



NRZ Meeting 5.22.2024  
Burroughs Community Center  
Bridgeport CT 06605

Board Members in attendance

Greg Simon	Erick Sastre	Peter Holecz
John Marshall Lee	Lazaros Papanikolaou	Stuart Sachs
Tim O'connor	Robert Foley	
Ex officio: Scott Burns	Others: Charles Marrelli	

This meeting did not have a quorum of board members, thus the meeting was informal and for sharing information.

At the next meeting we will motion to approve the last meeting's minutes.

**Treasurer Report:** John Marshall:

- The balance is the same: 8793.32 we have spent no money in the past few months.

**Leadership report:** Greg Simon

- Charles Marrelli is interested in joining the board, it will be brought up next meeting.

Greg shared a number of events and projects happening in the neighborhood relevant to the NRZ:

### **CT MAIN STREET**

- The City of Bridgeport has gotten a CT Main Street membership.
- The Black Rock NRZ is already a member of Main Street America (which CT Main Street falls under).
- The city has funded an assessment of Black Rock by the CT Main Street team (and has funded for another of Bridgeport's NRZs)
- The Black Rock intake session was held Wednesday 5/22 and included representatives from BOBR and BRCC to represent important community group.

### **Inter-NRZ Leadership Meeting**

- Currently the inter-NRZ leadership committee is working on appointing new leadership after the prior leader has ended her term.
- Their next meeting is Thursday June 20th, from the NRZ John Marshall and Tim O'Connor will attend and report back.

The leadership segment included updates/discussion regarding the following.

### **PT Bostwick Charrette**

- Scott Burns attended, and reported that the meeting was productive and positive. The area of evaluation is Bostwick and also St Steevens and where the new WPCA is going to be built.

### **BRCC Public Safety Meeting**

- Erick Sastre and Tim O'Connor attended and reported on the event: Discussion included parking, break ins, suggested community response to various types of incidents, and the state of the police force which is under-staffed with many new employees on the force. Day and Night Captains of our area were there to report and answer questions.

### **Standing Committee Chairpersons' Updates**

#### **Standing Committee 1: Business Land Use -**

- Greg Simon provided an update on behalf of the committee: The idea for a Black Rock design charrette, which has previously been discussed, has been table until after the CT Main Street study is completed.

#### **Standing Committee 2: Quality of Life-**

- Dog Park: Erick Sastre and Greg Simon report that we are waiting on Housing Authority Approval.

- Community Mural - Charles Marrelli reported that there are three final artists for the current location planned. They are keeping an eye out for other potential locations. The design process is open to input from the community still.

#### **Standing Committee 3: Outreach and Communications**

- Greg Simon reports that the website development is on pause, discussion related to the CT Main Street project is giving the idea that we would like to create unified in our branding between the NRZ and other community organizations like the BRCC, and BOOBR

#### **Standing Committee 4: Environment**

- Scott Burns reports that there has been some debate in the community regarding the actions of the Ash Creek Conservancy. They put up a fence in an effort to preserve the creek.
- The NRZ should take a bigger role in facilitating communication between the towns, conservancy, and community, to prevent misunderstanding and backlash.

**Val Rossi** was not present but provided the following updates on her projects:

##### **MetroCog update:**

- Proposed concepts have been reviewed with the City of Bridgeport.
- Proposed concepts are still in review with CT DOT
- Study team still hopes to have a CAC meeting (Community Advisory Committee) and separately a Public meeting to present final recommendations.

##### **Parking:**

- BRCC held a Public Safety Forum with the representatives from the police department. Parking issues, especially near ball field and at the corner of Brewster and Fairfield Ave were raised to the attention of the officers.

##### **Old Business:**

##### **UI Project**

- UI met with Fairfield, there is a lawsuit to block the project, Bridgeport, Fairfield and numerous community organizations have joined the suit.

##### **Higher Collective Social equity Partnership**

- Val Rossi wrote a letter of support along with the NRZ letter of Support
- The Higher Collective was connected with the food Pantry and their project is happening outside NRZ purview.
- NRZ and Higher Collective are teaming up for their Financial Literacy Education Program to be held at the Burroughs Community Center. There are two main tracks for this program. One is general financial literacy and the other is focused on entrepreneurship.
- Tim O'Connor suggested we connect with the Boys and Girls Club who currently hold financial literacy programs for high schools.

**ARPA Trees project**

- The project stalled due to the Metro-Cog Project.
- We are working on revisioning where the trees will be planted. Ideas include giving every landowner a tree, greening up the PT apartment area, and others.
- More to be reported soon.

**Other Discussion:**

- Robert Folay asked about the empty lot near the Black Rock Castle. It is the NRZs most recent understanding that development has been stalled, potentially due to rising interest rates. The NRZ will follow up with Attorney Russo for an update.
- Pedestrian bridge was discussed: The Fairfield Metro Station WILL have it's name changed ot Black Rock. We will seek a formal update on the bridge status.
- There is discussion about connecting with the PoliceCommission about parking regulations that may be needed after the bridge is constructed to prevent our of town commuters from parking in the neighborhood.
- It was discussed that we have two large empty restaurant spaces, and we talked about how we might determine what kind of businesses we would like to invite to the area, as well as businesses we would like to discourage, perhaps making a centralized list as recommended by CT Main Street.

Meeting was informally adjourned!

~ Notes respectfully submitted by Erick Sastre, NRZ Secretary