



Approved Minutes
Regular Meeting
June 20, 2019

President Scott Burns called the meeting of the Black Rock NRZ to order at 7:04pm at the Burroughs Community Center.

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

Board Members in Attendance:

Scott Burns	Joe Ianniello	Michelle Margo	Kraig Steffen
Dave Barbour	Joe Larcheveque	Christina Smith	
Phil Blagys	John Marshall Lee	John Soltis	
Pete Holecz	Karyn Leito	Kate Spain	

Board Member Proxies

Kate Spain as Proxy for Lazaros Papanikolaou
Michelle Margo as Proxy for Courtney Hartl

Also in Attendance

Steven Stafstrom, State Representative from the 129th District
Angie Staltaro, Consultant for the City
Brian Silvestro, Black Rock Resident
Peggy Ianniello, Assisting the Secretary

Approval of Minutes:

- February 20, 2019: On a motion by John Marshall Lee seconded by Kraig Steffen the minutes of the February 20, 2019 Regular Meeting were unanimously passed.
- April 10, 2019: On a motion by Pete Holecz seconded by John Marshall Lee the minutes of the April 10 2019 Special Meeting were added to the agenda for consideration. The motion passed unanimously.

On a motion by Karyn Leito seconded by John Marshall the minutes were amended. The motion to amend unanimously passed.

The main motion then unanimously passed. Joe Larcheveque abstained.

Old Business

Treasurer's Report: John Marshall Lee

Closing Balance: February 20, 2019		\$12,451.97
*Checks written: City Lights	\$1,000	
Black Rock CC	1,000	
Burroughs	<u>1,000</u>	
Total - Less:	\$3,000	
Deposit: Miscellaneous Contribution Plus:	\$200	
 Balance at People's United Bank:		 \$9,651.97

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On a motion by Joe Ianniello seconded by Kraig Steffen the Treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

NRZ Leadership Committee Report: Joe Ianniello

The April meeting took place at the PSEG facility and members of the Leadership Committee were given a tour of the new power plant. PSEG has developed a gas-powered plant that will replace the current coal-fired power-generating plant. The size, complexity, and scope of the development were very impressive.

The gas-powered plant will be in operation by 2019 and the coal-fired plant will be closed by 2021.

At the May meeting Jennifer Edwards discussed the status of this year's CDBG funding. Jennifer replaced Alma Maya as the OPED Special Projects Coordinator who oversees NRZs.

The NRZ Leadership Committee had requested CDBG funding to update their Strategic Plans. Jennifer said that this year's HUD program did not have a line item for administrative costs. However, she said that she will work with Ginne-Rae Clay, Deputy Director of OPED, to get funding from the Consolidated Plan for NRZ administrative needs. She will serve as the fiduciary for NRZs without one. Jennifer also said she would get information to us about reprogrammed CDBG funding.

Jennifer also discussed the Black Rock NRZ 2018 Annual Report. The report was distributed to Bruce Wittchen of the State's Office of Policy Management who oversees NRZs. In the report there was a discussion of the Bridgeport NRZ Academy. Bruce discussed the program with Jennifer and said he is considering expanding this for all state-wide NRZs.

The NRZ Leadership Committee voted not to have any regular meetings in July and August this year.

New Business

Annual Elections: (Appendix A shows the results of the elections).

Members of the Board of Directors:

- New Board Member: John Marshall Lee, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, nominated Calvin Jones to replace Pierre Belizaire. Mr. Belizaire was a Branch Manager of the People's United Bank at Fairfield Avenue Stop and Shop in Black Rock. He resigned from the NRZ when he was transferred to another location. Calvin Jones replaces Mr. Belizaire as the People's Branch Manager at the Black Rock Bank.
- New Board Member: Dave Barbour nominated Brian Silvestro to the Board of Directors. Mr. Silvestro has been working with Dave on the Land Use Standing Committee. He is a land use attorney and is experienced in working with developers.
- John Lee also recommended board members David Barbour, Joe Ianniello, Karyn Leito, and Michelle Margo whose terms expired in 2019 be reelected.

The President asked if there were any other nominations; there were none. Joe Ianniello moved that nominations be closed and the people nominated be elected to the Board of Directors. Joe Larcheveque seconded and all nominees were unanimously elected to the board.

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Election of Executive Officers:

- Scott Burns was nominated by John Marshall Lee as President. There were no other nominations and he was unanimously elected.
- David Barbour was nominated by John Marshall Lee as Vice President. There were no other nominations and he was unanimously elected.
- John Marshall Lee was nominated by Joe Ianniello as Treasurer. There were no other nominations and he was unanimously elected.
- There were no nominations for Secretary.
- Phil Blagys and Joe Ianniello were nominated by Joe Ianniello to be members of the Executive Committee.
 - ✓ A vote was taken for Phil and he was unanimously elected.
 - ✓ Then a vote was taken for Joe and he was unanimously elected.

Scott stated that not all openings on the board are being filled because there will be an update to the Strategic Plan and new skills may be needed.

Election of Ex Officio Member

- The bylaws allow an election of one ex officio member to be elected by the Executive Committee. 129th District State Representative Steven Stafstrom was nominated by John Marshall Lee and he was unanimously elected.

Election of Members of the Nominating Committee:

- John Marshall Lee nominated the following Directors to serve with him and John Soltis on the Nominating Committee: Courtney Hartl and Michelle Margo. This was unanimously approved.

An NRZ Leadership Committee cleanup program "Park City Pickin' It Up": will be in Black Rock from 9:00am to 12:00 noon on:

- ✓ Saturday, July 20 (cleanup the commercial corridor of Fairfield Ave)
- ✓ Saturday, July 27 (cleanup lower Fairfield Ave/Wordin St area)

Volunteers are needed. Supplies and refreshments will be provided.

Announcements of Dates of Regular Meetings through June 2020

- Wednesday, October 9, 2019
- Wednesday, December 11, 2019
- Wednesday, March 11, 2020
- Wednesday, June 17, 2020

The location of the Regular Meetings will be provided with meeting notices. Also, see NRZ Website: <https://blackrocknrz.org/>

- Meetings of Standing Committee 4, Zoning, Land Use, Development, & Historic Presentation Committee will be on the first Wednesday of every month in the Burroughs Community Center.

Strategic Plan Update: Council Representative Christina Smith, Co-chairwoman of the Strategic Plan Update Committee, reported that she now has an intern working with her and expects to move forward with the update.

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Standing Committee Reports.

- **Standing Committee 1:** Business & Economic Development. Scott Burns

Showcase Cinema Project: EastPointe LLC and Spinnaker Real Estate are continuing their efforts to redevelop the current Showcase Cinema site into 275-300 market rate apartments. The Board, following the recommendation of the Land Use committee, approved a letter of recommendation for a requested zone change. The developers will be looking to build on both sides of Canfield Avenue between Brewster and Alfred streets. The developers expressed their interest in continuing to work with our Land and Design committee.

Business Owners of Black Rock (BOBR): A woman-owned business group looking to set goals and priorities for retail and service businesses along Fairfield Ave. has started to take root and is coordinating efforts with the NRZ. Credit to Nikki Intilangelo of Sun-kissed Glow for pulling together her fellow owners. BOBR and the NRZ as well as guest Ed Lavernoich of BEDCO met June 4 to discuss concerns and goals. Lauren Coakley Vincent – President and CEO of the Downtown Special Services District (DSSD) – and Calvin Jones of Peoples Bank at Stop-n-Shop are looking to engage as well. Dave Rothberg (property owner) and Rich Magalik (business manager) hosted the meeting at WerkSpace — a well-designed, active co-working space upstairs from Birdman and Kure.

On a related note, Black Rock has had its somewhat continuous pattern of gaining and losing businesses along Fairfield Avenue. On the plus side, we now have three new restaurants on the Avenue, including the Birdman Juke Joint, Forza Ristorante, and Blind Rhino. We have lost, however, Replenish Juice, Match Taco, and Black Rock Yoga.

- **Standing Committee 2:** Education. There is no chairperson person at this time. Strategic Plan tasks are basically completed.
- **Standing Committee 3:** Arts, Entertainment, & Culture. Bruce Williams was unable to attend the meeting; however, he provided the following report.

The Black Rock Art Guild (BRAG) has played a big part in the Black Rock 375 celebrations with three signature events:

- ✓ The BRAG Members' show at Harborview Market on June 1st through July 31st. The opening reception was held on Friday, June 7th.
- ✓ BRAG Poets and Performing Artists was held at the Burroughs Community Center on Saturday June 22nd.
- ✓ The BRAG Members' Art Show will be held at Burroughs Community Center June 1st through July 31st.

- **Standing Committee 4:** Zoning, Land Use, Development, & Historic Preservation. Co-Chairs Dave Barbour and John Weldon. Dave Barbour reported:

We've held our regularly scheduled monthly meetings. We've expanded our committee to include an attorney, a finance expert, design professional, and history expert. We merged the Design Review Committee into Standing Committee 4. New members are:

- ✓ Brian Silvestro, an attorney
- ✓ Bruce Hbler, a finance expert
- ✓ Bruce Williams, a history expert
- ✓ Stuart Sachs, a design professional

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Partly because of our publicized, regularly scheduled meetings, we've had people who have come to us with ideas and proposals. Two proposals of interest and significance include:

- ✓ 10 Brewster Street Property (south end of Brewster Street, by Fayerweather Yacht Club)

Kevin Blagys came to us with a proposed public park focused on the historic features on the property.

There is a very old masonry structure, overgrown on the property. We reached out to the former city historian and the state archeologist to learn more about the property. It is possible that a portion of the structure may have been constructed by Lieutenant Thomas Wheeler as early as 1644. If so, it would be the oldest fort constructed by Europeans still existing in the entire United States.

We learned that this piece of land is one of the most historic places in Connecticut. It is the:

- Landing for colonial Fairfield
- Place where all trade was conducted during that first century
- Almost certainly the place where the first settlers came ashore in 1639
- It was the site of the first shipyard in the mid-18th century, and later the place where clipper ships (including the 'Charles Cooper') were constructed for worldwide trade in the 1850s.

We also learned that the site was a turpentine factory and later an environmental waste dump. We are still looking into the environmental aspects of the site. The site could become a state or national park, possibly with adjacent commercial development.

- ✓ Showcase Cinema Property. East Pointe LLC and Spinnaker Real Estate came to us. They have an agreement to purchase the Showcase Cinema site. The site includes the theatre building, the parking structure and the adjacent surface parking lots. They described their conceptual plans for redeveloping the site to become approximately 300 market rate, residential rental housing units. They plan to retain most of the existing parking structure. Part of their plan includes the development of a second residential structure on the adjacent parcel (southeast corner of Canfield Avenue and Brewster Street). Based on what we learned, we voted to support the developers proposed zone change, which was approved by the board at a Special Meeting on April 10th.

Joe Larcheveque asked if there were any plans for making this a mixed use development. Dave said the developer didn't think there would be a market for mixed use in this location. Dave stated the Trademark apartments located in Fairfield less than 0.3 miles from the proposed development had two restaurants in succession that failed.

- **Standing Committee 5:** Outreach & Communications. No chairperson at this time.
- **Standing Committee 6:** Quality of Life, Environmental, & Public Safety. Co-Chairs Kraig Steffen and Phil Blagys.

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NRZ Environmental sub-committee: Kraig Steffen reported the following: There are many important activities which have an impact on the environmental quality of life in Black Rock that are ongoing. Highlights with further information from the Ash Creek Conservation Association include:

- ✓ The Capozzi Park restoration project is underway. This project involves the removal of invasive bushes and trees and the restoration of the park with an emphasis on conservation uses over the next few years. A full update can be found at: <https://ashcreekassoc.org/categories/park-restoration>
- ✓ The installation of fishing line recycling tubes along the Bridgeport shoreline (Ash Creek, Seaside Park). For more information see: <https://ashcreekassoc.org/categories/fishing-line-recycling-bins>
- ✓ Participation a long-term water quality monitoring effort for all of LIS: <https://ashcreekassoc.org/news> (this project seeks to gather long term data on sewage outflows to independently monitor the effectiveness of ongoing work to update our antiquated combined storm/sewage runoff system.)

Kraig continued: There have also been a number of informational talks that have helped local residents understand the value of our natural resources. A short list of some but not all includes the following:

- ✓ History of Ash Creek talk by Gail Robinson on April 9th. Part of the Black Rock 375 Celebrations. Ash Creek is a thriving natural salt marsh today through the efforts of many people over decades.
- ✓ Osprey protection and rescue programs talks on February 11th. Osprey are once again thriving along the CT shoreline through the efforts of many citizens and the help of towns.
- ✓ Black Rock Garden Club Bee Pollinator talk on Jan 17.
- ✓ Annual Black Rock Garden Club Garden Fest at Harborview Market on March 10th
- ✓ Annual Black Rock Garden Club plant sale May 17th and 18th

Quality of Life: Scott met with James Michel of AccessHealthCT (Connecticut's "ObamaCare" portal) June 4th to discuss ways of reversing declining health insurance enrollment, particularly in cities and with minority populations. Mr. Michel also volunteered that his organization would be interested in sponsoring the Black Rock Farmers Market next year. We will also be working with Mollie Melbourne, new President of Southwest Community Health, to help reach the goals of AccessHealthCT.

Block Watch and Celebration 375: Phil Blagys.

- ✓ Phil Blagys stated that the Celebration 375 banner on the fence was ruined by vandals. The very large banner had many sponsors' names on it.
- ✓ Joe Larcheveque, Black Rock Little League president, stated that there was significant vandalism at Ellsworth Field.
- ✓ Phil also stated that there are many activities celebrating the Black Rock 375 anniversary of its founding. The Fairfield Museum has a large exhibition for Black Rock history. A highlight of the exhibition is the recently restored, 8-foot by 20-foot mural "Old Black Rock Harbor" by renowned muralist Robert Lambdin that originally hung in the Black Rock Bank and Trust Co., located on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street.

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Stuart Sachs was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following report:

The Environmental Task Force (ETF) will call a committee meeting in July with the expectation of receiving money from PSEG in August because PSEG has announced that they have finished construction. They'll now be doing testing and final permit reviews

Elected Officials' Reports.

- City Council Member Christina Smith reported:

The Zoning regulations are being updated. Kate Spain added that Lynn Haig, OPED, and Dennis Buckley, Zoning, met with the Land Use Standing Committee 4 and said the committee will have an opportunity to provide inputs. It is expected the new regulations will be completed in about 20 months.

Christina said the City Council Committee on Economic and Community Development and Environment has been looking at issues with small cell towers being located on telephone poles. People are concerned that radiation can cause health issues. This has not been proven. Federal law does not allow people to stop the installations; however, the phone company is willing to not locate these small cell towers where people object to them.
- State Representative Steven Stafstrom: Steve said the legislative session adjourns July 8th. Bassick High School construction budget was slashed; however, construction of the high school will be completed.
 - ✓ The State bond budget has not been adopted.
 - ✓ The Ash Creek Bridge project is being delayed. There is a controversy with Fairfield property owners/developers in agreeing to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to allow construction on their property. The Town of Fairfield and Bridgeport's OPED are working to get the Fairfield developers to agree to an MOU.

President Scott Burns adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 8:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Ianniello
Acting Secretary

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Appendix A: Black Rock NRZ Organization List

NAME	TERM EXPIRATION	NOTES
David Barbour	June 2022	
Joe Ianniello	June 2022	
Calvin Jones	June 2022	
Karyn Leito	June 2022	
Michelle Margo	June 2022	
Brian Silvestro	June 2022	
Open	June 2022	
Scott Burns	June 2021	
Robert Foley	June 2021	
Peter Holecz	June 2021	
John Marshall Lee	June 2021	
John Soltis	June 2021	
Kraig Steffen	June 2021	
Bruce Williams	June 2021	
Phil Blagys	June 2020	
Courtney Hartl	June 2020	
Joe Larcheveque	June 2020	
Lazaros Papanikolaou	June 2020	
Kate Spain	June 2020	
John Weldon	June 2020	
Open	June 2020	

Elected Position	Name	Term Expiration
President	Scott Burns	June 2020
Vice President	Dave Barbour	June 2020
Secretary	Open	
Treasurer	John Marshall Lee	June 2020
Elected Executive Committee Member 1	Phil Blagys	June 2020
Elected Executive Committee Member 2	Joe Ianniello	June 2020
Elected Executive Committee Member 3	Open	Open

Ex Officio Member	Position	Notes
Christina Smith	130 th City Council Member	Per NRZ Bylaws
Peter Spain	130 th City Council Member	Per NRZ Bylaws
Steven Stafstrom	129 th District State Representative	Elected by Executive Committee

Nominating Committee Member	Notes
John Marshall Lee	Chairman
Courtney Hartl	
Michelle Margo	
John Soltis	