



Approved Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
February 20, 2019

President Scott Burns called the meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 6:37pm at the Gary Crooks Center on 301 Bostwick Avenue.

Scott asked Joe Ianniello to be acting Secretary for this meeting.

Board Members in Attendance:

Scott Burns  
Dave Barbour  
Phil Blagys  
Joe Ianniello

John Marshall Lee  
Lazaros Papanikolaou  
Christina Smith

Kate Spain  
Peter Spain  
Kraig Steffen

Also in Attendance

Steven Stafstrom, State Representative from the 129<sup>th</sup> District  
Vanessa Liles and Dione Dwyer, Meeting Hosts  
Amy Dominguez, Representing board member Courtney Hartl  
Stuart Sachs, Environmental Task (ETF) Force Leader  
Peggy Ianniello, assisting the secretary

**Approval of Minutes**

- On a motion by John Marshall Lee, seconded by Kate Spain, the minutes of the November 29, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved. Dave Barbour and Christina Smith abstained.

Old Business

**Treasurer's Report: John Marshall Lee**

1.) Checking Account Balance: \$12,451.97  
Current payables: -0-

2.) While we are incorporated as a Non-Profit entity we have no mechanism to raise funds going forward at this time that would necessitate a set aside of some of above funds as an investment in a longer term capacity to strengthen membership and services in such a way that a revenue flow results from those satisfied with new services of value.

Respectfully submitted, JOHN MARSHALL LEE, Treasurer

John Marshall Lee submitted a written report part of which was moved to Agenda Item III Environmental Task Force (EFT). John's report also covers his function as Chair of the Nominating Committee which wasn't added to the agenda. This is included in Appendix A: Nominating Committee's written Report.

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**NRZ Leadership Committee Report: Joe Ianniello**

NRZ Academy Workshop: The NRZ Academy Workshop was held on Saturday, January 12, 2019 from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm. Four members of the Black Rock NRZ attended; Scott Burns, John Marshall Lee, Rob Foley, and Joe Ianniello. Joe found it worthwhile and was glad he attended.

January 2019 NRZ Leadership Committee Meeting: Police Department Lieutenant Paul Grech described the ShotSpotter system that's been installed in Bridgeport. The ShotSpotter system includes many sensors installed around Bridgeport. When a weapon is discharged the sensors can detect it and an accurate GPS location of the gunfire can be computed. The location is transmitted to the Fusion Center and police are dispatched to the location. This system has reduced police response times to the location of gunfire from 5 to 6 minutes to 1 to 2 minutes. The Police department's Fusion center also monitors cameras located throughout Bridgeport, and planned upgrades will enable the police to view the location of gun discharges.

Heads Up: Public Notice in the Connecticut Post on February 16, 2019: There was a notice in the CT Post on February 16, 2019 in which the City stated there is money left from previously authorized HUD CDBG programs. In the past reprogrammed money has been used on other projects: Wordin Park is an example. We should identify projects we could do should this funding become available for our use.

**New Business**

- I. Hosts' Update: PT Residents. Scott introduced the meeting hosts Vanessa Liles and Dione Dwyer.

Dione stated that PT Partners is a partnership of PT Barnum residents with nonresidents. PT Partners is involved with making the community a better place for residents to live. They have many programs to further this goal such as children oriented Christmas parties, Kwanzaa celebrations, etc. They are very active with community events and have a partnership with Wakeman's Boys and Girls club. They are starting a café and have a Friday night movie night for children once a month.

They also campaign to improve living conditions. For example they are addressing a mold problem in apartments and a parking problem.

PT Partners does not feel the mold situation in the resident's apartments has been adequately addressed. The Housing authority initially thought the mold problem could be solved by simply painting the apartment walls that had mold. John Marshall Lee said the NRZ meeting minutes should reflect that they later discovered the mold goes through the walls; you can't treat it only on one side. PT Partners are working with residents and the Park City Communities (PCC) housing authority to get an accurate number of apartments that are affected. The remedial job will then go out to bid.

Stickers are required to park in the complex. However, some people don't abide by that. Although they've been told there is not enough room to add more parking spaces, PT Partners feel they need an exact accounting of the

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parking situation to determine how many parking spaces are needed and an enforcement of the rules.

Once a month PT Partners meet with apartment management.

- II. Streetscape Project: Rt. 130/Ash Creek Fairfield Ave entrance;  
Fairfield/Brewster St intersection:(Bill Coleman, Jacob Robison – City of  
Bridgeport OPED)

The OPED representatives did not attend the meeting, possibly due to the inclement weather. Dave Barbour said he would talk with Bill Coleman to get information on the status of the Black Rock gateway from the town of Fairfield to the Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street intersection and have the design committee review the information.

State Representative Steve Stafstrom said that because this project is State funded the State controls the bidding process. He said that the City's initial approach was to have the same company do the design and build work. However, the State requires separate contractors do the design and build work and this has caused a delay.

- III. Environmental Task Force (ETF): PSEG funding and possible role for Black Rock NRZ to serve as fiduciary (Stuart Sachs)

Secretary's note. PSEG Power Connecticut is building a new gas power plant in the South End to replace the old coal fired power plant. An agreement between PSEG and the City of Bridgeport specifies PSEG would develop a Community Environmental Benefits Agreement (CEBA). Among the components of the CEBA is PSEG agreed to establish a \$2 million Community Environmental Fund to be divided up as grants among municipal departments and community organizations for public health and environmental initiatives. A Bridgeport Environmental Task Force (ETF) was established to manage this fund.

Stuart Sachs is the ETF leader charged with guiding and setting up the approach to this effort. Among the types of protocol Stuart is setting up are: all meetings will be on the public record, minutes will be done by a third party, certified public accountants will be involved, strict financial standards must be followed, etc. Also, there will be third party audits.

One issue is that it is not clear how to indemnify members of the EFT.

Because the Black Rock NRZ, Inc. is a 501c3 nonprofit organization it could act as the fiduciary. The fiduciary may earn up to 10% of the Community Environmental Fund (\$200K).

John Marshall Lee said he is very interested and will look into the details of this task and report back to the Board of Directors. His submitted report stated, this "Potential opportunity to use our broad community interests and representation, 501c3 status, and potential part-time staffing to draft (a) plan, with full expense and risk exposure to Stuart Sachs who heads (ETF)

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group with \$2M to commit to the Community Benefits Agreement. Gather people to create proposal to organize an administrative staff, gain NRZ approval and submit to decision makers. (Potential for piggy back part time staffing with appropriate professional consulting, cover expenses, and create a reserve for NRZ)".

Stuart said the time frame for finalizing this will possibly be June, probably the fall.

IV. Strategic Plan Update (Council Representative Christina Smith)

Christina and Vanessa Liles will co-chair the Strategic Goals revision process. Vanessa is a member of the West Side NRZ. They will work to get more representation from residents within Census Tract 702.

*{Secretary's note: Black Rock NRZ consists of 3 Census Tracts roughly described as 701 (Ellsworth Street to the Town of Fairfield), 702 (Ellsworth Street to St. Stevens Avenue), and part of 703 (St. Stevens Avenue to Bostwick Avenue)}.*

She's finding that a lot of work has to be done. The work must be thorough but not take too long. She is looking for more people to work on this effort.

She is searching for information on formats to enable scoping the extent of the effort. The applicable State Statute allows NRZs to "amend" their Strategic Plans and gives the approvals required.

The NRZ Leadership Committee has applied for CDBG funds for updating each of the 8 NRZ's Strategic Plan.

V. Community Support

- a. CDBG Letters of Support: Gifted Hands Boxing Association; PT Partners/Park City Communities.

The "Gifted Hands Boxing Association" took over the boxing training location on the second floor of the Senior Citizen building from the Police Athletic League. The Association serves about 20 youths each night. They asked that the NRZ provide a letter of support for their CDBG application. On a motion by John Marshall Lee, seconded by Kate Spain, the board unanimously approved their request for support.

The PT Partners requested the NRZ provide a letter of support for a CDBG applications submitted by PT Partners and Park City Communities for:

- 1) Leadership Training Program for residents at PT Barnum Apartments - managed and facilitated by PT Partners
- 2) Decent and Safe Improvements - to purchase new lighting for the apartments and security cameras that will link to the police's Fusion Center for PT Barnum apartments and Greene Homes
- 3) Job Placement and Computer Specialist (a staff position) for Gary Crooks and Trumbull Gardens

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On a motion by Kraig Steffen, seconded by Lazaros Papanikolaou, the board unanimously approved the request to write a letter of support.

- b. BR NRZ Donations: Burroughs (Taste of Black Rock); Black Rock 375; Aim Higher Together Bridgeport (Courtney Hartl).

Burroughs Community Center (BCC): The BCC is asking for donations to support their annual fund raiser, a Taste of Black Rock. The BCC is well known to members of the NRZ and provides many services for the community.

Black Rock 375: This is a celebration of the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Black Rock. This is being done by the Black Rock Community Council and consists of an expansion of their Black Rock Day as well as many other events. Phil Blagys, a major coordinator of the celebration, said the Black Rock NRZ will be acknowledged in their literature.

Aim Higher Together Bridgeport: Amy Dominguez represented Courtney Hartl, a member of the NRZ Board of Directors. She explained that Aim Higher Together Bridgeport is a collaborative initiative between community groups and artists with the objective to use the arts to encourage the community to come together to work towards an end to gun violence in Bridgeport and Fairfield County. The funds will support the Aim Higher Together Bridgeport initiative which will produce the following:

A minimum of 2 public murals, a poster contest for youth and a projected art piece inviting the community to submit images, artwork and selfie-style photos promoting positivity and messages about kindness, conflict resolution and those previously mentioned and presented through the RULER method that Bridgeport students learn to manage emotions and actions. (RULER is taught in the Geraldine Johnson School. Its acronym is: **R**ecognizing emotions in self and others; **U**nderstanding the causes and consequences of emotions; **L**abeling emotions accurately; **E**xpressing emotions appropriately; **R**egulating emotions effectively).

The group is nonprofit with City Galleries as their fiduciary. They are not a political or lobbying organization. Any money the NRZ donates will be used in Black Rock.

The above three requests for donations were discussed at length. It was decided that all three deserved the support of the NRZ. One question that arose was since much of the funds in the treasury were a gift by a single donor, are there any restrictions on their use. According to Joe Ianniello, on Thursday, December 6, 2018 he asked Angie Staltaro if there are any restrictions. She was the person who obtained the donation from Elizabeth Pfriem, who is deceased. Angie said unequivocally there are no restrictions.

Kraig Steffen made a motion, seconded by Joe Ianniello to provide a donation of \$1,000 to each of the three organizations.

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VI. Land Use Committee: New policy proposal; possible merger with Design Committee: David Barbour provided the following Black Rock NRZ Land Use Committee Report:

The objective of this committee is to monitor proposed development activity along the Fairfield Avenue corridor and become involved in projects which the committee decides can have an impact on the community. The goal is to encourage and support appropriate development and to prevent inappropriate development or help to change it to become appropriate.

Current members are:

- John Weldon and Dave as Co-Chairs
- Laz Papanikolaou
- Kate Spain
- Joe Larcheveque
- Rob Foley
- Scott Burns
- Pete Spain

The committee is in the process of merging the Design Committee with the Land Use Committee, which would add Bruce Williams and Stuart Sachs to the group.

They've had two recent meetings. The first was a small committee meeting (January 6) primarily to review Joe Larcheveque's proposed Procedure for Land Use Committee review of pending commercial developments.

After review of the proposal and discussion, they agreed:

- They should have regularly scheduled, open to the public meetings, First Wednesday of each month. Publicize the meeting better through social media, email and the NRZ web site.
- They should work with the City to streamline the communication process, by requiring digitized development proposals for easy distribution and sharing and request that the city notify NRZs as early as possible of pending projects
- Meet with developers and neighbors
- Develop an opinion on proposals. Support, oppose or decline to render an opinion
- Time permitting, forward recommendations to the full board for action.
- Submit a letter to the relevant City Land Use Board(s)

The second meeting was a larger, well attended first regularly scheduled public meeting (Feb 6) at Burroughs.

There was an open, productive discussion, gathering additional ideas on how to improve the performance of the Land Use Committee. One idea, which the Town of Fairfield does, is have the Land Use Boards refer developers directly to their Economic Development Committee prior to public hearing. The committee acts much like our NRZ committee and provides recommendations to the City Boards based on the developer presentations.

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Also, Bill Coleman, from OPED, made a presentation on the progress of the Brewster Street and Ash Creek Bridge improvements along Fairfield Avenue. The project has been designed, bid, contractor selected and is set to begin when the weather breaks and should be complete in 4 to 6 months.

There was also a discussion on the Philbin property, which Dave could not be a party to.

Standing Committee Reports

- Standing Committee 1: John Weldon: No report.
- Standing Committee 2: Education. There is no lead person at this time.
- Standing Committee 3: Arts, Entertainment, & Culture: Bruce Williams provided an Arts and Cultural Committee Report as follows:

The mid-winter months have been busy for visual and performing artists in Black Rock:

- December 20: BRAG artist Harold Davis's work is presented in "Unity" magazine.
- February 2: BRAG poetry reading at the Black Rock library.
- February 1 through 25: Brag artist Bruce Williams at the Fairfield University Bookstore.
- February 11: Donna Osterby-Brien art opening at the Atria Darien.
- February 13: Author Speak at the Norwalk Public Library. Poets Chris Madden and Lisa Meserole.
- February 16: BRAG poetry reading at the Watermark 3030 Park Avenue. Poets January Wilson, Janet Krauss and Rob Sauerhoff.
- Standing Committee 4: Zoning, Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation. See Dave Barbour's report under Agenda Item VI.
- Standing Committee 5: Outreach & Communications. There is no lead person at this time.
- Standing Committee 6: Quality of Life, Environmental, & Public Safety.

Co-chair Kraig Steffen asked about the status of the recently installed lights around St. Mary's. There was some resident concern about the intensity of the lights. City Council Member Peter Spain reported:

- The lights are being changed from 40 watts to 20 watts.
- Water has seeped into the globes of 10 lights and they are being fixed
- Light shields are being added to 2 of the lights at the southern end of the walkway

Co-Chair Phil Blagys reported on the 375 year celebration:

- The scaffolding has been removed from around the lighthouse
- A Black Rock ale has been developed and will be available soon
- A cookbook has been written as a collaboration with the Black Rock Garden Club (BRGC). Recipes for the book can be sent to: [recipes@blackrockcc.org](mailto:recipes@blackrockcc.org).
- Restoring the historic mural from the once Black Rock Bank and Trust Company building.

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- There will be a 3 month exhibit on the history of Black Rock at the Fairfield Historic Museum in Fairfield

Co-Chair Phil Blagys reported on the Black Rock Safety Committee:

- Police Captain Steven Lougal will replace Captain Kevin Gilleran as Bridgeport's West End Commander. He will be the liaison to the Safety Committee.

Elected Officials' Reports.

- State Representation Steven Stafstrom reported that the General Assembly's Public Safety committee is hosting a public hearing re: a possible casino here in Bridgeport.
- City Council Member Pete Spain reported:
  - There have been much more Section 8 transfers
  - A Capozzi Park proposal has been written
  - Public Facilities will be removing deadwood and invasive species from Capozzi Park
- City Council Member Christina Smith reported the Bridgeport Waterfront Advisory Board released grants to beautify the waterfronts.

President Scott Burns adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 8:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Ianniello  
Acting Secretary

**Appendix A. Items from Treasurer's and Nominating Committee's Written Report (This was not discussed at the meeting).**

Suggested Strengthening of Treasury Function:

Consider planning and design for three types of business membership, including traditional retail and commercial; businesses run out of residences; representation of commercial real estate landlords, especially those who reside outside Bridgeport. Bring forth action plan to identify numbers of prospects in each category, find out what organizational services may be of value, and price such service; along with budget. Volunteers: Diane Vulcano -management of projects; Beverly Balaz - resident and Exec Dir of Fairfield Chamber; John Marshall Lee etc.

Return to June meeting with specific plan and recommendations.

As Chair of Nominating Committee:

Seeking resignation of Pierre Belizaire from Econ Dev-People's changed his bank assignment from Black Rock; would like permission to include his replacement Calvin M. Jones, II Vice President and Branch manager on Econ Dev committee working on and place him in nomination in June.

Call for nominations, new and from existing members with current committee service.