



## Hartford NEXT Virtual Meeting Notes – Jan. 18, 2024

**Time:** 6:00– 7:30 pm Board Meeting

**Mission:** A collective voice of Hartford residents and stakeholders working to strengthen and grow our community

### BOARD DIRECTORS

✓	Marion Griffin, Co-Chair, Frog Hollow	✓	Bongi Magubane, Co-Chair, WECA
	Violette Haldane, Treasurer, At-Large	✓	Elizabeth Davis, Secretary, At-Large
✓	David MacDonald, Asylum Hill	✓	Frank Sentner, SODO
✓	Janine McMahon, Asylum Hill	✓	Emely Lugo, South End
	Sharmeen Wright, Blue Hills	✓	Lawrence Williams, Upper Albany
✓	Cheryl Zeiner, CSS/CON	✓	Yachecha Dickenson, Upper Albany
	Bernadine Silvers, CSS/CON, Chair Emeritus	✓	Janice Castle, Mayor’s Office, COH
	Jean Holloway, Clay Arsenal	✓	Randal Davis, COH
	Cindy Fenton, MARG	✓	Jeff Stewart, At-Large
	Charles Teale, Northeast	✓	Mary Falvey, At-Large

### MEMBERS

	Donna Thompson-Daniel, Blue Hills		Helen Nixon, Northeast
	Bea Powell, Clay Arsenal		David Morin, Parkville
	Chris McArdle, CSS/CON		Robin Zaleski, SODO
✓	Carey Shea, Frog Hollow		Kathy Evans, SW & BTR
✓	Rhodee Gine, Frog Hollow		Carl Williams, South End
✓	Marcus Ordonez, Frog Hollow		Blair Hughes, WECA
✓	Hyacinth Yennie, MARG		

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

✓	Jack Antonich	✓	Henry Hester, Keney Park
	Jackie McKinney	✓	Mary Pelletier

### GUESTS

Lauren Thompson, CT Educational Technology	Kevin Doyle, Resident West End
Pearl Granat, Resident, West End	Kim Gauthier, Hartford Next

### Expected Outcome:

- **Approval of 2024 Budget**
- **Approval of HNXT Bylaws**
- **Review of 2023**
- **Review of Compliance Best Practices for NRZs**
- **Preparation for 2024 Planning**

Time (est.)	Agenda Item	Facilitator Presenter	Purpose/Action	Activity/Essential Questions
6:00 pm	<b>Welcome</b>	Board Chair	Call to Order	
Marion Griffin called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.				
6:00– 6:05 pm	<b>Meeting Protocol &amp; Introductions</b>	Jeff  Marion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HNXT Board Meeting Protocol</li> <li>• What should we know</li> <li>• HNXT Vision</li> <li>• Review of Agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best Practices for meeting participation</li> <li>• Add Your Organization to your Zoom name</li> <li>• HNXT Vision</li> </ul>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of November Board Minutes</li> <li>2024 Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additions /changes to the agenda</li> </ul>
<p>Jeff Stewart read the Hartford Next meeting protocol.</p> <p>Marion read purpose statement for Hartford Next and reviewed the agenda.</p> <p>Marion asked for a motion to approve the November 2023 board minutes. A motion was made by Jeff Stewart, seconded by David MacDonald. Carey Shea abstained because she was not at the November meeting.</p> <p>There were no changes or questions. Motion passed.</p> <p>Yes votes: Larry Williams, Elizabeth Davis, David MacDonald, Jeff Stewart, Bongsi Magubane, Frank Sentner, Marion Griffin</p> <p>The HNXT Budget for 2024 was reviewed by Marion Griffin. The goal is for the search for an Executive Director be complete by early Q22024. Board has responsibility to seek donations and to donate as much as they can. Question: are there sufficient funds for an Executive Director Answer: sufficient for 2024. Executive Director and Board to assist with funding.</p> <p>Funding sources will be sought ongoing basis. The Forestry Grant will be researched.</p> <p>Marion called for a motion to approve the budget. Motion made by David MacDonald, seconded by Frank Sentner. Yes votes: Cheryl Zeiner, Bongsi Magubane, Jeff Stewart, Janine McMahan, Janice Castle, Elizabeth Davis, Marion Griffin</p> <p>Motion carried, budget approved.</p>				
6:05 – 6:10 pm	<b>Guest CT DAS Commission for Educational Technology</b>	Lauren Thompson	Connecticut: Everyone Connected  Digital Equity Plan	Introduction and opportunity for public comment on the plan.
<p>Lauren outlined the goals of the “Connecticut: Everyone Connected” program. Funding to support the program comes from the 2021 Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Digital Equity Plan. The plan is more than providing internet service and a computer to residents of the state. The goal is to close the digital divide for residents to live, work, and thrive in CT. Covered populations who need additional assistance are a priority: poverty, disability, incarcerated individuals, language barrier, age, etc. and access to online services.</p> <p>Over 7,000 resident surveys, focus groups, and US data were collected and analyzed and use to identify public opinion and needs. Free internet service is available in Frog Hollow, Northeast, and part of Blue Hills. It is called “Hartford Free WiFi.”</p> <p>Lauren reviewed the plan goals and asked attendees to provide feedback about the plan, goals, priority areas, if any goals are missing, needs for neighborhoods, or other related comments.</p>				



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<p>The Executive Summary is available online at <a href="https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/CTEdTech/publications/2023/DAS_DE_Draft_Plan-Eng_ES_Public_Comment.pdf">https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DAS/CTEdTech/publications/2023/DAS_DE_Draft_Plan-Eng_ES_Public_Comment.pdf</a></p> <p>For more information, email Lauren at <a href="mailto:digitalequity@ct.gov">digitalequity@ct.gov</a> or call 860-622-2032.</p>				
6:10 – 6:25 pm	<b>Board Business</b>	Marion Jeff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HNXT Bylaws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vote on HNXT Bylaws</li> </ul>
<p>The last revised text for the Hartford Text bylaws were displayed. Jeff Steward reviewed the updates to the bylaws and made a motion to accept the text as written; seconded by Elizabeth Davis. The motion passed and will be updated in the bylaws. No questions, no abstentions. Motion approved. The final document will be sent to all members and added to the board manual.</p>				
6:25– 6:30 pm	<b>Board Announcements</b>	Marion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HNXT 2023 in Review</li> <li>Community Engagement Funds available for the FY 2024: July 2023 – June 2024</li> <li>Board Retreat: 2024 Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HNXT Accomplishment</li> <li>Opportunity</li> <li>When &amp; Where to meet</li> </ul>
<p>Marion reviewed a 2023 year in review presentation and emphasized the major accomplishments for the year: community engagement workshop, community events, election year activities and communication.</p> <p>The community engagement funds for 2023-2024 are available to NRZs. Uses of funding such as hybrid meeting technology, marketing materials, meeting expenses, and websites.</p> <p>Bongi commented on the purposes for the retreat and the benefit of developing a 3-year plan. Key objectives are to anchor the board’s understanding about NRZ legislation, identify what drives community engagement, to discuss civic education opportunities, and to bond as a group. Board members and NRZ chairs were invited to attend. In addition, during the planning process there should be representation from individuals who rent in Hartford. The board is looking for volunteers to plan the retreat. Elizabeth Davis and Janine McMahon volunteered to help.</p> <p>It was suggested that a moderator be hired and the dates for the retreat pushed to later in Q1. Derek Hall was <a href="mailto:suggested-derek@rhcllc.org">suggested-derek@rhcllc.org</a> 860-778-1613. Attendees were asked to submit names for volunteers, moderator, or participants.</p> <p>CT Nonprofit Alliance is offering Advocacy training, which is free via Hartford Next membership. Upcoming sessions: Nonprofit Advocacy on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, Nonprofit Boards on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Anyone interested should contact Marion and she will submit their names. The Hartford Public Library in partnership with the Hartford Foundation also provides trainings.</p> <p>Dates for upcoming NRZ Leadership Meetings (fourth Tuesday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm): February 27, May 23, and September 26.</p>				
6:30- 6:55 pm	<b>NRZ Roundtable</b>	NRZ Reps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is one of your NRZ’s expectation of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does your neighborhood need?</li> </ul>



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			Mayor Arulampalam Administration?	
<p>Frank Sentner, SODO: There is a lot of development in the Bushnell South/Capitol Ave; original plans have been revised and residents are greatly concerned projects have changed and will be detrimental to the neighborhood. Of particular concern is parking. SODO expects the mayor to provide the NRZ to be heard particularly with CRDA. Randal Davis added that plans are also impacted by Planning &amp; Zoning and Development. He will provide additional information.</p> <p>David MacDonald, Asylum Hill: The mayor should be more responsive to the requests and needs of the community and respond in a timely manner to inquiries about various projects. Randal said if there are inquiries that are not answered to call him.</p> <p>Carey Shea, Frog Hollow: Two issues are vacancy and abandonment of buildings in Frog Hollow. Many could be renovated but out-of-town owners take no action. Neighborhood cleanliness is another issue. Landlords and residents should be accountable for keeping their properties clean. Carey suggested the need for a policy change.</p> <p>Carey also brought up the Washington St Corridor and the conflicting opinions of the city and of residents. The city wants more parking while residents want fewer and more use of public transportation.</p> <p>Lawrence Williams, Upper Albany: Public safety and traffic patterns in the area are getting worse. There's a change in driving habits and streets are unsafe.</p> <p>Keisha Dickenson, Upper Albany: Gun violence and violence in the neighborhood and throughout the city is her primary concern.</p> <p>Cheryl Zeiner, CSSCON: Most of the NRZs attention is the development of Barnard Park /South Green. The goal is for it to be less of a transportation hub and more of a park. CSSCON is working with SODO and Frog Hollow to develop positioning and suggestions.</p> <p>Hyacinth Yennie, MARG: They are working on work to eliminate blight in the neighborhood; it is an ongoing issue. Secondly, participate in the streetscape project that impacts the entrance to Goodwin Park. They are considering a food truck court on New Britain Avenue and are working on restaurant expansion on Maple Avenue. They will begin working on their strategic plan, with help from the city, in 2025. Public safety is always an issue.</p> <p>Emely Lugo, South End: Repairs need to be made to Franklin Avenue. Recent and ongoing underground work has left the road in disrepair. Hyacinth commented that the new administration must hold utility companies accountable. When street repairs are completed, the street is not returned to its former good condition.</p> <p>Bongi Magubane, WECA: The primary concerns are fostering homeownership and developing youth programming after school.</p> <p>Mary Pelletier, Associate: Trees are being removed around the city without notifying the NRZs or residents. Posted signs for resident feedback are not sufficient communication. NRZs need to be alerted when trees are</p>				



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<p>removed. Also, North Branch Watershed Committee wants to build awareness of the Park River Watershed Management Plan and neighbors need to understand that landscapes along waterways are valuable.</p> <p>Jeff Stewart, Clay Arsenal: Jeff expressed the hope that in the new administration, municipal departments would get out of silos and talk to each other to make sure things are effective. He noted that Development Services goes to NRZ meetings and should continue or keep NRZs up-to-date about changes.</p> <p>Elizabeth Davis, as Resident: Cleanliness is always an issue. It requires involvement and responsibility. Ordinances are already in place and need to be reinforced. There is no need for overflowing garbage cans on the streets. Retailers such as CVS and Walgreens, government offices, nonprofit organization, and residents should also be responsible and accountable for keeping their properties clean.</p> <p>Bongi Magubane, WECA: Public safety is important and the administration needs to hear from residents and the administration needs to explain the mayor’s plan about public safety. NRZs need to hear from the chief of police about his plans for public safety.</p> <p>Mary Pelletier: There is a need for increased awareness about development in upstream communities, specifically West Hartford, which draws economic resources from Hartford. Concentrated development right on town line send storm runoff and sewage into Hartford neighborhoods which increases flooding.</p> <p>Additional comments can be directed to Marion or <a href="mailto:hnxt@hartfordnext.org">hnxt@hartfordnext.org</a>.</p>				
6:55 – 7:20 pm	<p><b>Compliance Best Practices For NRZ (Guide)</b></p> <p><b>HNXT Updates</b></p>	<p>Janice Castle</p> <p>Committee Report Chairs/Reps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the new Guide for NRZ Municipal and State NRZ requirements</li> <li>• Executive Committee</li> <li>• Governance Committee</li> <li>• Communications &amp; Marketing Committee</li> <li>• Development Committee</li> <li>• Program Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview /Reminder of guidelines</li> <li>• What has been accomplished?</li> <li>• What needs to be done &amp; by Whom?</li> <li>• What are the next steps?</li> <li>• What can you do?</li> </ul>
<p>Janice went over the Compliance Best Practices guide. The goal is to make sure all the NRZs have the information they need to comply with requirements and be able to access the city’s funding. Janice has been working with the Town Clerk’s office to make information available and stored in one place. Janice will have copies printed for NRZ leaders and will bring them to meetings in person. An electronic copy of the document was sent out with the agenda for this meeting.</p> <p>Carey Shea requested an outline for creating a strategic plan. Marion said there will be more information forthcoming about strategic plan guidelines.</p> <p><b>Committee Updates</b></p> <p>Executive: Priority is the search for an executive director and planning the board retreat.</p>				



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<p>Governance: Looking for non-board members and community members to be part of the committee. If other board members have suggestions, please let the governance committee know and provide contact information.</p> <p>Finance: There is a need for people who understand finance to help Hartford Next maintain its records.</p> <p>Program: Continuing the work on recruitment and membership building. Created an outline and process to conduct a campaign. SODO will serve as a pilot for the membership program. The program committee wants to know which NRZs are interested in doing the membership campaign. There will be support through each step of the process.</p> <p>Communications &amp; Marketing: Jeremy and Mary are working on a repository for documents, marketing and promotional materials that NRZs can access.</p> <p>Development: HNXT needs everyone to help with fundraising and to identify sources of funding. If anyone knows individuals who can assist, please let Marion know.</p> <p>Bongi, Programming: There was a Neighborhood Training Institute or school without walls and in the past have provided leadership training, advocacy, and community economic development. There is a plan to relaunch NTI within the next month or two and develop programs. Potential topics are boards and commissions, recruiting Hartford residents, getting to know leadership, advocacy and other topics. Send other ideas for program trainings to Marion.</p> <p>Send items for the February agenda to Marion.</p>				
7:20 - 7:28 pm	<b>Follow up and Assessment</b>	All	Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did we miss discussing today?</li> <li>Does anything need to be documented and voted on?</li> <li>How am I doing as a Board Member? What went well? What did not go well? What needs to change?</li> </ul>
<p>Last announcements: Janine McMahon: Janine is working to get PLTI (Parenthood Leadership Training Institute) back in Hartford to teach people about civics and democracy. She would like to put together a civics design team with representatives from each of the NRZs to reinvigorate the program. Marion asked Janine to write up a short proposal. Bongi will meet with Janine offline for more discussion.</p> <p>Janice Castle: reminder that applications for the 2024 Love Your Block grants open on February 14. Planning and Zoning is giving LYB an extra \$20,000 for ideas related to traffic calming projects. There will be an information meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Print information will also be available.</p> <p>Follow-up from meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Forestry Grant</li> </ul>				



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback to Lauren Thompson regarding CT Digital Equity program</li> <li>Send ideas for program training to Marion</li> <li>Submit items for the February board meeting</li> <li>Send final copies of the bylaws to board members and add to the board manual</li> <li>Janine to provide a proposal for community trainings</li> </ul>				
7:30 pm	<b>Close</b>			
The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.				

<b>Objectives, Actions, &amp; Decisions:</b>			
Objectives	Action Steps	Accountability	Timeline
Outstanding Items			
Quality of Life Committee	Establishment of Committee, schedule meeting, determine objective	SW/BTR	???
Property Taxes/PILOT/.....	Establishment of Committee, schedule meeting, determine objective	SW/BTR – Chair Amilcar Hernandez	In Process???