



Social Equity Council

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL
February 1, 2022, Special Meeting 10 A.M.
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MEETING MATERIALS

[Minutes - 1/4/2021](#)

[SEC Workplan 2022](#)

[SEA Residency Verification Income Verification OwnershipAndControl.pdf](#)

[SEC-DECD MOU](#)

[Application timeline](#)

[Letter to legislature](#)

[Initial App and Backer Walkthrough presentation](#)

[CT Cannabis Study Update by IMAP](#)

[Executive Director Report for February 2022](#)

MINUTES

A special meeting of the Social Equity Council (SEC) was held virtually via Zoom on February 1, 2022.

This meeting was recorded by CT-N - To watch, visit:

<http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=19303>

1. Call to order and welcome

Meeting was called to order by Andréa Comer at 10:00 a.m. She spoke of recent inquiries about the quality of product in the medical marijuana program and noted that SEC has no oversight of the medical marijuana program, and that those with concerns about it should file a formal complaint. She stated that, "As this Council knows, during public comment at our meetings, we have heard from members of the community about concerns regarding medical marijuana. The Department of Consumer Protection is aware of these concerns and have investigated all complaints that have been submitted. For clarity, to date the department has received and reviewed 3 complaints of unsatisfactory products in the past 6 months. The department encourages any patient who believes they have purchased a product that does not meet department standards to file a formal complaint with the department by emailing dcp.mmp@ct.gov."

2. Attendance

Corrie Betts

Andréa Comer

Avery Gaddis

Subira Gordon

Michael Jefferson

David Lehman

Melissa McCaw

Ojala Naeem

Christine Shaw (Designee for Shawn Wooden)

Edwin Shirley

Kelli Vallieres

Joseph Williams

Council members absent:

Marilyn Alverio
Ramón Arroyo
Fabian Durango

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Interim Executive Director, SEC and Jennifer Edwards, Program Manager, SEC

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes (1/4/2022)

Andréa Comer asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January meeting on 1/4/2021.

Motion – Michael Jefferson
2nd – Ojala Naeem
Discussion – None

All In Favor – All
Nays – None
Abstentions – None

Motion passed. The minutes were approved.

2. Application Walkthrough

Rod Marriott, DCP

Rod Marriott did a detailed, line by line walkthrough of a sample application for a cannabis establishment license in his [Initial App and Backer Walkthrough presentation](#).

3. Cannabis Study Update

Andrew Clark, IMRP Director, UConn

Andrew Clark provided an [update on the IMAP-SEC CT Cannabis Study](#) being conducted. Ken Barrone spoke of the methodology and Mr. Clark spoke of next steps and additional study considerations.

4. Committee Reports/Requests for Action

a. Outreach Committee

Marilyn Alverio & Subira Gordon, Co-Chairs

Subira Gordon spoke of the Outreach Committee's meetings and discussions about how to create a robust online platform for people who want information about what is happening at the SEC. She spoke of the committee's interest in working with an outside vendor to create ads, social media, and a website with infographics and easily accessible FAQs and video library of technical assistance, to explain to people how to go through the application process.

b. Governance Committee

Ojala Naeem, Chair

Ojala Naeem spoke of the formation and use of committees. She reported on the discussions regarding personnel matters. A discussion ensued. Joe Williams made a motion to delegate responsibility for the interviewing and hiring of staff, outside of the executive director role, to the Executive Director.

Motion – Joe Williams
2nd – Avery Gaddis

Discussion – Melissa McCaw stated that this is typical for an office supported by a board, with the executive director reporting back regarding concerns about staff.

All In Favor –

Corrie Betts
Andréa Comer
Avery Gaddis
David Lehman
Melissa McCaw
Ojala Naeem
Christine Shaw (Designee for Shawn Wooden)
Edwin Shirley
Kelli Vallieres
Joseph Williams

Nays –

Michael Jefferson
Subira Gordon

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

Ojala Naeem spoke of the discussion about an Application Review Committee. She delivered a recommendation from the Governance Committee that the scope of work for that committee will include the hiring of a third-party firm to recommend to the council a process for reviewing the criteria set for Social Equity Applicants, to qualify applicants that can move forward into the lottery. The firm would recommend the process to review applications to qualify applicants as Social Equity Applicants, but also to educate the council summarizing information and learnings from the process. She noted that the council would not review the applications.

A discussion regarding the role of the SEC in reviewing applications by Social Equity Applicants ensued. Christine Shaw pointed to the need for legal clarity about the role of the council in approving applicants as Social Equity Applicants and suggested that parts of that role can be specifically delegated, but that the Council would need to do the final approval of the applicants to enter the lottery. Melissa McCaw and David Lehman spoke of working with legal counsel to bring back a legal opinion. Subira Gordon spoke of her interest in reviewing social equity and workforce plans.

David Lehman made a motion to proceed with engaging with a third party to provide recommendations for the review process to the council for approval.

Motion – David Lehman

2nd – Melissa McCaw

Discussion – The council discussed the need for a third-party vendor to qualify applicants based on the criteria that was set for Social Equity Applicants.

All In Favor – All

Nays – None

Abstentions – None

Motion passed.

Ojala Naeem spoke of the discussions by the Governance Committee about the various committees that are in place. She stated she will email other updates to the council, in the interest of time. Christine Shaw asked that the update summary be posted on the website to share with the public.

Ojala Naeem made a motion to create an Accelerator / Technical Assistance Committee that would focus on the accelerator program and other technical assistance.

Motion – Ojala Naeem
2nd – Joe Williams

Discussion – Andrea Comer spoke of the value of having this committee established. She noted that there are several councilmembers that have tremendous insight into accelerator programs.

All In Favor – All
Nays – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed.

- c. Finance Committee Christine Shaw, Chair
Christine Shaw spoke of continued collaboration with OPM, DCP and the SEC Office on the second half of the biennial budget, for FY23.

Ms. Shaw gave a summary of the recommendations for adjustments. The budget assumes ten staff positions at the office of the SEC, as well as marketing and technical assistance. The total request for SEC Administrative expenses is now \$5.7M for FY23 compared to the original \$3.6M – the variance is the added technical assistance costs. In addition, to the \$5.7M, is \$5.1M for workforce development costs. Total FY23 request is \$10.8M. In addition, there are expenses across other state agencies of \$20.5M. Ms. Shaw noted that every bit of the anticipated revenues, which are estimated to be \$31.3M, will be needed to cover the expenses.

- d. Policy Committee Edwin Shirley, Chair
Edwin Shirley presented the recommendation by the policy committee for approval of the criteria and documentation needed for applicants to establish ownership and control in an equity joint venture.

Mr. Shirley made a motion to approve the criteria and documentation needed to establish ownership and control in an equity joint venture.

Motion – Ed Shirley
2nd – Michael Jefferson
Discussion – None

All In Favor – All
Nays – None
Abstentions – None
Motion passed.

Corrie Betts spoke of the issue that there is no cap on backers for Equity Joint Venture Applications.

Edwin Shirley invited to committee members to submit concerns around legislations and prospective changes to legislation and policy to Michael Jefferson. The policy committee will meet in February to review those.

- e. Workforce Committee Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chair
Kelli-Marie Vallieres spoke of work that the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) has done to make connections with community colleges and learn best practices for training for the industry. She reported that the OWS is looking for a person to hire as a durational director to focus on the cannabis industry. She spoke of training programs needed for the industry and the opportunities outside of the cannabis industry that might be provided to people who have been impacted. Subira Gordon asked about the job types available in the cannabis industry, and mentioned it would be good information to provide in the council’s outreach.
- 5. From the Executive Director Ginne-Rae Clay, Interim Executive Director
Ginne-Rae Clay presented her Executive Director Report for February.

a. Workplan Update

Ms. Clay detailed her requests as presented in her [February 2022 report](#).

- Contract with 3rd party PR/Marketing firm on state master contract, Authorization to contract an estimated \$500,000 was requested.
- Reposting of SEA Residency and Ownership Control Criteria to SEC Website, approval requested.
- Legislative Recommendations Extension Letter, authorization to sign and send requested.
- DECD/SEC MOU, authorization to sign requested.

Motion -Ojala Naeem made a motion to approve the requests above as a consent agenda.
2nd – Joe Williams

All In Favor - All
Nays - None
Abstentions - None
Motion passed

Ginne-Rae Clay invited comment on the Work Plan and the Application timeline. She presented the technical assistance webinars that are scheduled and being planned. She gave an update on Staffing, Administration, Application Process, Council Administration, Finance, Legal, Legislative matters

Michael Jefferson requested the FY22 and FY23 budgets and Christine Shaw asked for those to be sent to the whole committee.

b. Executive Session – Personnel Matters

Michael Jefferson noted that this executive session isn't necessary given the earlier vote regarding staffing.

Michael Jefferson made a motion to accept the Executive Director's February 2022 report.

Motion – Michael Jefferson
2nd – Corey Betts

All In Favor - All
Nays - None
Abstentions - None
Motion passed

6. Discussion on ad hoc committees Full Council

Was previously discussed with the Governance Committee Update by Ojala Naeem.

7. Public Speaking - Members of the public addressed the Social Equity Council. The speakers were:

- Dawn Merritt, Hartford
- T D Howell, Wallingford
- Benjamin Pomerantz, Stamford
- Devaughn Ward, Hartford
- Shante Walser, Hartford
- Adam A Lewis, New Britain

8. For the Good of the Order – New Business, Updates, and Information
None.

9. Adjourn

Andréa Comer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – Michael Jefferson
2nd – Corrie Betts

All In Favor - All
Nays - None
Abstentions - None
Motion passed

The meeting adjourned at 1:21 P.M.

Minutes are a draft until approved at a subsequent meeting.