

The Natchaug-Willimantic
Neighborhood Revitalization Zone
Steering Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
For Jan. 29, 2013

Present: NRZ Chair Brenda Sullivan, Treasurer Roger Morin, members Kathy Dubay, Pamela Viens, Jeff Viens, Joel Meyers; guest - ECSU student Thomas Garcia and Town Manager James Finger. **Absent:** Secretary John LaTour, members Bonnie Calkins, Joanne Clark, Kerry Foust, Ron Haddad, Heather Meehan, Nancy Rivera, Ed Rivera, Laura Smith, Rosita Vining,

1. Call to Order – 5:08 p.m.

2. Opportunity for the Public to Speak – Joel Meyers introduced his guest, Thomas Garcia, a student at Eastern Connecticut State University majoring in Business Administration and Pre-Law. Garcia is an intern working with Meyers, and is interested in the structure and activities of the NRZ. There was discussion with Garcia and the members about the history of Neighborhood Revitalization Zones in the state, the legislation behind it, and the philosophy and purpose of this type of grassroots organization. Pam Viens also talked about the need for the NRZ to get back to a focus on housing and problems property owners face with meeting codes. She also suggested the Natchaug-Willimantic NRZ consider expanding its boundaries, which would require a formal process, and approval by the state Office of Policy & Management (OPM) as well as local approval.

3. New Business: Pam Viens reported that the statewide NRZ meeting that was canceled due to Hurricane Sandy has been rescheduled to March 26.

4. Opportunity for NRZ committee to add item to future agendas, including project proposals:

5. Old Business:

a. Update from subcommittees on progress on their assigned projects

- *Heather Meehan and Joel Meyers - suggestions for how to move the NRZ funds to an independent account:* Meyers said Meehan still intends to work with him on this. There was discussion of the need to make sure all financial transactions comply with the law and are “transparent,” the need for two signatures on checks (i.e. the Chair and Treasurer), the need in future for a bank account in order to deposit any grants, fees or proceeds from fundraisers. Pam suggested talking with other NRZs at the March 26 meeting about their structure, i.e. as a nonprofit organization or alternatives.

- *Kathy Dubay re: bus shelters:* Dubay talked about her letter to town officials regarding a request for bus shelters. J. Finger suggested she contact Melinda at the WRTD (Windham Region Transit District) to find out if that agency has any plans and/or funding for bus shelters. Dubay was also asked to set up a date to bring up the subject at a Windham Town Council

meeting and submit a letter to them at that time – other NRZ members should plan to attend and there should be an effort in advance to bring community members who support the project. Dubai will identify the locations where the bus stops are needed. She noted there already are concrete slabs in some of the potential locations. J. Viens suggested the NRZ might organize work parties to install the shelters. Dubai and J. Viens said they would research reasonably priced shelters and if/when funds become available, discuss with Public Works how a volunteer crew might help with installation. It was suggested they talk with Nancy Tinker, head of public works at ECSU about their choice of bus shelters. J. Finger also noted, regarding possible funds, that the Town Council is currently working on the next town budget.

- Pam Viens and Jeff Viens- application for non-profit status; identifying properties within the NRZ for project proposals in advance of grant opportunities: No properties identified, to date. There was further discussion about forming a 501c nonprofit and the need to first incorporate. A Board of Directors/officers would replace the Steering Committee. There also would need to be bylaws, a street address (could be the Chair's) and an incorporating member. J. Meyers added that the board would need liability insurance, and there was discussion of filing the necessary paperwork with the state, and paying an annual fee as well as attorney's fees. J. Viens said he would research costs and email the figures.

- Roger - working with James Finger to create an updated PDF version of the map of the NRZ boundaries: J. Finger said he believes he has a map on file that could be marked in some fashion to outline the NRZ boundaries.

b. Set deadline for update of Strategic Plan – 5 months, i.e. July 1, 2013? There was discussion about the need to hold a stakeholders' meeting before updating the Strategic Plan, in order to incorporate current needs within the NRZ. Suggestions included working with the town recreation department on an event, i.e. at Rec Park, this summer (middle of June), and invite local business owners to participate, i.e. with booths, and include games, chalk art for the children, etc. The date should not conflict with Third Thursday.

6. Approval of Minutes: J. Viens moved to accept the minutes of the Oct. 25, 2013 meeting, R. Morin seconded, motion passed unanimously.

7. Treasurer's Report: R. Morin reported no funds have been spent and the current balance is \$3,201.29

8. Second opportunity for public to speak: T. Garcia said he'd like to get involved in the NRZ.

9. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Submitted by Brenda Sullivan, Chair, Natchaug-Willimantic NRZ Steering Committee