

SACHEM FUND BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

**Thursday, June 1st, 2017
Norwich City Hall, Room 319
4:00-5:25 p.m.
Minutes**

Attendees: Mayor Debercy Hinchey and Comptroller Josh Pothier Community Development Deanna Rhodes; Mohegan Tribal Council Member Mark Brown;; Council Appointee Lottie Scott, William Quidgeon Jr. Council Appointee and Recording Secretary Marixsa Jimenez

Absent: Alderwoman Joanne Philbrick

Citizens Attending: Shiela Hayes, Regan Miner, Bill Champagne from Norwich Historical Society

Members of the Media: Claire Bessette, The Day

1. Deanna Rhodes called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.
2. Interview of the following applicants:
 - i. **Norwich Historical Society** - Regan Miner and Bill Champagne

a. Project overview:

The Norwich Historical Society is requesting \$27,772.50. The Norwich Historical Society's approach is to develop the major Walk Norwich program over four phases, which began with the pre-colonial to American Revolution timeframe, and will continue with the Jeffersonian Period, followed by the Civil War and completed with the Industrial Revolution. The first phase included the successful development of two self-guided walking trails: "The Uncas Leap Trail," which features the Native Mohegan Tribe's rich history in southeastern Connecticut and the "Benedict Arnold Trail," which focuses on Norwich's rich Colonial and Revolutionary War History. The second phase includes two trails, the first being "The Norwich Freedom Trail." This trail will cover the Jacksonian Period in history and will include Norwich notables such as David Ruggles, James L. Smith and the Jail Hill National Register Historic District, located adjacent to historic Downtown Norwich. In addition, this Trail will emphasize Norwich's connection to President Lincoln during the Civil War. Norwich has many important natives during this period, such as the Acting Vice President of the United States- Lafayette Foster, and Governor William Buckingham. There are also significant places, such as the historic Yantic Cemetery where many

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Civil War soldiers are buried, and the Wauregan Hotel, where Lincoln visited.

The other trail in phase two is the "Norwich's Millionaires' Triangle" which highlights the Industrial Era and the Gilded Age. At one time Norwich had more millionaires per capita than any other city in the United States. The rich and famous of the era, included William Slater, Leonard Ballou, and Henry Bill. Many of the homes are still in existence and are all conveniently located near Slater Memorial Museum and the Chelsea Parade National Register Historic District. This effort will include connectivity to the various mill village neighborhoods in the city (Greeneville, Occum, Taftville, and Yantic) along with the stories of millwork during that period.

The Consultant for the Norwich Historical Society will oversee the development of the "Norwich's Millionaires' Triangle" and the "Norwich Freedom Trail" self-guided walking trails. The Consultant will be responsible for coordinating with professional consultants and volunteers to research design and create self-guided walking brochures complete with photos, trail information, and information about local amenities (e.g. businesses, handicapped accessibility, restrooms, rest stops, financial institutions and retail stores). This component will need approximately 3-6 months to develop, design and print materials (maps, brochures, etc.).

This grant will enable the creation of heritage tourism materials, including self-guided trail brochures, interpretive and way finding signage. The wayfinding and interpretive signage for the "The Norwich Freedom Trail" and the "Norwich Millionaires' Triangle" will be consistent with the style of the first two trails. The project includes adding "The Norwich Freedom Trail" and the "Norwich Millionaires' Triangle" trails to walknorwich.org where currently "The Uncas Leap Trail" and the "Benedict Arnold Trail" are hosted. In addition, each trail hosted on walknorwich.org will have an interactive audio component for visitors and residents to listen to on their mobile device or computer. The development of the wayfinding and interpretive

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signage and adding the trails to walknorwich.org will take 6-12 months to complete. Further, the Norwich Freedom Trail will have a unique audio component. The Norwich Historical Society will interview current African American residents of Norwich and create oral histories from the interviews. Further, the Norwich Historical Society will research documented accounts from historical figures (such as David Ruggles and James L. Smith) and engage the services of a voice actor to read the narration aloud. The audio component will give a complete perspective of African American's experience in Norwich from the past and to the present. The oral histories and narration will be available on the Norwich Historical Society's website and the Walk Norwich website.

- b. Robert Quidgeon inquired about the trail location. Bill Champagne stated it has not been formulated as of yet. However, he believes it will be in downtown and Jail Hill and Lafayette Foster in the NFA campus. It will also have notices of other places for people to drive but not necessarily part of the walk.
 - c. Mayor Hinchey asked if the notices will be on an app. Bill Champagne stated that after a discussion about having an app versus a website it was decided to proceed with the website (walknorwich.org).
 - d. Deanna Rhodes inquired about interpretive signage in the additional locations aside from the brochures. Regan Miner replied yes there will be interpretive signage, way finding signage, the brochures and the website. She also stated they are working on an audio component for both trails as well.
- ii. **Safe Futures, Inc.** - Chelsea Randall Associate Director of Court Services, VALE, Counseling-Norwich, Caitlin Zito, VALE Advocate and Margaret Soussloff, Associate Director of Grants for Safe Futures, Inc.
- a. **Project Overview:**
Safe Futures is requesting \$6,000 for the partial support of the Norwich Domestic Violence Response Team (NDVRT) Victim Advocate Law Enforcement (VALE)

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program in partnership with the Norwich Police Department. The NDVRT consists of Family Violence Victim Advocates (FVVA) in the Norwich Criminal Court, a Civil Victim Advocate (CVA) in the Norwich Civil Court, a Victim Advocate Law Enforcement (VALE) Advocate in the Norwich Police Department, weekly support groups at the Madonna Place, 24-hour hotlines, and a full-time walk-in Counseling office. The VALE program Advocate is available two days/week, in 7 hour shifts, to work alongside police officers when responding to domestic violence calls. The advocate is located at the police station, rides with the police, and is provided with a desk, phone, etc. by the police. With this unique partnership, the VALE Advocate provides immediate crisis intervention and advocacy to victims during a police investigation, acting as a liaison between law enforcement so that victims can feel safe and learn to trust the police officers as a resource. Safe Futures VALE Advocate, Caitlin Zito, provides services to victims of family violence crimes and assists Norwich police officers who respond to domestic violence victim needs.

- a. Mark Brown asked Caitlin if she found this program to be helpful in preventing a repetitive situation. Caitlin stated this program is helpful as the victims have more people to contact.
- b. William Quidgeon asked if the program services only Norwich or New London area as well. Margaret Soussloff stated the VALE program services only Norwich as they work directly with the NPD. The main office is in New London.
- c. Mark Brown asked about how they assist with juveniles in situations. Caitlin stated through the agency they have a child advocate. If clients are working with DCF they can obtain permission to speak with DCF worker.
- d. Mayor Hinchey confirmed the VALE program Advocate is available two days/week. Mayor Hinchey asked if it's a set day the advocate comes or if they come when they are called. Caitlin stated the weekdays are Wednesdays and Fridays. She is also able to switch to the night shift.

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- e. Mark Brown asked if Caitlin is on an on call basis and the response was no, she is not.
- f. Deanna Rhodes asked how they came about asking for \$6,000 dollar amount and what is the other funding balance. Caitlin stated they have received CDBG monies from the City of Norwich Community Development Block Grant. This year they are recommended for \$15,000, of which \$10,000 of it will be for VALE and \$5,000 is for counseling and advocacy office.
- g. Josh Pothier asked if there was a long term plan for supporting the operations. Margaret Soussloff stated the program is a nonprofit and they do have a plan, they book at a lot of funding sources and they are always looking for new sources.

iii. **Ellis Walter Ruley Committee** – Shiela Hayes and Frank Manfredi

- a. **Project Overview:** The Ellis Walter Ruelly Projecto is requesting \$55,000.00 for a creation of a park and sanctuary.
- b. A six minute video was watched.
- c. The Ellis Walter Ruley Project will consist of creating a park and sanctuary on the homestead of Ellis Walter Ruley in memory of this extraordinary African American artist, collaborate with heritage groups, museums, educational institutions and local artists to create an Ellis Walter Ruley Arts Festival and Exhibition to increase tourism, and to commission the creation of original works of the Life of Ellis Walter Ruley
- d. The Ellis Walter Ruley Project includes developing 28 Hammond Avenue (city owned property) into a park and sanctuary to include walkways, benches, a fountain, walking trails, memorial plaques and informational narratives for on-site viewing. This will be achieved through partnership with the City of Norwich Department of Public Works, City of Norwich Public Utilities and community volunteers. Monthly meetings will be held and site visits will be scheduled as needed.
- e. William Quidgeon asked how they were going to draw tourist to the site and how would

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they be notified. Shiela Hayes stated there will be signage as you travel up Route 2 out on East side. Then on Hammond Avenue there will be signage advising the park location. This will also be on the Norwich Freedom Trail, it will not be part of the walking trail but hey will they will mention this with David Ruggles which is on Bean Hill. The Connecticut Freedom Trail has also expressed interest in having this as part of their trail. It will be marketed by the Connecticut Freedom Trail, the City Website and brochures. They believe they will have free marketing through Norwich Free Academy who will be doing a big exhibit in 2018.

- f. Deanna Rhodes asked about the funding being requested and wanted clarification that the monies will be for multiple purposes such monies for the park and for the exhibition. Frank Manfredi stated the bulk of the monies will be for the park. Shiela Hayes stated \$48,000.00 will be for the park and the \$7,000.00 is for the exhibition.
3. Deanna stated that there is currently a meeting scheduled for June 6th, 2017 to talk about the applicants and make decisions.
4. Mayor Hinchey motioned, and seconded by William Quidgeon, to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Marixsa Jimenez, Recording Secretary