



Draft Minutes
Regular Meeting
September 20, 2018

President Scott Burns called the regular meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 7:06 pm in the Burroughs Community Center.

Board Members in Attendance

Scott Burns
Phil Blagys
Courtney Hartl
Lazaros Papanikolaou
Kate Spain

Joe Ianniello
Joe Larcheveque
John Marshall Lee
Michelle Margo
Pierre Belizaire

Ex-Officio Members
Steve Stafstrom
Peter Spain

Board members made brief introductions.

Approval of Board Minutes of June 21, 2018 – Moved by Joe Larcheveque.
Seconded by Phil Blagys. Minutes approved unanimously.

Old Business

Treasurer's Report: John Marshall Lee

Financial Report submitted. Consolidated \$1,000 into our account from Farmer's Market account. Check #1020 was issued to Chair Scott Burns to reimburse for CT Post legal ad. Our current balance as of this meeting is \$12,451.97.

Motion to accept the financial report made by Joe Ianniello, seconded by Kate Spain. Approved unanimously.

NRZ Leadership Committee Report: Joe Ianniello

Joe Ianniello gave an overview of city NRZs and the Leadership Committee. City Council member Kyle Langdan was the guest speaker at June 28th meeting. He discussed partnering with NRZs to assist in filling board and commission seats. Scott Burns encouraged all present to consider serving.

Motion to approve the NRZ Leadership Committee Report made by Phil Blagys, seconded by Joe Larcheveque. Approved unanimously.

New Business

Casino Request for Proposal

Scott Burns discussed the recent NRZ Leadership Committee meeting with MGM representatives who presented an update on their current proposal and sought to gain support for legislation allowing a RFP to build a casino in Bridgeport. Joe Ianiello stated MGM is looking for an open bid process as currently only the two Indian tribes can legally bid on new casino projects.

Steve Stafstrom provided a legislative update indicating that tribal casino payments to the state are down and there is an increased number of casinos in the northeast. Last year's bill did not authorize casino construction and any new legislation will not either. Bill allowed for an open, competitive transparent process anywhere in CT. Certain criteria will be required. Once bids are received, they would be reviewed by legislature. A public referendum would be needed locally. The Bridgeport delegation supports the proposal stating MGM would not seek tax abatements and there is potential for financial benefit for city. He urged citizen support for the current proposal.

Phil Blagys questioned whether the proposal will conflict with current tribal agreements and cause a legal issue. State legislature would vote to terminate tribal agreement if casino proposals provided increased financial benefit to state.

Joe Ianiello moved to support a request for a proposal for an open competition to build a casino anywhere in the state of Connecticut. The motion was amended to include "in the upcoming January 2019 legislative session." Amendment moved by Joe Ianiello and seconded by Phil Blagys. Motion carried unanimously.

The revised motion now reads "to support a request for a proposal for an open competition to build a casino anywhere in the state of Connecticut in the upcoming January 2019 legislative session."

John Marshall Lee called the question. Main motion voted on. Motion carried 9-1 of board members present, with Courtney Hartl opposed.

The following four members were not present at the meeting but emailed their vote to the chair:

- Pete Holecz in favor
- Kraig Steffen opposes
- Dave Barbour in favor
- Bruce Williams in favor

Final vote tally 12-2. Motion carried.

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Plan Bridgeport Update

Scott Burns gave an update on Plan Bridgeport, a ten-year and beyond master plan for the city's conservation and development. The city is still looking to engage stakeholders. The last major meeting will be held next week. Check the city's Plan Bridgeport website (<https://www.planbridgeport.com>) for more information and to provide input.

John Marshall Lee commented on safety and security, public and private cameras – what if we began to understand what are the safest areas, density of security? What is the process for using cameras, length of time footage is kept? Public access to information on camera locations and policy for captured footage. Phil Blagys commented that the Public Safety Committee of BRCC discussed potential of cameras in Black Rock.

BR375 Update

Phil Blagys asked people to follow the BR375 Facebook page: BlackRock375. Twitter handle is the same. BlackRock375 is already taken on Instagram.

375th projects are progressing. Lighthouse presentation was conducted by Phil Blagys and Bruce Williams yesterday (9/19/2018) at the Fairfield Museum. The Black Rock Bank and Trust mural restoration is moving forward at an art conservancy in Massachusetts. Black Rock weekend is being planned at Fairfield Museum. Other museum activities being planned include a historical panel display. Other events in the works include walking tours, Kate Moore presentation, dinner dance on 9/28/19, Goody Knapp dedication, etc. Mary Kleps co-chairing.

Black Rock History Project

Rob Foley not present. Phil Blagys provided a brief update on the lighthouse restoration.

Standing Committee Reports

Quality of Life, Environment and Public Safety – Phil Blagys

Criminal activity report has been lacking but PD has started to resend. Pete Spain discussed Black Rock School Parent Action Committee concern about speeding near the school. PD is aware and handling.

Outreach and Communications – A Chair is needed for this committee
No Report

Arts, Entertainment and Culture – Bruce Williams

Bruce Williams emailed the following report in advance of the meeting:

The Black Rock Art Guild has been busy this summer. Members Sue Fehlinger, Linda Downing, Jane Silvestro and Harold Davis have presented their work in galleries throughout Fairfield County. Member January Wilson

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has published her seventh book Songs and Sketches; and member Chris Madden has edited the newly published The Astronaut's Son.

Upcoming BRAG group shows will include an exhibit of members' work at Framemakers Gallery in Black Rock, October 6-30 [opening reception 10/6 at 2 pm]. A fall group show is also being planned for Harborview Market.

Zoning, Land Use, Development and Historic Preservation – John Weldon

John Weldon emailed the following report in advance of the meeting:

I – Ongoing matter re: Philbin's Landscape and Nursery. Current owner wishes to expunge two conditions of the original stipulations that allowed the business to begin operations at 3369 Fairfield Ave. The hearing for this matter has been postponed three times. The Executive Committee met in early September to discuss how to proceed on the matter, and decided not to take an official position, although individual members were by no means discouraged from speaking publicly on the matter. A key point of contention is whether the amended change would violate the letter and spirit of the Commercial Overlay District. Further discussions with the owner and/or his attorneys are likely to follow.

II – Ash Creek Pedestrian Bridge Project: From Planner Dean Mack of City of Bridgeport OPED:

"While things are moving slowly we are still moving forward. The two issues that we are focused on are securing an easement in Fairfield for our bridge abutment and path to Ash Creek Blvd. and attempting to expedite the permitting process by reducing the scope of the project through eliminating the waterside trail from Fox St. to Morehouse St."

The side trail project is effectively being set aside at this time. Regarding the easement, Bridgeport is working with Fairfield to create the necessary space for the bridge on the railroad side without going through a full eminent domain process.

III – Fairfield/Brewster/Auden Grogins Project: From Planner Jacob Robison of City of Bridgeport OPED:

"We are preparing the Black Rock Streetscape construction bid for launch, with construction beginning as soon as possible in the Spring. Construction should conclude no later than June 30, 2019."

IV – Bridgeport Theaters project: The proposal to build apartments at the current Bridgeport theaters site is apparently stalled or killed. Developers approached the city through the tax incentive policy program, and OPED determined the request did not meet the standards meriting a tax incentive of the scope the developers wanted.

A brief discussion ensued on Fox Street improvements associated with pedestrian bridge to train station and area wide parking improvements.

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Pete Spain asked about Philbin's proposal impact on village overlay – sought board members' opinions. Joe Ianiello said he was a "purist" and believed overlay should be enforced. Scott Burns concurred. Joe Larcheveque stated the actual verbiage of the Black Rock village overlay requirements was not presented to the executive committee and felt verifiable information is needed to render an informed decision on whether to support the variance as proposed.

Education – A chair is needed for this committee
No Report

Business and Economic Development
No Report

Elected Officials Report – Pete Spain

The Saint Mary's street light replacement project is in progress. All lights should be replaced by the end of the year.

Wordin Park – A request to add raised beds to the park will be added to a future meeting agenda.

Capozzi Park – RFP for park renovation going out.

The next City Council meeting is on 10/1. Pete Spain is pressing for Bridgeport to be referred to the state Municipal Accountability Review Board (MARB).

Gerry Manning resigned from the board. Scott Burns acknowledged Gerry for his years of service to the NRZ.

Public Discussion

No public comments. Scott Burns offered congratulations to board member Courtney Hartl who is expecting a baby.

Motion to adjourn by Joe Larcheveque. Seconded by Phil Blagys. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.