

MINUTES

The Natchaug-Willimantic Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Steering Committee
Regular meeting Feb 26 2013

Present: NRZ Chair Brenda Sullivan, Treasurer Roger Morin, members Kathy Dubay, Pamela Viens, Jeff Viens, Joel Meyers, Ed Rivera, Nancy Rivera. Absent: Secretary John LaTour, members Bonnie Calkins, Joanne Clark, Kerry Foust, Ron Haddad, Heather Meehan, Laura Smith, Rosita Vining,

1. Call to Order - 5:11 p.m.
2. Opportunity for the Public to Speak - no one present
3. New Business:

J. Meyers asked if the NRZ could support his plan to convert a barn (on more than two parcels). J. Viens said to check with the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM) regarding the zoning regulations concerning this project. If state regs indicate the project is legal, then the NRZ can consider a letter to support his appeal to the local zoning body. P. Viens also suggested talking with other NRZ members at the March 26 statewide NRZ meeting.

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

B. Sullivan suggested asking the Police department to send a representative to NRZ meetings, contacting Lt. Reed was suggested; B. Sullivan also suggested having someone from the community engagement group, Click, come talk to us at a future meeting.

5. Old Business:

- a. Update from subcommittees on progress on their assigned projects

- Kathy Dubay re: bus shelters: J. Viens handed out photocopies of three different styles of bus shelters, along with their costs, from a company in New Jersey, Handi-hut Inc. (800-603-6635). One model is aluminum and plexiglass with a domed top and a wheelchair-accessible opening - and the option of adding a wind screen. The size of this model would fit the existing concrete pads, he said. The cost is \$5,500 each, with a 10 percent discount when buying 5 or more. A similar model, with a windscreen and half a bench - to allow access for a wheelchair, costs \$5,000 each, or \$4,500 each if buying 5 or more, and free shipping; this model could be assembled by two people. The model numbers are Model #4-2WSB (with wind shield) and Model #4-2B.

K. Dubay said Mindy (Melinda) Perkins at WRTD (Windham Region Transit District) is looking for possible funding. She also suggested that students at the technical high school might be able to do the assembly work.

The committee discussed coming up with 6 possible locations, i.e. Jackson and Valley Streets near St. Mary's school. K. Dubay said she'd make a list of 6 suggested locations. J. Viens suggested finding funding for 10 shelters.

The committee discussed writing a letter from the NRZ to present to the Town Council, and to make a presentation to the Public Safety Committee, then request a place on the following Town Council agenda - with the idea that the town budget for 2013-2014 is currently being prepared and if the Town Council wants to contribute funding, now would be the time to ask. The committee also directed K. Dubai to work with M. Perkins at WRTD to pursue any grants that might be available. K. Dubai was also asked to talk with the Facilities Director at ECSU, Nancy Tinker, for ideas and possible collaboration.

- Heather Meehan and Joel Meyers - suggestions for how to move the NRZ funds to an independent account/ Pam Viens and Jeff Viens- application for non-profit status.

There was discussion about the steps that would need to be taken in order to become a financially independent entity, beginning with incorporating. J. Viens said this would entail forming a new board, which would replace the current NRZ Steering Committee.

B. Sullivan noted that until the NRZ is an independent financial entity, it cannot (1) transfer its funds from the town to a separate account and (2) cannot accept funds, i.e. donations or grants.

P. Viens expressed concern about expending all of the NRZ's funds on legal expenses and suggested others at the March 26 statewide NRZ meeting might have other suggestions.

E. Rivera expressed concern that becoming independent could create friction with the town if there is competition for grants.

There was also discussion about fees associated with incorporation at the state and federal levels, and liability - N. Rivera said incorporating at the state level covers us for liability. She also said that as a 501-3c nonprofit, there is no annual fee at the federal level but the state does charge an annual fee.

- Fund-raising/public outreach - B. Sullivan said she would contact the recreation department (Tara Risley, Charlie...) about co-sponsoring a May or mid-June event, possible at Jillson Square or one of the parks. (At the previous meeting, the committee talked about an event that would draw families, involve local businesses, and on a date that would the children not conflict with Third Thursday.)

- Updated PDF version of the map of the NRZ boundaries - B. Sullivan said J. Finger is working on this.

- Updating the NRZ Strategic Plan - 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.

6. Treasurer's report - R. Morin - No funds have been spent. The balance is \$3,201.29

7. Approval of Minutes - J. Viens moved to accept the minutes of the Jan. 29 2013 meeting, K. Dubay seconded, motion passed unanimously.

8. Second opportunity for public to speak - no one present

9. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

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

The Natchaug-Willimantic Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ) is a wonderful patchwork quilt of historic buildings and facades, and neighborhoods with an ethnic, social and financial diversity second to no other city in Connecticut. It includes a significant area stretching from the Windham Mills to the Town Hall and the adjacent neighborhood of Milk and Union Streets.

For more info, find (and "like") us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/120042431383856>

<<https://www.facebook.com/groups/120042431383856%20>>

or contact NRZ Chair Brenda Sullivan at 860-942-8367 (box 1)