacted areas map. Patrick indicated that he was involved with creating the first DIA map and could answer questions about the process. The legislation set an annual deadline of August 1<sup>st</sup> to certify the list of disproportionately impacted areas. Discussion ensued.

Chairwoman Comer asked, Is there anything for the good of the order? Hearing none,

Chairwoman Andréa Comer, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

- Motion – by Avery Gaddis
- Second – by David Lehman

The meeting adjourned at 10:38 am.

Minutes are a draft until approved at a subsequent meeting.