

STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING (DRAFT)  
March 5, 2024, Meeting 10 A.M.  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Paul O. Robertson called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed newest SEC Member Daniel Karpowitz.

2) Attendance

Corrie Betts  
Andréa Comer  
Avery Gaddis  
Subira Gordon  
Andrea Hawkins  
Michael Jefferson  
Daniel Karpowitz  
Melvin Medina  
Paul O. Robertson  
Edwin Shirley  
Shirley Skyers-Thomas  
Kelli-Marie Vallieres  
Kevin Walton

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Executive Director; Karen Colebut, Paralegal Specialist; Kristina Diamond, Communications & Legislative Program Manager; Arlene Galindo-Jimenez, Outreach Program Manager; Vera Lembrick, Reinvestment Program Manager; Jennifer Stevens, Associate Accountant

3) Approval of February 6, 2024 SEC Meeting Minutes

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve the February 6, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Melvin Medina  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

4) Executive Session

a) Discussion on Pending Litigation

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

- 5) Vote on Equity Joint Venture Application Recommendation  
a) Approvals  
i) AMHF.0008281 – Budr Holding 6 LLC

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve application AMHF.0008281.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

- ii) ACRE.0015685 – Connectibuds EJV I

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve application ACRE.0015685.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Melvin Medina  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

- iii) ACRE.0015686 – Connectibuds EJV II

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve application ACRE.0015686.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

- iv) ACRE.0015687 – CTCannaVentures, LLC

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve application ACRE.0015687.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

b) Denial

i) AMHF.0008280 – Acreage Connecticut Retail JV, LLC

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to deny application AMHF.0008280.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

ii) AMHF.0008278 – Sweetspot - Stamford

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to deny application AMHF.0008278.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Edwin Shirley  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

6) Executive Director’s Report

Ginne-Rae Clay presented the Executive Director’s Report for March 2024.

The Legal Program Director position was approved for SEC use, but the SEC was awaiting final approval for posting. The posting for the Program Manager position for Workforce Development was closed on February 26, 2024, and a hiring committee will be set up to conduct interviews as soon as possible. The Research Analyst position was approved and will be posted this week.

Updated Canna-Business Revolving Loan Fund requirements now allow Social Equity owners with multiple licenses to apply for a maximum of two loans, one loan per license.

The Council will vote on the community reinvestment plan today. The investment account has \$34.6M. The Reinvestment and Workforce Committee recommended targeted reinvestment of \$22M for violence prevention and \$12.6M for community collaboration. Council Members received the reinvestment plan for review. The SEC will be in contract with grantmakers by mid-May.

At Council's direction, Ginne-Rae Clay was in the process of meeting with agency partners to avoid duplication of services. Ginne-Rae Clay met with the Department of Social Services (DSS), Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Department of Housing (DOH), Department of Children and Family (DCF) and the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD). Ginne-Rae Clay was scheduling meetings with other agencies.

The Council previously discussed fatherhood initiatives and programs to support fathers and mothers returning to the community. Ginne-Rae Clay met with the DSS Commissioner and learned that DSS had a program and other programs were in development. Staff will have additional conversations with DSS on how the SEC could provide resources.

The next round of community conversations will be in New London and Stamford. Ginne-Rae Clay met with the Mayors of Ansonia, Bristol, Norwalk and Manchester and will meet with the remaining municipal leaders of our 36 DIA communities.

Subira Gordon wanted a written report that outlined how agencies were spending their money in the DIA, how much money they were spending and the ROI. Ginne-Rae Clay had notes from her meetings with various agencies and will share the information with Council.

A list was displayed of approved Social Equity and Workforce Development Plans.

March Goals: Council will vote on the Reinvestment Plan. Grantmaker interviews to select SEC's partners in distributing funds into the community. Complete the Personal Services Agreement (PSA) for community conversations. Contract with Oaksterdam University to provide boot camps for DIA residents on the cannabis industry in addition to holding another accelerator program and doing preliminary workforce development information sessions on career pathways until our RFP is set and workforce development programs have been developed. Posting of new staff positions for Legal Program Director and Research Analyst and complete the hiring process by the end of March. Staff will work on completing our pre-lottery education and outreach materials.

During February, SEC staff provided community education about our reinvestment efforts, familiarized people with our website as well as criteria and preparation for the anticipated lottery. Ginne-Rae Clay was at the New Haven Free Public Library where about 25 people were interested in the Council's reinvestment plan as well as owning and operating.

Ginne-Rae Clay was on a panel at the Connecticut Journal of International Law's Annual Symposium at the University of Connecticut Law School. Attendees from Spain mentioned they were closely watching the SEC's reinvestment efforts and work we were doing.

In February, Black Women United honored Ginne-Rae Clay as a Woman Trailblazer in the area of economic development.

On February 24 and 25, SEC was at XPOCanna at Mohegan Sun. Over 600 people visited our booth for information about our reinvestment work and the potential new lottery.

SEC staff and the Office of the Attorney General staff went on a tour of Advanced Grow Labs to see how cultivators and producers operate in Connecticut.

Next meetings: Outreach Committee on March 8, Reinvestment/Workforce Committee on March 20, Policy/Governance Committee Meeting on March 21, Finance Committee on April 9, and the next Council Meeting is on April 2.

#### 7) Committee Reports and Recommendations

- Policy/Governance Committee
  - 2024 SEC Legislative Update
- Reinvestment/Workforce Committee
  - Recommendation to approve 2024 Reinvestment Plan
- Finance Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Personnel Committee

Edwin Shirley stated the Policy/Governance Committee met on February 15. One item of discussion included the Council bylaws. The Committee wanted input from the full Council before the next Policy Committee Meeting on March 21. The Committee will report the results at the next Council Meeting on April 2.

Edwin Shirley asked Kristina Diamond to discuss legislative updates. Kristina Diamond highlighted a few updates she sent to the Council. The General Law Committee raised one large cannabis bill that included some of the Council's legislative priorities. Ginne-Rae Clay testified at that hearing. The SEC was involved with the Appropriations Committee, agency budget hearings and work sessions and received positive feedback on the Council's reinvestment efforts. Kristina Diamond will monitor for cannabis legislation and Appropriations budget information and will continue to send weekly updates to the Council throughout the legislative session.

Kristina Diamond responded to Subira Gordon's concern about hemp producers and the General Law hearing. Ginne-Rae Clay testified in opposition to that section of the bill. Kristina Diamond has been in conversations with General Law leadership, and she was waiting for substitute language in the cannabis bill. There was talk about limiting the number of Social Equity applicants that could partner with a hemp farmer. Once Kristina Diamond has the substitute language, she will share with the Council, but the SEC will continue to oppose the bill unless otherwise directed by the Council. Subira Gordon thought Council Members should call their appointing authorities since they were the most powerful people in the Legislature. Ginne-Rae Clay stated one of the reasons she shared her testimony with

Council Members was so the Council could speak as one voice. Her testimony reflected the Council's views. Ginne-Rae Clay encouraged every Council Member to speak to their appointing authority.

Kristina Diamond remarked that staff contacted Social Equity applicants and those who responded were opposed to the section of the bill on hemp farmers. Ginne-Rae Clay commented that when she testified before the General Law Committee, Council Member Corrie Betts sat with her at the table, was questioned and testified in opposition to hemp farmers. Corrie Betts hoped Council Members called whoever appointed them to voice the SEC's opposition to this bill.

Shirley Skyers-Thomas stated Ojala Naeem was unable to attend today's meeting. The Reinvestment/Workforce Committee discussed the reinvestment plan and proposed timeline at their February 21 meeting. The Committee suggested including reinvestment focused on larger funding pools. The plan recommended to Council included reinvestment in communities for violence prevention and community collaboration, to distribute money regionally focusing on crisis housing, food insecurity and community-based childcare. Michael Jefferson stated workforce development was included in the \$12M plan.

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion on the reinvestment plan. Motion made by Michael Jefferson and seconded by Shirley Skyers-Thomas. Discussion ensued. Ginne-Rae Clay stated that the Council had the final say over all grants as they did in the pilot. Grantmakers send the Council an Excel spreadsheet listing the name of the organization, the amount of money requested and its spending plan. During the pilot program, the Council and staff had four days to review the spreadsheet and provide feedback. If Council did not provide any feedback, the grantmaker could approve those grants. Grantmakers have a contract that provides details on how and where to disperse the funds as well as any other restrictions or additions. Staff will share information with the Council before making any major change.

Kelli-Marie Vallieres offered a friendly amendment to roll antiviolence into one pot of funding to allow dispersal of the monies as necessary based on the applications because she felt strongly about having more flexibility. Avery Gaddis and Michael Jefferson objected to the friendly amendment. Avery Gaddis pointed out there was a motion on the floor and Council was in the discussion phase. If the discussion was over, Council needed to vote.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson  
Second – by Shirley Skyers-Thomas  
In Favor – All  
Opposed – None  
Abstentions – None  
Motion passed unanimously.

Andréa Comer stated there was no Finance Committee report.

Subira Gordon remarked that the Outreach Committee meets on March 8. Next Council meeting will have a report from the Outreach Committee.

Michael Jefferson reported the Personnel Committee was drafting expectations to define the role of their ad hoc committee. The Committee will meet prior to Council's April meeting.

8) For the Good of the Order (New Business, Updates, Information)

None

9) Adjournment

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson

Second – by Edwin Shirley

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

/mlc

# TRANSCRIPTION *Plus*

LLC  
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March 7, 2024

RE: Minutes: March SEC Council Meeting Minutes Draft 32142

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,

*Mary A. Goehring*

Mary A. Goehring  
CEO, Transcription Plus, 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.

*Michelle L. Coronado*  
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