

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL | REGULAR MEETING - **DRAFT**
DECEMBER 10, 2024 Meeting 10:00 A.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1) Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Chair Andrea Comer at 10:03 a.m. A roll call was conducted to confirm attendance.

2) Attendance

Andrea Comer
Fanita Borges
Corrie Betts
Tina Beamon
Avery Gaddis
Andrea Hawkins
Daniel Karpowitz
Michael Jefferson
Melvin Medina
Ojala Naeem
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Kevin Walton
Charles Venator

Executive Director: Brandon McGee

3) Approval of November 12, 2024 SEC meeting minutes

The Council addressed the approval of the November 12, 2024, meeting minutes after resolving a technical issue that temporarily limited public access to the meeting.

Motion – by Melvin Medina
Second – by Kelli-Marie Vallieres
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – Tina Beamon

Motion passed unanimously.

4) Recommendation for Equity Joint Ventures: A vote to approve:

The Council considered and approved two Equity Joint Venture (EJV) applications.

1. Nova Retail CT LLC (License No. AMHF.0008286)

Motion – by Melvin Medina
Second – by Andrea Hawkins
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

2. C3 EJV II LLC (License No. ACRE.0015694)

Motion – by Melvin Medina
Second – by Edwin Shirley
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

5) Vote on 2025 CT SEC Meeting Dates:

The Council reviewed and approved the proposed 2025 meeting dates for the Connecticut Social Equity Council.

Motion – by Kyle Abercrombie
Second – by Edwin Shirley
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

6) Updates from the CT SEC

Brandon McGee provided comprehensive updates on recent activities and progress at the SEC since the previous meeting.

Strategic Planning

The SEC completed an eight-week strategic planning process with consultant Slalom to guide future Council operations. McGee outlined plans to share themes, focuses, and operational models, followed by next steps.

November Review

Alignment of internal systems to expedite Social Equity and Workforce Development plan reviews.

Staff training and enhanced communication with Social Equity entrepreneurs.

Reimagining the loan program to clarify terms for entrepreneurs and applicants.

Hosting two virtual roundtables with Social Equity entrepreneurs.

Participation by McGee and Kristina Diamond in two Connecticut Cannabis Chamber meetings to update industry leaders and gather feedback.

Review and approval of six Social Equity plans and 11 Workforce Development plans by the Success Strategy team.

Financial Overview

The Cannabis Social Equity and Innovation Fund held a balance of \$50 million as of November. The proposed budget for FY 2024–2025 is \$10.2 million. The current Social Equity Innovation Fund balance stands at \$34 million, with future appropriations required for fiscal years 2026–2027.

Acknowledgments

McGee expressed gratitude to Chair Andrea Comer for her leadership and to the Council for their trust in his leadership. He recognized staff efforts and contributions by co-chairs of the Strategic Planning and Development Committee, Andrea Hawkins and Daniel Karpowitz, for their guidance and dedication.

Interruption and Technical Pause

The meeting experienced a brief interruption due to public access issues with the meeting link. Andrea Comer addressed the concern, confirming the issue was resolved, and the meeting resumed.

McGee concluded his updates by reflecting on his 131st day in the role and reaffirming his commitment to advancing the mission and vision of the Social Equity Council.

Public Attendance Issues

Kelli-Marie Vallieres noted the absence of public attendees due to technical issues with the meeting link.

Andrea Comer and Shirley Skyers-Thomas acknowledged the problem and shared updates on attempts to rectify the situation, including making recordings available to ensure transparency.

Strategic Planning Process

Brandon McGee presented the Social Equity Council’s three-year strategic plan developed with Slalom, a consultancy firm. The plan emphasized reimagining the Council’s mission and vision to support social equity entrepreneurs and reinvest in communities affected by the war on drugs.

Key Themes and Challenges

Organizational Culture: McGee highlighted challenges, including leadership transitions, negative press, and a tense organizational culture. A collaborative and supportive working environment was proposed as a solution.

Council and Staff Roles: McGee outlined the need for clear role definitions and an improved operating model to enhance alignment between the Council and staff.

Focus Areas and Initiatives

Staff: Plans included restructuring the organizational model, defining roles, and fostering a collaborative culture.

Council: Efforts were proposed to integrate the Council more effectively into the strategic plan, enabling members to act as advisors.

Community: Reinvestment strategies in disproportionately impacted areas (DIAs) were highlighted, with goals to define success criteria and improve transparency.

Industry: Emphasis was placed on enhancing the end-to-end entrepreneur journey, restructuring loan programs, and developing a comprehensive workforce development approach.

Collaborative Governance

Andrea Comer reflected on the evolution of the Council from an operating board to a governing body, emphasizing the importance of balancing governance with operational responsibilities.

The updates showcased progress in refining the Council’s focus and priorities, while addressing key organizational and community challenges.

7) Good of the Order

During this portion of the meeting, Chairwoman Andrea Comer facilitated discussions and procedural approvals to ensure compliance with FOIA rules now that public participation is incorporated.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (November 12, 2024):

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Andrea Hawkins
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Equity Joint Venture Applications:

Application AMHF.0008286 for Novo Retail, CT, LLC:

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Edwin Shirley
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

Application ACRE.0015694 for C3 EJV II LLC:

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Fanita Borges
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of 2025 Social Equity Council Meeting Dates:

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – by Edwin Shirley
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.

Strategic Planning Process Review:

Chairwoman Andrea Comer noted that the strategic planning process had been reviewed and recorded for public access.

Committee Chair Reports:

Andrea Comer invited committee chairs to provide updates. No reports were presented during this meeting.

1.

8) Adjourn

Motion – by Avery Gaddis

Second – by Ojala Naeem

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed unanimously.



A Plus Reporting, LLC
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Date: December 10, 2024

RE: Minutes: December SEC Council Meeting Minutes 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