



Approved Minutes
Regular Meeting
November 29, 2018

President Scott Burns called the meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 7:03pm at the Boys and Girls Village at 170 Bennett Street.

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

Board Members in Attendance:

Scott Burns	Joe Ianniello	John Soltis
Pierre Belizaire	John Marshall Lee	Kate Spain
Phil Blagys	Karyn Leito	Peter Spain
Courtney Hartl	Michelle Margo	Kraig Steffen
Peter Holecz	Lazaros Papanikolaou	John Weldon

Also in Attendance

Peggy Ianniello, assisting the secretary

Welcoming Address: Reggie Walker of Boys and Girls Village welcomed the NRZ members and guests to their facility. Boys & Girls Village serves children and families in at-risk situations by strengthening their ability to succeed in life. He said they serve 553 Bridgeport children and have been in Bridgeport for 15 years. The headquarters is in Milford and has been in operation over 75 years.

1. Approval of Minutes

- On a motion by Joe Ianniello, seconded by John Marshall Lee and Kate Spain, the minutes of the September 20, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved.

2. Standing Reports

- Treasurer's Report. John Marshall Lee provided the following written report:
 - I. Financial Status: There has been no financial activity in our books since the last report September 20, 2018. The balance stands at \$12, 451.97.
 - II. Since our September meeting a special meeting of the Exec Committee was called to consider and approve of a sum of funding that represented 40% of our balance for a project that is most worthy of neighborhood support, but after due consideration. Subsequently funds were found elsewhere, but the speed of meetings and information showed a weakness in our system of appropriating funds, handling funds, and raising funds where necessary.
 - III. As a matter of fact the use of the Executive Committee in 2018 has pointed out a weakness in the operation of our Committee system, currently. When Committee Chair are too busy with non-NRZ pursuits, when members of the Board are not assigned to committees of their competence and choice, and when meetings are not held, items of

Black Rock NRZ Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018
(Second Draft)

neighborhood interest that fall within the purview of a committee are not addressed, and potential ad hoc committee members are neither encouraged to participate nor are used where expertise rests. As a budgetary issue, each committee might be provided with a \$100 budget automatically to use in carrying out their work. Amounts in excess that are necessary should be reported by the committee along with the project, a timeline, and details of the discussion and research. (Perhaps each committee should have co-chairs? A schedule of meetings? And an opportunity to reach out to the community?) Pursuing the formation of a committee to serve the needs of our business community and the future vitality of economic development is something of interest to our newest Board member. I have talked to several folks who have attempted to initiate such action in the past decade. Perhaps a small membership fee from our businesses, both retail and at home, will fund the communications protocol and maintenance efficiently and effectively allowing such a committee to succeed?

IV. We may also provide for legal or professional expense? For guidance in the 10 year strategy review? And for update and regular operation and maintenance of our communications ability. As Treasurer I will volunteer to co-chair that assignment and report back at our next Board event.

Respectfully, John Marshall Lee, Treasurer

Joe Ianniello stated that since the NRZs are indemnified the City Attorney may provide legal advice.

He also stated that at the NRZ October 2012 meeting the board voted to allow the Executive Committee to authorize the treasurer to spend up to \$500 for plans/projects and report this to the board members.

John Marshall Lee stated he thought it may be a good idea to develop an NRZ budget. He thought that may streamline the process.

There was a discussion about whether the money in the treasury donated by Elizabeth Pfriem was restricted. Scott stated he asked Angie and Alma whether the Pfriem donation had any restrictions, they said that the funds should go to youth-related purposes. He further asked for any documentation, but they have not provided any. Scott said John Lee has a similar recollection of the funding, but does not have any documentation either. (Acting Secretary's note: To clarify this, on Thursday, December 6, 2018 Joe Ianniello asked Angie Staltaro if there were any restrictions. She was the person who obtained the donation from Elizabeth Pfriem. Angie said unequivocally there were no restrictions).

- Bridgeport NRZ Leadership Committee Report: Joe Ianniello's report:

Black Rock NRZ Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018
(Second Draft)

City of Bridgeport NRZ Academy Training: The City has hired a consultant, Michael Taylor, President of Vita Nuova, to develop training for NRZ officers and leaders. The first training session/workshop will be on Saturday, January 12th from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the Margaret Morton Government Center on 999 Broad Street.

The purpose of the training is to prepare NRZs for success in 2019.

Among the topics to be discussed will be:

- City government structure, zoning boards, public hearings, and city departments/offices
- What is an NRZ and how are they formed
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Prepare for funding through the HUD CBDG Consolidated Plan which will be submitted in early 2019

The trainers include:

- Bill Coleman – Director of Neighborhood Development, City of Bridgeport
- Ginne-Rae Clay – Deputy Director OPED, City of Bridgeport
- Black Rock's Stuart Sachs – Principal, PRE/view Landscape Architects
- Michael Taylor – President, Vita Nuova

I feel this is an opportunity to learn about NRZs and City resources and to network with key City personnel.

Although attendance may be limited those who would like to attend should contact Scott Burns.

3. New Business

- Discussion Regarding Black Rock NRZ Committees, Protocols and Activities

Scott stated from his observation over 2 years as an ex officio member of the NRZ, he thought the committees were at that time more active, more involved, and more engaged than what he's seen. There are two Standing Committees that don't have chairs. We should be more active from a committee standpoint. We should reach out to the community to get more members who want to be involved. We have talented and interested people in the community who want to be involved; not necessarily to be on the board.

He said that there were two zoning issues in the past few months. We have to be more proactive in knowing what's going on.

Scott also stated he has the sense that developers are leery of dealing with the NRZ and that they fear the NRZ can be an obstacle to development.

- Revision of Strategic Plan/Process: Scott said we will do this in 2019 and will have to seek community input.

Black Rock NRZ Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018
(Second Draft)

- J.P. Philbin's Landscapes & Nursery Zoning Variance Application for 3369 Fairfield Avenue.

The floor was yielded to Diane Vulcano who is a Black Rock resident living on Beachview Avenue behind the nursery. Mr. Philbin had submitted a petition to the Zoning Board of Appeals which read in part, "...to legalize the establishment of a landscaping business and ... to expunge two conditions of approval to an application granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals ... which limited material storage, trucks and vehicles." Ms. Vulcano stated her objections to the granting of the variance.

However, the petition has been withdrawn and Mr. Philbin is suing the City's "Zoning Official", therefore bypassing the ZBA.

John Weldon stated that these petitions come up too fast; there's no time to mobilize or to meet. A general discussion followed that the NRZ should be more nimble and proactive.

Kate Spain said there should be better communications to board members and we should get information out sooner to people.

Phil Blagys made a motion that the Executive Committee will develop a reasonable and fair procedure for addressing land use issues. John Soltis seconded the motion.

John Soltis made a motion to amend the main motion by adding that the main motion will not preclude the board from addressing the Philbin issue in the interim. John Weldon seconded the motion to amend the main motion.

The motion to amend was passed with 14 members in favor and Kraig Steffen opposed.

The motion before the Board of Directors is the Executive Committee will develop a reasonable and fair procedure for addressing land use issues but in the interim this will not preclude the board from addressing the Philbin issue. The motion passed unanimously.

Another issue was brought up by Black Rock residents on Bywater Street. The City's Planning and Zoning Commission at its November meeting changed the zoning designation at 11 and 27 Bywater Street from a Residential 1 or 2 family R-B zone to a multi-family R-C zone.

With this designation two duplex 2 family residents can be built. The residents are concerned that the developer will ask the ZBA for a variance to significantly increase the number of units.

Scott said that Vice President Dave Barbour was unable to attend the meeting but he provided his thoughts on these issues as follows:

Black Rock NRZ Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018
(Second Draft)

- I think we should be actively involved in how our neighborhood is developed
- I think we should learn as much as we can about proposed development
- Assuming we have time and we hold community information meetings, we should prevent them from devolving into emotional neighborhood complaint sessions (as city public hearings often do).
- If we arrive at the conclusion that a development is a positive for the community, or positive with modifications, I think we should offer support for the development.
- If not, then we should oppose.

Standing Committee Reports

- Standing Committee 1: John Weldon: In addition to the discussions above, Pierre Belizaire has contacted John and he is interested on working on Economic and Business Development. Pierre said he felt we should meet with business owners to uncover their needs. The NRZ should meet with them and discover a way to help them.
- 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:

October and November were busy months for Black Rock visual and performing artists. The following shows and events took place over the last two months:

- October 6 -Reception for the BRAG fall art show at the Framemakers Gallery.
 - October 20-Sue Fehlinger presented a selection of her oil paintings at the Gallery on Pearl.
 - November 8-BRAG members Chris Madden and Lisa Meserole launched their new book "Osterville: Poems".
 - November 9 "Take the Time show at the Fairfield Library featuring the works on paper of Michele Kibler.
 - November 14-The Harborview Market BRAG annual party and fundraiser.
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- Standing Committee 4: Zoning, Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation. John Weldon: This has been addressed in the discussion above.
 - Standing Committee 5: Outreach & Communications. There is no lead person at this time.
 - Standing Committee 6: Quality of Life, Environmental, & Public Safety.
 - Quality of Life & Public Safety: Phil Blagys stated:
 - ✓ Things are generally good in Black Rock.
 - ✓ They are now getting reports from the Police Department on crimes in the Black Rock area. (There was a change in the system generating reports and the Safety Committee hadn't received reports from May to September in 2018).

Black Rock NRZ Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2018
(Second Draft)

- ✓ Officer Robert Bruno is very active and engaged in enforcement. About 2 nights ago he apprehended the individual who was looking into windows in the Garden Apartments complex.
- ✓ During this time of year there's going to be problems with people stealing delivered packages from front porches, people breaking into cars, etc. People must take precautions to protect their personal property.

Elected Officials' Reports.

- State Representative Steve Stafstrom had a meeting in Hartford and was unable to attend the NRZ meeting.
- 130th District City Council Member Peter Spain:
 - ✓ Installation of lights around Saint Mary's should be completed in the next 2 weeks.
 - ✓ A 3 acre parcel at 10 Brewster Street known as the Savage property is a brownfield. Tom Gill, Director of OPED, said a lawyer who specializes in reclaiming brownfields and redeveloping them is looking at this property. Joe Ianniello suggested Pete contact Ed Lavernoch, head of BEDCO to see if he'd like to partner with the Black Rock NRZ to address this issue.
 - ✓ There have been some suggestions about charging for parking along Saint Mary's to generate revenue. It should be done in a way that the area isn't cluttered with signs or parking meters. Possibly set up a kiosk like Stonington to collect fees. Pete asked if the NRZ can address this.
 - ✓ He hears all the time from residents that there's a parking problem where residential areas abut commercial zones such as Waldorf, Wilson, Fox, Bennett, and Canfield Streets. We should be readying ourselves for the Fox Street pedestrian bridge. We may want to look at New Haven and Stamford to see how they address the problem.
 - ✓ There is a house under construction behind the historic house at 344 Brewster Street by the flag pole. Scott said that Stuart Sacks, Chairman of the City's Historic District Commission Number 1, is keeping abreast of its status.
 - ✓ He mentioned the Worden Park raised bed project.

Laz Papanikolaou asked about the survey of board member's preference for the committees they'd like to serve on. Scott said he didn't get much of a response so he'll resend the survey to board members.

Final note: This meeting can be viewed on the Black Rock NRZ Facebook page.

A motion by John Marshall Lee, seconded by Phil Blagys to adjourn was unanimously approved. President Scott Burns adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joe Ianniello
Acting Secretary