



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING

A subcommittee of the State Neighborhood Revitalization Advisory Board and others met Monday, June 27, 2022, at 9:30 AM. The [agenda](#) and other information are available at <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/IGPP-MAIN/Services/Neighborhood-Revitalization-Zone-Program>.

Board Members or Designees:

Jonathan Cabral, [CT Housing Finance Authority, South Downtown NRZ](#), Hartford
Julie Carmelich, [CT State Historic Preservation Office](#)
Mike Gilmore, [Waterbury Development Corporation](#)
Marion Griffin, [Hartford NEXT](#)
Martin Heft, [CT Office of Policy & Management](#)
Jim Vannoy, [CT Dept. of Public Health](#)
Laura Watson, [CT Dept. of Housing](#)

Others:

Yomaira Colon, [New Britain Housing Authority](#)
Maureen Goulet, [Capitol Region Council of Governments](#)
Luz Holmes, Upper Albany NRZ, Hartford & [New Britain Housing Authority](#)
Debi Martin, [LISC Connecticut](#)
Matt Pafford, [CT Office of Policy & Management](#)
Bruce Wittchen, [CT Office of Policy & Management](#)

1. Welcome & Introductions

Bruce Wittchen asked everyone to introduce themselves.

2. Discussion: Revitalizing the NRZ Process – Where to begin?

- Update [Community Organizing Handbook](#) (2000) & [Strategic Plan Guidelines](#) (2005)?
- Training – NRZ statutes, organization best practices, etc.?
- Other capacity development: what else do NRZs need to carry out their missions?
- Other

There was an overview of the advisory board's objectives for this subcommittee and for today's meeting, as outlined in the [draft minutes](#) of last month's advisory board meeting. The options listed in this section of the agenda were taken from points raised at that meeting and the subcommittee is asked to consider the concepts and refine one or more of them for the state NRZ Advisory Board to act on beginning in September.

There was a discussion of the three tasks being interrelated components of the process for strengthening NRZs and none can be ignored. There was a suggestion to begin instead with a needs assessment of individual NRZs because each has different needs. It

was pointed out that many NRZs are not aware of the NRZ Advisory Board or of the state's role and it was suggested that the state Advisory Board should reintroduce itself to NRZs and proceed to other work afterwards.

A question was asked about OPM funding for NRZs and there was a discussion of the history of funding. OPM's NRZ funding was passed through the [CT Community Economic Development Fund](#) (CEDF), which funded the hiring of consultants to assist individual NRZs with their plans. That funding was depleted 10+ years ago and no funding is included in the 2022-23 state budget. It can be considered in the next budget. There have been other sources of NRZ funding too, including municipal funding.

There was a discussion of how to ensure NRZs meet their requirements. There was support for a carrot & stick approach and it was noted that Hartford NRZs received funding only if they comply with expectations for meetings. Training is an important part of that, and not just providing training once but instead providing it regularly so new leaders learn what is expected and continuing leaders are reminded. The importance of succession planning was also pointed out, as well as the need to market NRZs to younger people and build organizational capacity.

In conclusion, all three of the listed bullet points are important aspects of organizational development. There was a discussion of how comparable efforts have been supported in the past. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has supported a variety of organizations, including NRZs. Dept. of Housing experiences in this area include hiring the Regional Plan Assoc. to prepare the [Affordable Housing Plan and Process Guidebook](#) and a consultant to go to neighborhoods because each has its own set of needs.

Everyone was asked to send any further suggestions to Bruce Wittchen, who will organize a follow-up meeting in mid-late August.