



Approved Minutes
Regular Meeting
October 9, 2019

President Scott Burns called the meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 7:10pm at the Hub and Spoke Restaurant on 3001 Fairfield Avenue.

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

Board Members in Attendance:

Scott Burns	Peter Holecz	Brian Silvestro
Dave Barbour	Joe Ianniello	Christina Smith
Phil Blagys	Joe Larcheveque	Kate Spain*
Courtney Hartl	Lazaros Papanikolaou*	Peter Spain*

*These board members were not in attendance for the approval of minutes.

Also in Attendance

Tara Collins	Darryl Manning	Angie Staltaro
Danielle Crisafulli	Gerry Manning	Peggy Ianniello, assisting the secretary
Jon Fatigate	Mardi Marrow	
Vanessa Liles	Laura Pennock	

Approval of Minutes (*Members identified above did not vote on the minutes)

- Annual meeting, June 20, 2019: On a motion by Joe Larcheveque seconded by Peter Holecz these minutes were unanimously approved.
- Special Meeting July 6, 2019: On a motion by Brian Silvestro seconded by Joe Larcheveque these minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

Treasurer's Report: John Marshall Lee: There was no report; John did not attend the meeting.

NRZ Leadership Committee Report: Joe Ianniello

The Leadership Committee only met once since the BR NRZ June meeting because they:

- Didn't have quorum in June
- Took July and August as a summer break.

Joe presented the highlights of the September 26, 2019 Leadership Committee meeting.

Jennifer Edwards, OPED Special Projects Coordinator who oversees NRZs, notified the Leadership Committee that HUD would not fund administrative efforts for PY-45 CDBG funding. She is working on internally obtaining funding of the \$175K for the NRZ Strategic Plan updates for the 8 Bridgeport NRZs.

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She had asked for Plans for PY-46 (FY 2020 – July to June) CDBG projects. The Black Rock, Reservoir Avenue, South End, and East Side NRZs have submitted their plans.

The Leadership Committee asked Joe to look at two issues:

- Are NRZs City Agencies?
- Are NRZs required to follow the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?

Joe reported that because the State Legislature felt an indemnifying section had to be added to the NRZ statute, he didn't think the NRZs were City agencies. NRZs are defined by State Statute and have operating rules significantly different from those of the City's boards and Commissions.

It isn't clear whether NRZs are required to follow the FOIA; however, the FOIA is a good procedure for any organization that represents the public. Following it ensures transparency both in its meeting procedures and record keeping, therefore, he recommended that the NRZs follow the FOIA.

The BR NRZ has been using the FOIA rules for record retention since the formation of its Implementation Committee.

Guest Speaker: "An Update on the City's Progress". Bill Coleman, Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED), stood in for Mayor Ganim who was unable to attend the meeting. Bill reported:

The City is doing a comprehensive update of the Zoning Regulations. This project, called Zone Bridgeport, was formally launched on September 25, 2019 and its objectives are to embed best practices into the zoning process and develop strategies and metrics to achieve the values that foster prosperous, livable, and equitable neighborhoods. The Zoning code has to preserve neighborhood character.

Bill stated, to achieve this there has to be more land use interactions with NRZs. Urban design issues should go to the appropriate NRZs. Although developers are steered to the NRZs, that is not obligatory at this time.

Zone Bridgeport is an 18 month process that will take good values from Plan Bridgeport, the ten year Master Plan of Conservation & Development adopted by the City's Planning and Zoning Commission on April 22, 2019.

An interactive website is being developed (zonebridgeport.com) that will allow residents to provide input during the zoning rules update process.

MGM: The Leadership Committee members met with MGM on September 30, 2019. Dave Barbour attended this meeting and reported that MGM is seeking action through the courts to have an open competition for bids for casinos. They expect this to be a 2 year process.

New Business

- I. Pollinators Partner Project – Mardi Morrow, Pollinator Partner Committee, Black Rock Garden Club. Mardi reported:

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"In March, at our (Black Rock Garden Club) annual Garden Fest held at Harborview Market our speaker, Louise Washer, from the Pollinator Pathways project inspired a small group of us to form a committee to consider what we might do to foster the values of that project in Black Rock.

"We decided that the first goal would be to host an informational meeting for the community and we've asked three speakers to talk about how we can all begin to contribute to this worthy effort simply by planting more native plants that nourish bees and butterflies, replacing some of the space we devote to lawns with pollinator friendly gardens, and eliminating pesticides and herbicides on lawns and gardens.

"We've reached out to invite homeowners, businesses, schools, churches and other organizations to our meeting, to be held on Thursday, October 17th at 7 p.m. at the Burroughs Community Center and we'd love for each of you to come and we urge you to invite and urge any other interested parties to attend as well.

"We've already begun to meet with the Business Owners of Black Rock to encourage and help them add planters to the sidewalks of Fairfield Avenue and explain why the many advantages of choosing native plants.

"The three speakers will address why it's so important to support pollinators, what other towns are doing to attract pollinators, and what steps we can take to create a small or large pollinator garden.

"The speakers are Louise Washer, from Pollinator Pathways and the Norwalk River Watershed Association, Harry Speer, from NATIVE Nursery in Fairfield, who is now stepping in to help with planting and watering of Capozzi Park, and Roberta DiBisceglie, from Columbine Landscape Company, Norwalk".

II. Land Use Committee: Showcase Cinema/Canfield Ave Eastpointe Project Update: David Barbour

Dave said a development of approximately 300 market rate apartments is being done at the location of the Showcase Cinemas on Canfield Avenue. There will be two buildings; one at the site of the Cinemas and the other at the parking lot across Canfield Avenue. The developers are Eastpointe and Spinnaker. They reached an agreement with the zoning board to rezone the parking lot to enable building the second group of apartments. The Black Rock NRZ supported the developers at the zoning hearing.

The 300 apartments will be 1 and 2 bedroom units so they shouldn't be a large burden on the city school system. The buildings will be 6 stories high.

The major attraction is the apartments are within easy walking distance of the Fairfield Metro train station.

The developer is willing to work with the NRZ on the building design. The second meeting with the developer was held recently. The conversation is

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positive but the committee has some thoughts about how the final design should look.

Dave said Spinnaker has a good track record. They are targeting rentals to cost less than the Trademark apartments located just across the city line in Fairfield at the corner of Black Rock Turnpike and Commerce Drive.

Dave also mentioned that the City will receive more money in taxes from the apartments than from the theatres.

He also said we should see activity within the next year.

III. Capital project requests. Scott has submitted requests to OPED for the following capital projects in priority order:

1. Façade improvement for businesses/storefronts
2. Streetscape improvements, particularly along Fairfield Avenue from I- 95 to Ellsworth Street
3. Welcome signs/signage in area near I-95/Exit 25
4. Sidewalk improvements

Scott said we should know about the funding in the spring. The amount of money for each NRZ should be about \$25K.

Angie Staltaro said the applications should be submitted in February and the money won't be available until July 1.

IV. Strategic Goals Revision Update (Scott Burns/Council Representative Christina Smith)

Scott discussed the status of the update to the NRZ's Strategic Plan. There were 3 community meetings and a survey was distributed. There were 132 responses.

The updated goals will follow the same format as those of the original Strategic Plan.

Scott said Vanessa Liles, Claire Burns, and Christina's intern Ashley Torres also worked on this.

The following documents were distributed at the meeting. The Black Rock NRZ:

- Strategic Planning Outreach
- Preliminary Strategic Goals, 2019 – October 9, 2019
- Summary Narrative of Strategic Goals Process

The above documents can be found on the Black Rock NRZ website address (<https://blackrocknrz.org/>). On the website go to "News and Updates" Then click on "more" in the paragraph "Strategic Goals Documents".

Mardi Morrow asked if chain linked fences could be discourage. These haven't been addressed as part of the Strategic plan presentation. A discussion on

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the appearance of these fences followed. The general thought was the looks could be improved by painting the fences black and/or growing vines on them.

Darryl Manning thought the Harbor sewage leak should be included in the goals. Scott stated it will be addressed.

Standing Committee's Reports

- Standing Committee 3: Arts, Entertainment, & Culture: Bruce Williams was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following report:

Only one event coming up to report on for the Art Guild. It's the BRAG Members Art Show at Burroughs which runs from November 8 through December 28. Opening reception is Friday, November 8 at 5:30 to 8:00. There will be a poetry reading at the event and an auction of small works by the artists; the proceeds of which will go to Burroughs and Fayerweather Yacht Club to recognize their support of the arts in our community. This show is one of the events on the Bridgeport Art Trail.

Elected Officials' Reports

- Council Representative Christina Smith. Christina stated:
A focus should be on keeping people involved. Money is always needed for projects.
She also said we should learn from the Sanborn event. There should be an inventory of historic buildings made to be ready when funds are available for restoration. CT trust has funding available to do projects to restore buildings.
- Council Representative Peter Spain.
Peter mentioned the Zone Bridgeport website is zonebridgeport.com. People should access the website and make comments and provide input to the information.
- State Rep. Steve Stafstrom: Steve was unable to attend the meeting.

President Scott Burns adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 8:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Ianniello, Acting Secretary