

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL MEETING

November 1, 2022, Meeting 10:00 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Comer at 10:03 a.m. This meeting was digitally recorded and the video is posted on the YouTube page of the Social Equity Council.

Council members present:

Kyle Abercrombie (Designee for Commissioner David Lehman)

Marilyn Alverio

Corrie Betts

Andréa Comer

Avery Gaddis

Subira Gordon

Michael Jefferson

Ojala Naeem

Marc Pelka (Designee for OPM Secretary Jeffrey Beckham)

Christine Shaw (Designee for State Treasurer Shawn Wooden)

Edwin Shirley

Council members absent:

Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Kevin Walton

SEC Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director, Komla Matrevi, Staff Attorney, Jennifer Stevens, Associate Accountant, Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager, Jennifer Edwards, Program Manager

Guests: Geoffrey Magon, Senior Manager, CohnReznick; Saron Saadeh, Manager, CohnReznick; Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director of the Office of State Ethics

Chairwoman Comer stated the Council would be asked to vote on the recommendations from CohnReznick regarding 11 applications that were remanded to the Council by the Superior Court, and only ownership and control aspects would be voted on. Vote to reconsider a previously denied application; have a briefing on ethics training; and hear the Executive Director and Committee Reports. Executive Session would be entered to discuss pending litigation prior to conducting that business.

Chairwoman Comer asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the September 7th meeting.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Avery Gaddis

Council Member Shaw recommended a revision referring to the Finance Committee report on page 2. The minutes should reflect the revenues available would be confirmed, not that the exact

revenues would be clear.

Chairwoman Comer asked for a vote accepting the minutes as amended by Council Member Shaw.

The Councilmembers unanimously voted to approve the minutes from the September 7th SEC meeting.

Chairwoman Comer asked for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss legal updates regarding pending litigation with SEC's staff attorney, Komla Matrevi and Joseph Gasser, Rebecca Quinn, and Jonathan Blake from the Attorney General's Office. Director Clay was also admitted to executive session

Motion – by Edwin Shirley
Second – by Christine Shaw

After the executive session, Chairwoman Comer introduced Geoffrey Magon, Senior Manager at CohnReznick, who summarized reviews of 11 applications remanded for ownership and control. All 11 passed the ownership and control section.

Chair Comer asked for a motion to approve CohnReznick's recommendation to approve 11 remanded applications meeting the Social Equity criteria based on ownership and control.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson
Second – by Ojala Naeem
In favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstention – None
Motion passed.

Chairwoman Comer commented as a result of the vote, applicants who had met the residency and income criteria would be referred to the Department of Consumer Protection to continue with the provisional licensing process. Those who had previously failed any other criteria would continue the ongoing appeals process at the Superior Court based on the criteria not met. Chairwoman Comer asked Attorney Matrevi if they would move forward with the previous agenda item.

Attorney Matrevi indicated they would be moving forward with that.

Chair Comer asked for a motion for reconsideration of Let's Grow Hartford.

Council Member Naeem motioned pursuant to Conn. General. Stat. Sec. 4-181a reconsidering the Council's vote on October 18, 2022, denying Social Equity status on Application #ACDS00001177 to Let's Grow Hartford LLC, without admitting that the Council erred in denying the license or otherwise failed to follow appropriate procedures. It would be in the best interest of the Council to reconsider the application; therefore, the Council will notify the applicant it may resubmit an updated application only as to ownership and control no later than

10 days after the date of notification and that the Council shall hold a vote on the application only as to ownership and control. The Council shall apply the criteria for ownership and control that had been posted on its website September 28, 2022.

Motion – by Ojala Naeem
Second – by Edwin Shirley
In favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstention – None
Motion passed.

Chairwoman Comer introduced Peter Lewandowski, Executive Director of the Office of State Ethics, provided a PowerPoint presentation and gave an overview of the code of ethics for public officials focusing on principal provisions of the code, gifts, use of State position, conflicts of interest, interacting with lobbyists, contracting with the State, outside employment provisions, and post State employment or post State service revolving door provisions. Discussion ensued.

Director Clay presented her monthly report which included an update of the council votes as of 10/18/2022. The licenses that have been completed are the following: Retail, Micro-Cultivator, Product Manufacturer, Product Packager, and Transportation. Director Clay discussed the plan for the Accelerator Program, Canna-Business Revolving Loan Program and informed the Council of a meet-and-greet via Zoom planned for November 14, and she referenced topics of discussion.

A proposed 2024/2025 budget had been submitted to OPM on October 3, and questions from OPM were being addressed. The DIA map had been recertified, and work with the Policy Committee would be done to determine its use for community reinvestment and the next lottery. She listed goals of providing updates on the following areas: operations, legislative/communications, legal/policy, program, administrative, Council/Committees, SEA support, and workforce development. Director Clay provided a list of upcoming committee and council meeting dates. The Outreach and Governance committee meetings will be rescheduled due to state holiday conflicts.

Council Member Pelka inquired if there was an afternoon timeslot available for the special meeting planned for the week of November 14. Director Clay agreed to resend the doodle poll to include afternoon options. Council Member Shaw questioned if a date had been set for the strategic planning session and if there was a timeline for the elements Director Clay reported today. Director Clay noted the strategic planning session was being worked on.

Chairwoman Comer asked if there was anything good of the order. Council Member Alverio requested an update, maybe at the next meeting, on the pause put on the marketing agency. Director Clay would provide that update.

Finally, Director Clay informed that the Council meeting scheduled for December 6, 2022, is planned to be conducted in person.

Chair Comer called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Marilyn Alverio
Second – by Avery Gaddis

The meeting adjourned at 12:20pm.
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