

APPROVED MINUTES
Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Steering Committee
4-5 p.m. Thursday, March 29, 2012
ACCESS Agency 1315 Main St, Willimantic CT

Present: NRZ Chair Brenda Sullivan, Secretary John LaTour, Treasurer Roger Morin, and Steering Committee members Nancy Rivera, Ed Rivera, Andrew Seeling, Kathy Dubay; Town Planner James Finger; Natchaug Elementary School Principal Jeff Wihbey; WALA members Pam Viens, Jeff Viens; Kerry Foust, Laura Smith, Joel Meyers, Jack Fulton, Joanne Clark, Ron Haddad, John Walker, Ricardo Ojeda. Absent: Rosita Vining

1. Call to order – 4 p.m.

2. Opportunity for public to speak

3. New Business:

a. Rental property owners request for NRZ support regarding waiver of application of certain housing codes. (15 min. time limit):

Members of WALA discussed barriers to upgrading rental properties because of the costs associated with the town/state codes and other roadblocks. J. Finger suggested arranging a meeting to talk about these issues with Matt Vertefeuille.

There was also discussion about

- possible support for the Willimantic Police and the Weed and Seed program,
- establishing a police substation in the Milk Street neighborhood (there used to be one in the PMR building on Taylor Court),
- communicating and cooperating with Natchaug School administration,
- connecting with the new church that now owns the former Polish Club on Ives Street
- supporting efforts to promote home ownership within the NRZ neighborhoods.

J. Finger also responded to questions about revitalizing the downtown Willimantic and the NRZ addressing the Economic Development Commission. He invited anyone interested in the EDC's activities to attend the April 2, 2012 meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall.

There also was discussion about making a presentation to the Windham Town Council at a May 2012 meeting. In preparation for that presentation, the NRZ will create a one page overview and/or bulleted list of concerns affecting neighborhoods within the NRZ to give to council members.

Joel Meyers suggested creating an NRZ web site. (There currently is an NRZ Facebook page.)

b. Opportunity to nominate new members of NRZ Steering Committee, and vote on nominations.

NRZ Chair B. Sullivan moved to nominate the following new members to the NRZ Steering Committee: Pam Viens, Jeff Viens, Kerry Foust, Laura Smith, Joel Meyers, Ron Haddad. The motion was seconded by Nancy Rivera, and passed unanimously.

NRZ Chair B. Sullivan moved to create an NRZ Housing Subcommittee headed by Pam Viens. The motion was seconded by Roger Morin, and passed unanimously.

b. Discussion of whether to change meeting day to another day of the week and possibly meet later – The committee agreed by consensus to continue to hold meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month at 4 p.m.

c. Discussion of mini-grants/loans in partnership with a local bank – No action taken.

d. Sharing a booth with another community group at Third Thursday festivals to attract new members/projects. – It was agreed by consensus for WALA and the NRZ to share a table, and for B. Sullivan to have an NRZ banner made for the table.

4. Old Business:

a. Accepting minutes from Feb. 9 2012 Special Meeting. – B. Sullivan voted to accept the minutes, seconded by A. Seeling, passed unanimously.

b. Update on community garden (Andrew Seeling): involvement by St. Paul's Church – Tabled.

c. The following was tabled –

Updating Strategic Plan – choosing two points of focus for 2012 (i.e. affordable food, affordable housing) and working with existing groups (i.e. CliCK community kitchen, the Willimantic Farmers Market, the town committee on urban agriculture), setting benchmarks for projects, streamlining updated plan – setting a deadline for completing and submitting to the state.

5. Treasurer's Report (Roger Morin) – Tabled.

6. Opportunity to bring up new business or agenda items for next meeting. – None

7. Adjourn – 5 p.m.

Submitted April 25, 2012 by NRZ Steering Committee Chair Brenda Sullivan/Sec. John LaTour