**MINUTES OF THE POLICY**

**COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL (DRAFT)**

REGULAR MEETING

September 15, 2022, Meeting 10:00 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Teams

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Edwin Shirley at 10:01 a.m.

**Committee Members Present:**

Subira Gordon

Michael Jefferson

Ojala Naeem

Edwin Shirley,

Kevin Walton.

**Council Members Attending as Guests:**

Chairperson Andrea Comer

**Other Guests:**

Andrew Clark, Director of Municipal and Regional Policy at UConn, Kenneth Barone,

Associate Director at Municipal and Regional Policy at UConn, Mohamad Alkadry, Director of the School of Public Policy at UConn, and Patrick Hulin, Senior Policy Advisor at the Office of the Governor.

**SEC Staff**:

Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director, Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager, Komla Matrevi, Staff Attorney, Crystal Morris-Crenshaw, Administrative Assistant

The Committee has reviewed and approved unanimously the minutes from August 18, 2022, policy committee meeting.

Chairperson Shirley gave the floor to the representatives from the University of Connecticut School of Public Policy to begin their scheduled presentation entitled “Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIA) Analysis.”

Andrew Clark, Director of the Municipal and Regional Policy at UConn introduced his colleagues Associate Director Kenneth Barone and Director Mohamad Alkadry. In their presentation, the UConn scholars gave some findings regarding the current legislation on Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIA) and made recommendations to the policy committee.

Associate Director Kenneth Barone explained that the current definition of a disproportionately impacted areas needs improvement to better achieve social equity and to better support community reinvestment. The UConn scholars continue to explain that

currently a DIA is defined as a census track that has either a historical conviction rate for drug related offenses greater than one tenth or an unemployment rate greater than 10%. OPM in their initial map that was certified last year, had identified 215 census tracks. That is about 26% of the statewide. He recommended that SEC should stop using the unemployment data to determine a DIA. Instead, SEC should use the conviction rate only, for the moment, because the unemployment data is not reliable enough to determine a DIA. He insisted on the need to update the definition of a DIA to provide SEC with more options in determining the DIA in the future. Mainly he recommended two options. One recommendation is static option which involved replacing the unemployment data with adjusted poverty data. Second, there is a more sophisticated option which involves replacing the conviction and unemployment data with a proportionality index called DIA index that gives more weight to certain factors such as conviction, incarceration, and adjusted poverty based on policy decisions that that can be made by the Social Equity Council.

Associate Director Barone addressed several scenarios and questions asked by the Councilmembers. Associate Director Barone recommended in the short-term moving in the direction of the immediate need which calls for drafting a DIA redefinition to present to the legislature and that definition should give the Council leeway to make methodological decisions and to refine the methodology over time. He spoke of the time frames of certifying maps. There is time to refine the methodology but less time to craft legislation around a definition.

Councilmember Gordon explained that she was not comfortable making the decision immediately but wanted to review the presentation that was sent to the Committee to ensure the current DIA map was not hindering the process of people currently under review. She recommended holding the current map and to keep it as a precedent for next year. Director Clay explained that the Council is required to certify a map under the law. Councilmember Gordon responded that she needed more information before deciding on recertifying the DIA map this year. Discussion ensued.

The Committee continued to discuss the legislative package. Councilmember Michael Jefferson suggested an amendment to the definition of the DIA to include indexes. He also spoke in favor of amending the statute to require recertification of the DIAs every three, five, or seven years. Associated Director Barone reaffirmed that certifying a map for 5, 7, or 10 years is acceptable, but the recommended legislation must also give the Social Equity Council the authority to modify the map if appropriate so long as the Council provides reasons to support the modification.

Director Clay has recommended that a placeholder be included in the legislative package while the Council continues discussing these policies.

The members suggested that UConn should give the same presentation at the full Council meeting. Director Clay will work out the logistics to ensure its feasibility.

Director Clay clarified the legislative package submission process by stating that the SEC legislative recommendations will be forwarded to the Office of the Governor and OPM for review and then come back to the Policy Committee for more discussions before it goes to the Full Council. The full Council will not need to vote until about November. The Policy Committee will have another opportunity to have discussions around the appropriate language as we insert a placeholder.

Chairperson Shirley asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Kevin Walton

Meeting adjourned at 11:51am