

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL

April 5, 2022, Meeting 10 A.M.

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

This meeting was recorded and posted to YouTube - To watch, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGbom59wpX8&list=PLq1QOKxCtmGPkdRV135yEav3u-PHSSeA9&index=3>

MEETING MATERIALS

- [Minutes - 2/1/2022, 2/17/2022, 3/1/2022](#)
- [CohnReznick Presentation – SEA Review and Verification Process](#)
- [Scope of Work for Marketing Firm](#)
- [Draft RFP – Accelerator Program](#)
- [Proposed Resolutions on the Correspondence of the Social Equity Council](#)

MINUTES (DRAFT)

A meeting of the Social Equity Council (SEC) was held virtually via Zoom on April 5, 2022.

1. Call to order

Meeting was called to order by Andréa Comer at 10:00 a.m.

2. Attendance

Marilyn Alverio
Corrie Betts
Andréa Comer
Avery Gaddis
Subira Gordon
Michael Jefferson
David Lehman
Ojala Naeem
Marc Pelka (Designee for Jeffrey Beckham, OPM)
Christine Shaw (Designee for Shawn Wooden, OTT)
Edwin Shirley
Kelli-Marie Vallieres
Kevin Walton

Council members absent:

Ramón Arroyo
Fabian Durango

Staff: Ginne-Rae Clay, Interim Executive Director, SEC, Jennifer Edwards, Program Manager, SEC, and Komla Matrevi, Staff Attorney, SEC, Kyle Abercrombie, Director of Government Affairs, DECD

Andréa Comer welcomed new council members Kevin Walton and Marc Pelka and thanked former member Joe Williams for his service. She spoke of the application process briefly and noted that while applications are coming in steadily for the first round, there are no social equity applicants for certain license types yet: Product Packager, Food & Beverage Manufacturer, Transporter, and Hybrid Retailer. A discussion ensued.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes ([2/1/2022](#), [2/17/2022](#), [3/1/2022](#))

Andréa Comer asked for any comments or corrections to the previous meeting minutes. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes for 2/1/2022, 2/17/2022 and 3/1/2022.

Motion – by Marilyn Alverio
Second – Seconded by Corrie Betts
Discussion – None
In Favor – All
Opposed – None
Motion Passed.

4. From the Executive Director Ginne-Rae Clay, Interim Executive Director

Ginne-Rae Clay presented her April 2022 Report to the Council. She began with a staffing update regarding the open positions, Administrative Assistant, Associate Accountant, Fiscal Administrative Officer, Brand Director, and Communications and Legislative Program Manager and described their roles. She introduced the new SEC Staff Attorney, Komla Matrevi.

She gave updates on the 2022 Workplan which included completion of a draft of the SEA Application Review and Verification Process, the Marketing and Outreach RFP and a draft of the Accelerator Program RFP. Proposals are coming in for the Marketing and Outreach RFP and she expects a recommendation for a service provider to be presented for approval to the full Council in May. In progress, she spoke of ongoing work on the Low Interest Loan Program and SEC Bylaws, Policies and Procedures.

Ms. Clay spoke of the ongoing webinar series and reported that over 549 attendees attended live and there were 1201 views on YouTube. Over 592 questions were answered, and the mailing list has grown to 256 contacts.

Ms. Clay presented a grid showing the number of applications submitted through the end of March, as taken from [DCP's webpage](#) with these numbers that is updated regularly.

Andréa Comer noted that Equity Joint Ventures and Cultivator license applications are not posted on that section of the site.

5. Committee Reports/Requests for Action

a. Finance Committee

Christine Shaw, Chair

Andréa Comer presented comments on behalf of Christine Shaw who was unable to attend this meeting. In March, the finance committee discussed an SEC request to OPM for an allocation of \$10M in bond funds, for the purpose of low interest loans. This is out of the \$50M total approved by the legislature for interest loans and technical assistance. Committee chairs are asked to continue to keep the finance committee apprised of any upcoming funding needs so that requests can be submitted to OPM in a timely way so that resources are in place for the Council's work.

b. Policy Committee

Edwin Shirley, Chair

Edwin Shirley introduced representatives from CohnReznick who presented the SEA Review and Verification Process. He stated that the Finance Committee recommended that the Council approve the process and approve CohnReznick be the firm that implements that process. The presentation detailed the application timeline.

Edwin Shirley asked for a motion to accept the recommendation by the Policy Committee that CohnReznick be engaged as the vendor which will provide SEC with the information for SEC to determine the eligibility of the Social Equity Applicants.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson
Second – Seconded by Corrie Betts
Discussion – None
In Favor –

Marilyn Alverio
Corrie Betts
Andréa Comer
Subira Gordon
Michael Jefferson
David Lehman
Ojala Naeem
Marc Pelka
Edwin Shirley
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Opposed – None
Abstained – Kevin Walton
Motion Passed.

There was a discussion regarding the Social Equity Applicant Backers requirement to provide 3 years of tax return documents. Komla Matrevi explained the issue and the recommendation by the Policy Committee to consider updating the checklist of required documents. Edwin Shirley explained that requirement hindered some social equity applicant's ability to have backers work with them.

Edwin Shirley asked for a motion for that requirement for Social Equity Applicant backers to provide three years of tax returns be removed.

Motion – by Michael Jefferson
Second – Seconded by Ojala Naeem

Discussion – Kelli Vallieres expressed concern over the ability of the SEC to verify the backer's financial stability and the ability of the organizations to fulfill their financial obligations. Komla Matrevi referred to the legislation and explained that there are other documents, such as the operating agreement of the entity that is applying, that will show what the Social Equity Applicant and the Backer is getting out of the agreement. He recommended that this change be made. Avery Gaddis stated that tax returns provide information about the backers and that these are documents required for many business transactions. Christine Shaw spoke of the legislation and referred to the factors around the approval of Equity Joint Venture's by the SEC and suggested that these documents will help with this council's review.

In Favor –
Andréa Comer
Michael Jefferson
Ojala Naeem
Edwin Shirley

Opposed –
Marilyn Alverio
Corrie Betts
Avery Gaddis
Subira Gordon
David Lehman
Marc Pelka
Christine Shaw
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Abstained – Kevin Walton
Motion was not passed.

- c. Outreach Committee Marilyn Alverio & Subira Gordon, Co-Chairs
Marilyn Alverio gave an update on the Marketing Firm Selection Process and reiterated the timeline for hiring a marketing and pr firm. She described the search process which is underway. Four responses to the RFP have been invited to the interview process. At the May meeting the selected firm will make a presentation to the full Council on May 3, 2022.
- d. Governance Committee Ojala Naeem, Chair
Ojala Naeem stated that all council members should have received the Executive Director review survey by email and asked all to please finish and return that by April 13. There will be an executive session during the May meeting to discuss it.

Atty. Matrevi spoke of a policy and procedure document that was sent to the members. It included procedures on designees, distribution of documents and resignation of Council membership. He explained the purpose of the policies.

Ojala Naeem asked for a motion, as stated by Atty. Matrevi, to approve the policy of the appointment and designation of members of the council and of the correspondence policy to be adopted for the Social Equity Council.

Motion – by David Lehman
Second – Seconded by Ed Shirley
Discussion –
In Favor –

Corrie Betts
Andréa Comer
David Lehman
Ojala Naeem
Marc Pelka
Edwin Shirley
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Opposed – Avery Gaddis

Abstained –

Marilyn Alverio
Subira Gordon
Michael Jefferson
Kevin Walton

Motion Passed.

e. Accelerator Adhoc Committee Ojala Naeem, Chair

Ojala Naeem spoke of the Accelerator Program RFP draft document. She asked for a motion to approve the Accelerator Program RFP for release (by April 11 with proposals due May 5, 2022).

Motion – by Avery Gaddis
Second – Seconded by Michael Jefferson
Discussion – None
In Favor –

Marilyn Alverio
Corrie Betts
Andréa Comer
Subira Gordon
Michael Jefferson
David Lehman
Ojala Naeem
Marc Pelka
Edwin Shirley
Kelli-Marie Vallieres

Opposed – None
Abstained – Kevin Walton
Motion Passed.

f. Workforce Committee Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chair

Kelli-Marie Vallieres reported that at the next Workforce Committee, the group will review the criteria for the workforce development plans.

6. Public Comment Period

Members of the public spoke to the council.

- Luis Vega, West Hartford
- Lou Rinaldi, Guilford
- Emily Sabo, Farmington

- Jeffrey Kivlin, West Hartford
- Erin Doolittle, Manchester
- Eileen Kopec, Groton
- Charles Kohn, West Hartford
- Denise Sullivan, Tolland
- Christina Eva Capitan, Broad Brook

7. For the Good of the Order – New Business, Updates, and Information

There was none.

8. Adjourn

Andréa Comer asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion – by David Lehman

Second – Seconded by Ojala Naeem

Discussion – None

In Favor – All

Opposed – None

The meeting adjourned at 12:32.

Minutes are a draft until approved at a subsequent meeting.