



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MAY 5, 2026, Meeting  
10:00 A.M.**

**1) Call to Order, Welcome and Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 10:11a.m. by Chair Andréa Comer.

In attendance:

Andréa Comer (Chair)  
Tina Beamon  
Corrie Betts  
Greg Davis  
Avery Gaddis  
Andréa Hawkins  
Michael Jefferson  
Brittany Lamar  
Ojala Naeem  
Shirley Skyers-Thomas  
Kevin Walton  
Kyle Abercrombie  
Charles Santiago Venator

Members Noted Absent / Not Present for Roll Call:

Fanita Borges  
Melvin Medina  
Edwin Shirley  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

A quorum was confirmed.

Chair Andrea Comer acknowledged Council person Tina Beamon for being selected to deliver a commencement address at the University of Connecticut College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and recognized Councilperson Fanita Borges for receiving the Latina Champion Award for her work expanding equitable access to homeownership.

**2) Public Comment: None**

**3) Approval of April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes**

The Council considered approval of the April 7, 2026 regular meeting minutes.

*Motion: Avery Gaddis*  
*Second: Michael Jefferson*  
*Discussion: None*  
*In Favor: All Present*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstentions: None*  
*Motion passed unanimously.*

**4) Vote on Equity Joint Venture Applications**

The Council considered several Equity Joint Venture applications.

A. Application ACRE.0015707- Alpha CT, LLC

*Motion to approve: Corrie Betts*  
*Second: Michael Jefferson*  
*Discussion: None*  
*In Favor: All Present*  
*Abstentions: None*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Motion passed unanimously*

B. Application ACRE.0015708- HP EJV, LLC

*Motion to approve: Michael Jefferson*  
*Second: Corrie Betts*  
*Discussion: None*  
*In Favor: All Present*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstentions: None*  
*Motion passed unanimously*

C. Application ACME.000848- Budr Cultivation, LLC

*Motion to approve: Michael Jefferson*  
*Second: Avery Gaddis*  
*Discussion: None*  
*In Favor: All Present*  
*Opposed: None*  
*Abstentions: None*  
*Motion passed unanimously*

## 5) Updates from the CT SEC Provided by Executive Director Brandon McGee

Executive Director Brandon McGee provided written and verbal updates regarding agency operations, staffing, strategic planning, legislative engagement, financial matters, and community reinvestment initiatives.

### A. Staffing and Organizational Updates

Mr. McGee introduced recently hired staff members including:

Karraine Moody, Social Equity Impact Officer

Attorney Nichelle Mullins, Chief Legal Officer

Mr. McGee also discussed plans to expand staffing capacity in legal, finance, compliance, underwriting, grants administration, and research functions.

Councilmember Gaddis requested an updated organizational chart outlining staff responsibilities, reporting structure, and points of contact for major initiatives. Mr. McGee confirmed that an updated organizational chart and staff role summaries would be provided.

### B. Financial Update

Mr. McGee reviewed the Council's Fiscal Year 2026 budget and monthly expenditures.

Key updates included:

Total FY2026 budget remains approximately \$17 million.

April personnel services expenditures totaled approximately \$117,354.

April operational and programmatic expenditures totaled approximately \$120,698.

Total April expenditures were approximately \$238,053.

Councilmember Gaddis requested future financial presentations include more detailed breakdowns of "other expenses." Staff acknowledged the request and agreed to provide additional detail in future reports.

### C. Strategic Roadmap and Agency Priorities

Mr. McGee reviewed the Council's three-year strategic roadmap and discussed implementation efforts focused on four core areas:

- Staff capacity and organizational development
- Council governance and committee coordination

- Community reinvestment initiatives
- Industry and entrepreneur support

The Council discussed ongoing efforts to expand support services for Social Equity Entrepreneurs beyond lending programs, including business development resources, technical assistance, and long-term sustainability planning. Mr. McGee reintroduced Karraine Moody as the staff member who will work with SEEs on the loan and grant programs.

Chair Andrea Comer emphasized the importance of measuring and communicating collective community impact through reinvestment initiatives.

Mr. McGee explained that staff have spent a lot of time socializing ideas and responding to community, industry, and cannabis commerce feedback. Working groups were formulated to bring stakeholders together, obtain feedback, and utilize feedback to inform future programming.

#### D. Legislative Working Group and Policy Development

Mr. McGee provided updates on the Social Equity Council working group process established to review policy recommendations and legislative priorities.

- Topics discussed included:
  - Economic opportunity and entrepreneurship pathways
  - Workforce development and reentry employment programs
  - Youth programming and public education campaigns
  - Municipal engagement regarding illicit market enforcement and cannabis tax revenue awareness
  - Community-informed program design and impact measurement

Staff reported that stakeholder engagement efforts included collaboration with legislators, municipalities, community organizations, and industry representatives.

#### E. Community Reinvestment and Public Communication

Council members discussed communication strategies related to community reinvestment programs and grant opportunities.

Chair Comer and other Council members emphasized the importance of:

- Providing timely public updates
- Publishing implementation timelines
- Improving communication with community organizations

Providing advance notice of SEC-sponsored public events and outreach activities

Staff confirmed that:

- Regional grant manager onboarding and training activities are ongoing;
- Public-facing communication materials and toolkits are being developed;
- Funding opportunity announcements are anticipated for release near the end of May 2026.

Council member Gaddis asked for clarity about which staff will lead the initiatives mentioned.

Mr. McGee provided a brief overview of how staff are currently being utilized and will provide an organizational chart for the Council.

Council member Hawkins asked about the Council's strategy for communication and encouraged the need to communicate in a variety of ways with various stakeholders. She also mentioned publishing a timeline so that stakeholders understand when programs and grants will be available.

Council staff informed the entire Council of its collaboration with Miranda Creative for its communication, marketing and branding needs.

Council members Gaddis and Naeem asked to be kept updated on upcoming community events so that they may attend schedules permitting.

Council members also encouraged the use of regular email updates, website updates, public event notifications, and additional outreach materials to improve transparency and public awareness.

Mr. McGee acknowledged the feedback and mentioned the press release as well as a timeline that has already been released to the public.

#### F. Social Impact and Performance Measurement

Mr. McGee discussed efforts underway to develop a formal social impact model and performance framework to measure:

- Program outcomes
- Community impact
- Investment effectiveness
- Organizational performance indicators

Council member Hawkins emphasized the need for strategic communication efforts to the Council and external stakeholders.

The framework is intended to support accountability, strengthen external partnerships, and improve long-term reporting capabilities.

Mr. McGee provided a written and verbal update on the legislative session including HB 5350, which was amended by H522.

Council member Gaddis asked if the Council provides legal advice to the public.

Mr. McGee responded that the Council does not provide legal advice. Attorney Collazo Cruz explained that legal staff gives guidance and feedback to stakeholders about whether their applications and supporting documentation meets statutory requirements. Everyone is strongly advised to seek advice from their own legal counsel.

Council member Gaddis asked if there are safeguards in place to minimize risk and liability to the SEC. He explained that he is team SEC and that his only concern was for the SEC. He asked for clarity on how the SEC is protected if someone applies for a loan and is denied.

Mr. McGee and Attorney Collazo Cruz explained the intent of our meetings with SEEs and the loan application process. Staff do not give legal or financial advice. Staff are working to streamline and strengthen processes.

Council member Jefferson asked if Council staff includes a disclaimer on their emails or websites.

Staff do not currently have a disclaimer on their email or website.

Council member Gaddis asked if individuals are required to sign a waiver.

Attorney Mullins suggested that the conversation be tabled to discuss in a committee meeting in order to fully understand, discuss and determine viable solutions.

Council member Gaddis addressed Chair Comer indicating that he does not want staff members suggesting to table anything. He then addressed Attorney Mullins stating that he does not work for her; Attorney Mullins works for him. If he or the Council want to talk about an issue, they will talk about it.

Chair Comer responded by acknowledging Council member Gaddis' comments and explaining that Attorney Mullins' suggestion was towards having the conversation in a space that was more conducive to finding a solution. Chair Comer then explained she is in favor of having continued discussions and mentioned creating a disclaimer that can be signed via DocuSign.

Council member Skyers-Thomas recommended tabling the discussion for a committee meeting or executive session.

Mr. McGee asked for clarity about the request.

Council member Naeem commented on the need for more clarity on programming.

Council member Hawkins mentioned the need for more information so that the Council can be supportive and can respond to questions from stakeholders.

Chair Comer asked for asked for more information so that they can be supportive and asked for a vehicle in the form of a disclaimer to protect Council members.

Council member Jefferson made mention of adding a disclaimer to emails and the website. He also commended Mr. McGee and his staff on all of their work and did not want the conversation to be misconstrued.

Council member Lamar asked for clarity on the Market Outlook Working group. Staff agreed to share more information via email.

Meeting dates will be shared with the Council.

## 6) Good of the Order

Council members discussed improving internal and external communication processes related to Council initiatives, public engagement, reinvestment opportunities, and community outreach.

## 7) Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:22am upon motion.

**Motion: Avery Gaddis**  
**Second: Andréa Hawkins**  
**In Favor: All Present**  
**Opposed: None**  
**Abstentions: None**  
**Motion passed unanimously.**