



Social Equity Council

Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 10 A.M.
Meeting of the Reinvestment Committee, Social Equity Council
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

View the video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzpcWzNtEb0>

Co-Chairs: Ojala Naeem and Avery Gaddis

Members: Corrie Betts, Andrea Comer, Subira Gordon, Michael Jefferson, Paul O. Robertson

MINUTES

1. Call to order and welcome

At 10:00am, Ojala Naeem called the meeting to order.

2. Attendance & Committee membership

Present:

Corrie Betts

Avery Gaddis

Michael Jefferson

Ojala Naeem

Paul O. Robertson

Absent:

Andrea Comer

Subira Gordon

3. Reinvestment Committee Responsibilities

Ojala Naeem, Co-Chair

Ojala Naeem presented three key areas of responsibilities as the committee works to create a Reinvestment plan; providing criteria parameters for Reinvestment, guidelines for the evaluation of any proposals for Reinvestment, and make recommendations to the SEC for how to deploy funds into the community.

4. Funding Allocation and Deployment

Paul O. Robertson

A discussion ensued about the options for deployment of funds. Kyle Abercrombie presented a Community Reinvestment plan of action for discussion. He recapped where the funds are coming from, and what the funds may be used for, and how much is estimated to be available for use in FY23, \$6,112,934.95 and FY24-25. Options for actions were presented, including: providing funds to existing Community Based Organizations and Community Development Corporations for support of programs in DIAs, hosting community conversations on reinvestment so that recommendations can be made to the SEC based on the feedback from those engagements, and Identifying 3-5 focus areas for investment to issue RFP for those areas, in consultation with the Community Investment Fund to avoid overlap/redundancy. Details for community conversations were discussed – with a suggestion of holding two or three in-person events, located in the eastern, central, western parts of the state, possibly at university locations, and two-three webinar events, along with a possible survey to get feedback.

Motion:

Ojala Naeem asked for a motion to request the SEC staff to draft and put out an RFP to bring in a third party to run community conversations to be held in about 4-6 weeks. Committee members will be invited to join in on those conversations, to hear the sorts of questions, feedback and areas of interest for reinvestment from community members.

Motion made by Corrie Betts

Seconded by Avery Gaddis

Motion was approved unanimously.

Ojala Naeem asked Paul O. Robertson to share out the UConn Study to the Social Equity Council and asked for the Reinvestment Committee members to come to the next meeting with any reinvestment opportunities ideas from that study.

Avery Gaddis questioned how this group would treat funding requests from communities that have placed moratoriums on cannabis businesses. He suggested a weighted preference to communities that don't have moratoriums.

Ojala Naeem spoke of other upcoming areas of work for this group. Once areas of reinvestment, have been identified, the SEC would likely create an RFP. In order to do an RFP for investment, this group will need to develop the RFP criteria and guidelines. When project proposals are sent in, Ojala Naeem recommended that the staff takes the first look at proposals and bring them to this committee for review, and this committee would recommend them to the full Social Equity Council.

Matt Pugliese, Executive Director of the Community Investment Forum spoke of the application process and questions that fund has been using to rank and rate the proposals that have come in for that program. He will share key documents from that program to help the SEC do this work.

A discussion ensued regarding the community conversation perimeters, the role of the facilitator, and having a clear agenda for the sessions, along with the goal of using the session feedback to understand what types of entities would be eligible and what types of uses would be eligible for funds.

Avery Gaddis, spoke of using the feedback loop to find gaps in funding. He hopes that the focus will be on resources and programs that addresses needs of children, around mental health and wellness for example. Ojala Naeem spoke of reinvestment specifically in DIAs, but not outside areas. Corrie Betts spoke of having a focus on prison re-entry avoidance and substance abuse assistance. Avery Gaddis pointed out that there are funds through DPH and DCP targeted/ allocated to substance abuse programs. Matt Pugliese mentioned that CIF had a prioritization for projects that had labor agreements to hire ex-offenders for projects, as a way to support ex-offenders and spoke of identifying projects that aren't being supported by other initiatives in the state.

Ojala Naeem presented steps for a request to disburse funds by the end of this fiscal year. It included: Community Conversations, coordination with the Outreach Committee and their plans for outreach, a look at the UConn Study, this committee was asked to come back to the next meeting with ideas for funding from that study, and asking the staff to

Social Equity Council

draft a high-level start to a perimeter document for investment purposes, which should be approved by the council, with the goal of launching an RFP for Reinvestment by April and disburse funds by the End of Fiscal Year 2023.

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

No new business discussed.

6. Adjourn

Motion:

Ojala Naeem asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Avery Gaddis

Seconded by Corrie Betts

Motion was approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 10:35am.