

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL (DRAFT)

SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL- REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 2, 2024, Meeting 10:00 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1) Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Paul O. Robertson called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M. and welcomed all attendees, including council members, state agencies, licensees, applicants, and the public.

2) Attendance

Corrie Betts
Andrea Comer
Avery Gaddis
Subira Gordon
Andrea Hawkins
Michael Jefferson
Daniel Karpowitz
Melvin Medina
Ojala Naeem
Edwin Shirley
Shirley Skyers-Thomas
Kelli-Marie Vallieres (late arrival)
Kelvin 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.

3) Approval of March 5, 2024 SEC Meeting Minutes

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to approve the March 5, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson
Second – by Ojala Naeem
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 Andrea Comer
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.

a) Members were provided with a Teams link for the executive session. After the executive session, attendance was again confirmed to ensure a quorum.

b) Attendance

Corrie Betts
Andrea Comer
Avery Gaddis
Subira Gordon
Andrea Hawkins
Michael Jefferson
Daniel Karpowitz
Melvin Medina
Ojala Naeem
Edwin Shirley
Shirley Skyers-Thomas
Kelli-Marie Vallieres (late arrival)
Kelvin Walton

5) Vote on Equity Joint Venture Application Recommendation

a) Denials

i) ACRE.0015684 - Green Acres CT One, LLC

Paul O. Robertson asked for a motion to deny application ACRE. 0015684- Green Acres CT One, LLC.

Motion – by Andrea Comer
Second – by Michael Jefferson
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 Executive Director presented a comprehensive report on several key aspects of the Social Equity Council's operations and initiatives. One significant highlight was the council's rebranding efforts, including the introduction of a new logo and color scheme that integrates the identity of the State of Connecticut. This rebranding initiative extends across state agencies, boards, commissions, and councils, marking a cohesive visual identity for the council and its associated entities.

In terms of staffing updates, key positions such as the Legal Program Director, Research Analyst, and Program Manager were discussed. The Legal Program Director position had been posted, with applications set to close on April 8th, while the Research Analyst position recently closed for applications on April 1st. Talent searches are underway to shortlist candidates for interviews, reflecting ongoing efforts to strengthen the council's workforce.

Program updates indicated the commencement of activities related to the revolving loan fund, community reinvestment, and outreach programs. Notably, progress was noted in the loan fund, with several applications in the underwriting phase, signifying active engagement with funding initiatives. Community engagement, including webinars and Q&A sessions, demonstrated a proactive approach to informing and involving stakeholders.

The April goals encompassed a range of activities, from conducting interviews for key positions to continuing community conversations across various locations. The focus on meeting with partners to discuss funding for community collaboration grants underscores the council's commitment to addressing crucial societal issues such as childcare, housing, and food insecurity.

Committee meetings slated for April, including finance, outreach, reinvestment, policy, governance, and personnel committees, reflect a structured approach to governance and decision-making within the council. The ongoing presence on social media platforms like Facebook serves as a means to communicate updates and showcase the impact of the council's investments in community programs.

7) Committee Reports and Recommendations

- Policy/Governance Committee
 - 2024 SEC Legislative Update
- Reinvestment/Workforce Committee
- Finance Committee
- Outreach Committee
- Personnel Committee

The Policy/Governance Committee, led by Mr. Shirley and involving Kristina Diamond and Paul O. Robertson, delved into crucial legislative updates. Specifically, they scrutinized proposed changes allowing Social Equity applicants to engage in agreements with hemp farmers for cultivation beyond designated areas. This discussion reflected a nuanced understanding of potential impacts on designated investment areas (DIAs) and

the broader social equity program, demonstrating a thorough examination of legal and strategic considerations.

In the Reinvestment/Workforce Committee, chaired by Ojala Naeem, there was a focus on operational efficiency and strategic planning. The committee's approval of the current plan for grant proposals signaled a proactive approach to fund allocation. Their discussion regarding scheduling reflects a desire for streamlined decision-making processes, ensuring that any necessary adjustments can be addressed promptly. The involvement of Michael Jefferson and Paul O. Robertson highlighted collaborative decision-making within the committee.

The Finance Committee, under the leadership of Chairwoman Andrea Comer, showcased a meticulous approach to financial oversight. Reviewing monthly expenditures and budget balances demonstrated a commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency. Chairwoman Comer's emphasis on optimizing budget utilization, particularly regarding unspent funds, highlighted a strategic mindset toward resource allocation and program sustainability. The involvement of Jennifer Stevens and Paul O. Robertson underscored the collaborative effort in financial management.

The Outreach Committee, led by Subira Gordon, exhibited a strong commitment to stakeholder engagement and program improvement. The announcement of an upcoming meeting for Social Equity applicants to provide feedback showcased a proactive approach to incorporating stakeholder perspectives into program refinements. The emphasis on responsiveness to applicant feedback and the utilization of multiple communication channels, including email, website, and social media, demonstrated a comprehensive outreach strategy. The collaboration between Committee Chair Gordon, Councilwoman Andrea Comer, and Ginne-Rae Cray highlighted a coordinated effort toward effective communication and engagement strategies.

The Personnel Committee, chaired by Michael Jefferson, discussed creating letters of expectations for the chair and executive director. Sample draft letters and proposed duties for the committee were sent to members for review. These matters will be further discussed at the next committee meeting scheduled for April 24th. The committee aims to finalize these expectations and duties to present a comprehensive report at the upcoming full council 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 Avery Gaddis, Andrea Comer

In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed unanimously.



A Plus Reporting, LLC
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Date: April 4, 2024

RE: Minutes: April SEC Council Meeting 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