



Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2018
(Draft)

President Scott Burns called the Regular meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 7:10 pm in the Burroughs Community Center.

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

Board Members in Attendance:

Dave Barbour	Peter Holecz	Christina Smith (ex officio)
Phil Blagys	Joe Ianniello	Kate Spain
Scott Burns	Karyn Leito	John Weldon
Robert Foley	Michelle Margo	Bruce Williams
Courtney Hartl	Lazaros Papanikolaou	

Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Peter Holecz, seconded by John Weldon, the minutes of the December 15, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved.

Old Business:

Treasurer’s Report: John Marshall Lee

John Lee was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a report.

January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016	Account Balance	\$12,866.74
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Expense

Check No. 1018	May 8, 2017	\$1,000.00
Check No. 1019	October 24, 2017	<u>989.00</u>
		\$10,877.74

Revenue

Smith/Spain Campaign	449.03*
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Account Balance	\$11,326.77
February 21, 2018	

*This was a donation from the Smith/Spain campaign and it was asked that these funds go to activities and/or projects focused on improving the lives of residents of PT Barnum apartments and/or the Towers complex per Niels Heilman, Treasurer.

There have been two checking accounts operated in the past by Black Rock NRZ, Inc. with Peoples United Bank. The second account was opened to receive contributions for Black Rock Farmers Market. Per request of Karyn Leito and Michelle Margo, the balance in their account has been returned to the Farmers Market with a check for \$1,800 dated February 13, 2018. Previously, one other check in the amount of \$5,000 was provided to them on October 25, 2017, thus

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\$6,800 was received in our Peoples Account and distributed back to the Farmers Market. The \$1,000 initial startup from BRNRZ is available to be returned to the NRZ and the account closed.

Per John Lee's request, Pete Holecz made a motion that the Board make an authorization by resolution of the NRZ Board identifying Scott Burns as President and appointing John Marshall Lee as account signatory. This act will eliminate any previous signatories no longer on the Executive Committee. This motion was seconded by John Weldon and unanimously approved.

John also noted in his report that the financial report is being provided to our accountant for completing the tax return for exempt organizations.

On a motion by Joe Ianniello, seconded by Pete Holecz a motion was made to approve the treasurer's report and was unanimously approved.

New Business:

1. Standing Committee Reports

- Standing Committee 1: Business & Economic Development. John Weldon

The state \$500K grant for the Commercial Village District Gateway Improvements project design phase is 95% complete. It will go to bid for construction in about 2 weeks with the award being at the end of April. It is expected to complete construction at the end of August 2018.

- Standing Committee 2: Education. Scott Burns

With the \$13 million addition expanding Black Rock Elementary School to include classes for seventh and eighth grades completed in 2015, and the tear down of Longfellow School and building of the \$51 million Geraldine Claytor Magnet Academy (GCMA) completed in 2017 the tasks of this Standing Committee are complete.

- Standing Committee 3: Arts, Entertainment, & Culture. Bruce Williams

The Black Rock Art Guild (BRAG) has established a new website – Blackrockguild.wordpress.com. Visitors can click on to the site to get updates on the group and individual events in which BRAG members are participating.

The group has been busy of late. Following is a list of recent and upcoming activities:

- Poetry reading at the Black Rock Library on February 10th.
- Book signings by local BRAG authors James and Tyler Silvestro, January Wilson, Jay Miscencik and Geralene Valentine.
- BRAG members participating in solo art shows: Linda Downey, Michele Hubler, Susan Fehlinger, Judy Noel, Lee Walther and Harold Davis.
- Member Peter Konsterlie is curating the show "Monsters, Superheroes and Villains" at the Shelfhault Gallery, U.B.

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- BRAG'S next group show is an Art/Poetry event at the Fairfield University Bookstore. Opening reception April 6th.

In other news, BRAG members have been invited to paint an outdoor mural on the Fayerweather Yacht Club mooring building.

- Standing Committee 4: Zoning, Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation. Scott Burns

There was a community meeting about the Ash Creek Pedestrian Bridge Project. The design is about 70% complete. The trail along Ash Creek running from Davidson Street to Fox Street will be 8 feet wide with the bridge 12 feet wide. Fox Street is being redone to make it a meandering street for pedestrian safety, but sidewalks will be straight. The project is expected to be completed in late 2020 or early 2021. David Barbour remarked that it is a long bridge and the designers said there are a lot of permits required because it is a wetland project. These contribute to the length of the project.

The Post Office at 2253 Fairfield Avenue is expected to move, hopefully to another location in the area. The owner of the building has successfully petitioned the Zoning Board of Appeals to revise the zoning from residential to office/retail. It is planned to house medical offices in the building after it is vacated by the Post Office.

The NRZ supported the Bennett Street petition of Boys & Girls Village to renovate a home on Bennet Street. Gerry Manning talked with the Girls and Boys Club attorney and went to a community forum on the project. Neighbors were not opposed and the plans appeared to be a good renovation. He recommended the NRZ support the project. Courtney Hartl, who lives in the area said the work they're doing is an improvement and the Boys and Girls Village are good neighbors.

- Standing Committee 5: Outreach & Communications. Scott Burns

The main function of this committee is to inform the Black Rock community about the NRZ, our organization and activities, and to encourage their involvement. In 2018 this committee is expected to evolve and focus more on public relations.

A website was developed at: <https://blackrocknrzbpt.wordpress.com/>.

- Standing Committee 6: Quality of Life, Environmental, & Public Safety. Phil Blagys

- BRCC Safety Public Safety Committee. The next meeting will be next Wednesday. The City has provided a phone to one of the Black Rock Patrol Officers, PO Robert Bruno, who regularly attends safety meetings. His number is 475-282-6929. He will take phone calls but he prefers text messages be sent to him.

Captain Gilleran, the City's west side commander, also attends the meetings. The Captain responds quickly to phone calls from Phil.

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People wanting to join the Block Watch can send an email to Safety@BRCC.org. Registering your email address with Block Watch will allow you to receive safety alerts/issues affecting Black Rock that have been vetted by the Police Department.

BRCC History Committee. The committee has been partnering with the Fairfield Museum on two projects: the Archives Project and the Mural Project.

The Archives Project is to identify Black Rock artifacts at the Fairfield Museum that were collected prior to 1644 when Black Rock was separated from Fairfield. Fairfield may dedicate one of their museum rooms for Black Rock to display items from historic Black Rock during the 375th year anniversary celebration.

The Mural Project is to repair and find a new home for the mural (a rendition of colonial Squires Wharf near the present day location of the Black Rock Yacht Club) that was removed from the Black Rock Bank and Trust building during renovation. The builders gave the mural to the Fairfield Museum who are keeping it in a climate controlled room. It may not come back to Black Rock and if it does it is not certain where it would be displayed.

The History Committee has been working with Ben's Lighthouse Foundation. This foundation is a group from Newtown that honors one of the children killed in the school shooting who loved lighthouses. The foundation has helped Bridgeport with Fayerweather Lighthouse projects.

The osprey nest on the lighthouse has caused damage and had to be removed.

2. Bylaws Change Proposal: Joe Ianniello

Changes to the bylaws will be proposed to the Board of Directors. The sections being considered for changes are:

- Ex Officio Directors
- Wording of The Quorum
- Term Limits
- Add Additional Executive Committee Members

The bylaws can be found on the Black Rock NRZ website:
<https://blackrocknrzbpt.wordpress.com/>

All board members were asked to review the bylaws and let Scott and/or me know of any changes they think are appropriate.

The Executive Committee will develop a draft of the bylaws with changes identified. The goal is to provide this draft to all members of the Board of Directors prior to the Annual Meeting in June.

More detailed descriptions and rationales for changes are in Appendix 1.

3. Black Rock Farmer's Market Update: Michelle Margo and Karyn Leito

There will be a change in the organizational structure and operation. The Farmer's Market has grown too big to handle without a larger organization. There is a new partner transitioning into the management of the market. The Black Rock NRZ will no longer have to act as fiduciary because the partner is a 501 (c) 3 organization. The new partner has grant writing capability, will do the book keeping, etc. The market will need financial support and will look for a corporate sponsor. Michelle and Karyn will work in an advisory role.

Phil Blagys commended Michelle and Karyn for their tremendous effort.

4. Black Rock Community Council/Black Rock NRZ Coordinated Efforts: Business Outreach; 375th Anniversary Celebration. Phil Blagys

The year 2019 will be the 375th anniversary of the founding of Black Rock in 1644. The Black Rock Community Council (BRCC) is planning a big celebration to include walking tours, a calendar, parade, activities at Captains Cove, banners along Fairfield Avenue, etc.

There will be a community meeting on March 5th at the Burroughs Community Center for planning and to get volunteers to help with the celebration.

5. Elected Officials' Reports.

- 130th District City Council member Christina Smith reported the City is looking for volunteers for outreach.

She mentioned that the Bridgeport 311 is a good tool for reporting items for repair.

(Editor's comment: The Bridgeport 311 mobile app and web tool from SeeClickFix is a powerful tool that enables Bridgeport residents to provide city departments with pictures, videos, specific descriptions, locations and more valuable information needed to fix problems efficiently. To install this app, Goggle "Bridgeport 311" and follow the directions).

- According to Scott, 130th District Council member Pete Spain is pushing for an anti-fracking resolution. He said that several communities support this.
- State Representative Steve Stafstrom was unable to attend but sent a report which stated, "The Bridgeport delegation in the State legislature has re-submitted the NRZ indemnification legislation. This past week, the Planning and Development Committee voted to raise the bill for public hearing. This is the first step in the process. The bill cleared the committee last year and was acted on favorably in the House. It died from inaction in the Senate".

Public Input, Questions

There was a discussion on the UI tree trimming/removal program. The general consensus was the UI worked with property owners to define what tree trimming or

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removal had to be done to mitigate potential power outages caused by trees or branches falling through power lines. The UI and property owners would develop a plan for tree trimming or removal; however, the company the UI hired would not always execute the plan. They should be watched to ensure the plan would be followed and there were not excess cutting and tree removal done.

Rob Foley reported construction began on the lots behind the historic house at 344 Brewster Street. He asked who was going to monitor the construction to ensure the builders remained compliant with historic district regulations. Joe Ianniello said he would send Rob a copy of the Letter of Intent that was incorporated as a condition of approval of the petition to divide the lot behind the historic house into two residential building lots.

Scott Burns adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 8:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Ianniello
Acting Secretary

Appendix 1: Description and Rational for Proposed Bylaw Changes

EX OFFICIO OFFICERS

Reason for Change: Section 2.08 states, "The Board of Directors shall include three (3) ex-officio directors. Two (2) of the positions shall be filled by the elected city council representatives from the 130th City District; and one (1) from the City of Bridgeport NRZ Office". However, the NRZ office has been reduced to 1 part-time person.

The NRZ has had significant help from the Black Rock area State Representatives and it is recommended that this person be made an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

WORDING OF THE QUORUM

Reason for Change: The Quorum is specified to two places; Section 2.07 Annual Meeting and Section 3.05 Meetings. Section 3.05 is poorly worded and is not consistent with wording in Section 2.07 – the quorum for the annual meeting. This leads to ambiguities in interpretation. The proposed change provides a quorum that follows the Robert's Rules of Order guidelines and is stated in a manner consistent with Section 2.07.

TERM LIMITS

Reason for Change: The Strategic Plan specifies 36 tasks the NRZ Implementation Committee has to perform. It defines expected completion dates for each task. Thirty-three tasks were expected to be completed within 5 years; three tasks within 6 to 10 years.

The NRZ Implementation Committee was established on April 7, 2008. We've been working on the Strategic Plan tasks for almost 10 years and still there is considerable work to complete the tasks.

It's essential that the NRZ maintain Board Members that have gained valuable knowledge and experience in obtaining grants and working on projects. Term limits would greatly impact the ability of the NRZ to complete Strategic Plan tasks.

In the three year period from the end of 2014 to the end of 2017 eleven members of the Board of Directors resigned. The average number of board members during this period was 18. The turnover rate is slightly more than 60% over three years.

Normal board member turnover and the Nominating Committee's selection of candidates with skills needed will refresh the Directors in a more efficient and effective manner.

ADD ADDITIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Reason for Change: The current bylaws define the Executive Committee as the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer and allows 2 additional executive committee members.

One more person would help in addressing issues, preparing information for board members, supporting standing committees, and writing the annual report.

Also boards and commissions normally have an odd number of members probably to limit tie votes. This proposed change will increase the number from 2 to 3 additional Executive Committee members.