

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | OUTREACH COMMITTEE
April 12, 2024 Meeting 11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. **DRAFT**
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

QUORUM NOT MET – Meeting considered informational and no official business was conducted.

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Subira Gordon called the meeting to order and welcomed committee members.

2) Review and Approval of the March 38, 2024 meeting minutes.

Skipped.

3) Pre-Lottery Education Outreach

The discussion began with Subira Gordon addressing the agenda item regarding pre-lottery education outreach. Subira expressed the need to focus on educating already approved social equity license holders or provisional license holders who have gone through the lottery process. Subira suggested turning to either Arlene Galindo-J or Executive Director Clay for an update on the pre-lottery education outreach efforts, anticipating a discussion on goals and potential shifts or changes.

Arlene Galindo-J then provided an update on the outreach efforts, mentioning that they recently completed their first informational session with Oaksterdam University at the Q House on April 4th. They presented entry-level workforce training and management training programs and scheduled several listening sessions in the upcoming months at various locations across the state, including New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport. Arlene outlined the curriculum for the training programs, including entry-level workforce training, management training, and pre-accelerator bootcamps.

Ginne-Rae Clay added context to the purpose of pre-lottery education and outreach, emphasizing the importance of understanding the lottery process, criteria for social equity applicants, and offering required workforce training in the cannabis industry. Ginne-Rae highlighted the certification programs offered through Oaksterdam University, such as an entry-level budtender program and a management training program. They also mentioned the importance of providing information about criteria and readiness to apply for those interested in a career or entrepreneurship in the cannabis industry.

Subira Gordon then raised several concerns and questions:

Uncertainty about the timing of the lottery and potential legislative changes, questioning the appropriateness of calling it pre-lottery education. Concerns about the hiring process for an outreach agency, lack of committee input, and the need for transparency and group discussions regarding agency selection. Emphasis on targeted education and addressing existing issues before expanding outreach efforts, highlighting the importance of solving problems first.

Subira praised the listening sessions as a good idea but expressed skepticism about the approach to pre-lottery information and emphasized the regulatory role of the council in the cannabis industry.

The discussion continued with Subira Gordon expressing concerns about the clarity and alignment of the outreach efforts, particularly regarding pre-lottery education. Subira emphasized the need for targeted messaging and clear goals in community interactions, raising questions about the timing and decision-making process for the lottery, as well as the necessity of aligning outreach activities with regulatory responsibilities.

Kevin Walton echoed Subira's concerns about clarity and alignment, emphasizing the importance of ongoing outreach efforts despite uncertainties about the lottery's timing. He highlighted the positive impact of outreach activities in informing and engaging the community.

Ginne-Rae Clay clarified the council's role as a regulatory authority in approving social equity plans, workforce development plans, and verifying social equity applicants. She explained the necessity of outreach to educate the community about social equity criteria and expectations, emphasizing the council's responsibilities in the licensing process.

Subira Gordon reiterated the need for clear communication and alignment between outreach activities and regulatory functions. She urged for more clarity on the lottery's timeline and decision-making processes to ensure that outreach efforts are well-coordinated and effective.

Andrea Comer provided context regarding the upcoming lottery, highlighting concerns about oversupply in the cannabis market due to delayed payments from section 149 license holders. She emphasized the need for clear communication and education sessions to inform the community about changes in criteria and legislation.

Subira Gordon reiterated concerns about clarity and alignment within the agency, particularly regarding the selection of an outreach agency. She emphasized the importance of ensuring all aspects are aligned before moving forward.

Ginne-Rae Clay clarified that the outreach agency contract had not been signed yet, and the agency was selected based on its expertise in rebranding Connecticut. She emphasized the importance of proactive education and preparation for social equity applicants regarding documentation and eligibility criteria, regardless of the lottery's timing. Subira Gordon acknowledged the proactive approach but expressed ongoing concerns about agency alignment and decision-making processes.

4) Community Conversations Update

Ginne- Rae Clay initiated the update request, asking Arlene Galindo-J to provide the update.

Arlene Galindo-J reported that PSAs were sent to trusted messengers in New London, Stamford, and Norwalk. Plans were underway to start at the end of April. Interviews were ongoing for locations like Bristol, Meriden, and Bridgeport.

Subira Gordon raised concerns about the Council's lack of involvement in interviewing candidates for community conversations, as was done in the initial round. She emphasized the importance of a collaborative process and suggested utilizing the Committee's networks to find suitable candidates.

Kevin Walton echoed the need for collaboration and expressed willingness to support but emphasized the importance of staff sharing information with the Committee.

Andrew Hawkins emphasized the need for a strategic plan and suggested bringing in consultants to advance that work. She also offered to leverage her connections with nonprofits for community outreach efforts.

Ginne- Rae Clay clarified the process of finding trusted messengers, especially in smaller DIA communities, where government entities might not lead but only provide space and support. She highlighted the challenges in finding suitable candidates and the need for flexibility in approach.

Subira Gordon reiterated the importance of collaborative decision-making in selecting candidates for community conversations. She also stressed the need to review and approve the outreach plan, along with transparency in hiring marketing agencies.

Arlene Galindo-J offered to address the outstanding questions regarding the outreach plan and proposed having a separate meeting to discuss it further.

Ginne- Rae Clay agreed to share the request for proposal criteria and the locations where trusted messengers were not yet identified. She also agreed to set up meetings for individual members to interview marketing agency candidates.

Subira Gordon emphasized the need for an updated outreach plan, approval of the marketing agency's scope of work, and coordination for a lottery feedback information session within the next 30 days.

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

None.

6) Adjourn

Subira Gordon concluded the meeting.



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Date: April 16, 2024

RE: Minutes: April SEC Outreach Committee 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