

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL MEETING - DRAFT
APRIL 1, 2025 Meeting 10:00 A.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1) Call to Order, Welcome and Attendance

Andrea Comer called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., welcoming council members, state officials, representatives, and members of the public. She proceeded to conduct the roll call.

Andrea Comer
Kyle Abercrombie
Fanita Borges
Corrie Betts
Greg Davis
Tina Beamon
Avery Gaddis
Andrea Hawkins
Daniel Karpowitz
Michael Jefferson
Edwin Shirley
Shirley Skyers-Thomas
Melvin Medina
Ojala Naeem
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Charles Venator
Kevin Walton

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

2) Executive Session

Andrea Comer confirmed a quorum with the presence of Council members Vallieres, Santiago Venator, and Walton. She then introduced the first order of business: entering into executive session to discuss pending litigation.

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Kyle Abercrombie
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Comer then instructed Council members to move to a private Teams meeting for the executive session and assured the public they would return after the session concluded.

3) Approval of the March 4, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

Andrea Comer introduced the agenda item for the approval of March 4, 2025, meeting minutes.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Avery Gaddis

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

4) Vote on Equity Joint Ventures

Chair Andrea Comer introduced the next agenda item: the approval of two equity joint ventures.

A. ACRE.015699 - Highway 84, LLC – recommended for approval

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Corrie Betts

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

B. ACRE.015700 - FFDC EJV II, LLC – recommended for approval

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Kyle Abercrombie

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

5) SEC Committee Updates

Andrea Comer invited committee chairs to provide updates.

Finance Committee Report:

Avery Gaddis reported that the Finance Committee met on March 20 and received a detailed report from Executive Director Brandon McGee. He noted that the committee reviewed the contract with Miranda Creative and found no concerns regarding cost structure. Gaddis commended Executive Director McGee and his team for implementing recommendations from the comptroller. He also recognized Council member Fanita Borges for her dedication to the loan process. Out of the \$50 million allocated for loans, \$10 million had been set aside, with 13 to 14 applications under review. The committee is ensuring loan approvals remain within available funding.

Policy and Governance Committee Report:

Edwin Shirley reported that the Policy and Governance Committee also met on March 20. The meeting included a presentation from Executive Director McGee on bylaw updates and a rigorous report from Mr. Valentin on the Social Equity Plan criteria.

Reinvestment Workforce Committee Report:

Ojala Naeem announced that the Reinvestment Workforce Committee meeting was scheduled for April 16.

Legislative Committee Report:

Corrie Betts confirmed that a Legislative Committee meeting had taken place and that the next meeting was set for June 25. He deferred to Executive Director McGee to provide further updates during his report.

Chair Comer acknowledged the workload involved in implementing the loan program and cautioned that timing challenges might arise as restructuring efforts continue. With no further reports, the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

6) Vote to approve updated SEC Bylaws.

The Council voted to approve updates to the SEC Bylaws.

Presentation of Bylaw Updates:

Chair Andrea Comer introduced the agenda item and invited Executive Director Brandon McGee to provide context. McGee then turned the discussion over to Legal Director Mariedy Collazo Cruz, who summarized key changes, including:

Increasing the Executive Director's contract signing authority to up to \$100,000 without requiring a Council vote, while maintaining internal approval processes.

Allowing the Executive Director to reallocate up to 20% of any budget line item without Council approval, provided it does not exceed \$10,000.

Updating committee descriptions and revising reporting requirements to align with current practices.

Council Discussion:

Kyle Abercrombie voiced support for the changes, emphasizing their logical and practical nature. Avery Gaddis moved to approve the bylaws, seconded by Abercrombie.

Michael Jefferson raised concerns about language in Section 4.6 regarding the approval process for workforce development plans. He questioned whether applicants could continuously resubmit flawed plans without a defined limit. Cruz clarified that the process aligns with Social Equity Plan (SEP) procedures and noted that the provisional license expiration naturally limits the time for resubmissions. Jefferson accepted this explanation but noted the potential for ambiguity.

Edwin Shirley echoed Jefferson's concerns but ultimately agreed that applicants have an inherent incentive to finalize their plans promptly.

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Kyle Abercrombie
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

- 7) Vote on change in policy regarding social equity status for social equity individuals approved under 2021 and 2022 DIA maps.

The Council voted to approve a change in policy regarding Social Equity status for Social Equity Individuals certified under the 2021 and 2022 Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) maps.

Presentation of Policy Change:

Chair Andrea Comer introduced the agenda item and invited Legal Director Mariedy Collazo Cruz to provide context. Cruz explained that under the current policy, Social Equity Individuals (SEIs) certified under the 2021 or 2022 DIA maps could lose their status if the 2023 DIA map showed a change in census tracts. The proposed change would allow individuals who were previously certified to retain their SEI status until the next DIA map revision, ensuring consistency and alignment with the Department of Consumer Protection's (DCP) handling of these cases.

Council Discussion and Vote:

Brandon McGee emphasized the importance of providing context for the public, and Andrea Comer agreed. After Cruz's explanation, there were no further questions or objections. The Council proceeded to vote.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Corrie Betts, Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

8) Updates from the CT SEC

1. Financial Report

- Total expenditures for the month: \$168,021.20, including:
 - Personnel services (salary and benefits for nine full-time staff): \$127,468.93
 - Other expenses (contracts, agreements, supplies): \$40,552.27
- SEC retains \$5.6 million in community reinvestment funds, with an April 16th meeting planned for further discussion.
- Year-to-date, \$1.48 million has been disbursed through the Social Equity Council's loan program.

2. Workforce Development and Social Equity Plans

- No new submissions between March 1-31; one new submission pending review.
- Two additional plans were submitted, but one was rejected due to incorrect filing.
- Tiffany, Ceasar and her team are assisting applicants with proper documentation.

3. Strategic Plan & Workplace Culture

- SEC has centralized program documentation and policies for easier staff access.
- Andrea Hawkins leads efforts to improve workplace culture through SWOT analysis.
- SEC's programs (Community Reinvestment, Workforce Development, Loan Program) are on track.

4. Legislative and Policy Updates

- SEC's agency bill: House Bill 6930 – Council members were encouraged to review.
- House Bill 7181 (General Laws Committee's cannabis bill) – SEC has provided testimony and is engaging stakeholders.

- Kristina Diamond and Councilor Betts were acknowledged for their legislative support.
- Anticipated special meeting in June for legislative updates.

5. Strategic Communications and Website Updates

- Vendor engaged in website improvements to reflect realigned programs.
- More detailed updates to be provided at the next in-person SEC meeting in May.

6. Upcoming Meetings

- **April 16th** – Community Reinvestment and Workforce Development Committee.
- **May 6th** – Next regular Council meeting confirmed as **in-person**.

Additional Acknowledgments:

- Fanita Borges and Kyle Abercrombie were recognized for their contributions to the Loan Advisory Group.
- Dr. Charles Venator is leading a research initiative to create a database connecting Social Equity Entrepreneurs with community-based organizations.
- Councilor Daniel was commended for efforts in supporting reentry programs for formerly incarcerated individuals.

McGee concluded by inviting Council members to attend his office hours and reiterated appreciation for their dedication.

Chair Andrea Comer invited final comments from Council members.

- Council Member Avery Gaddis expressed appreciation for Kristina Diamond and the SEC staff, noting their responsiveness and expertise when addressing his questions. He encouraged fellow Council members to reach out to staff directly rather than waiting for formal meetings.
- Andrea Comer opened the floor for additional comments, but none were raised.

9) For the Good of the order

None

10) Adjourn

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

Second – by Michael Jefferson

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.



A Plus Reporting, LLC
55 Whiting Street, Suite 1A
Plainville, CT 06062
203-269-9976
scheduling@aplusreportingservice.com

Date: April 1, 2025

RE: Minutes: April SEC Council Meeting Minutes Minutes (Draft)

Please be advised that the above-referenced typewritten minutes are a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations to the extent that the audio could be clearly heard/understood. Portions that could not be heard/understood have been notated with a (an “inaudible” or “?...”).

Sincerely,

Brenda LaFleur

Brenda LaFleur
Owner, A Plus Reporting Service, LLC

I certify that this document is a true and accurate description of the proceedings obtained from the recorded conversations contained in the listed audio file.

Boden Truitt

Boden Truitt,
Transcriber