



MINUTES

CITY OF NEW ALBANY COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

Friday, December 13, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

Community Improvement Corporation President Philip Smith called to order the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) meeting of December 13, 2024, at 3:07 p.m. at the New Albany Village Hall, 99 West Main Street, New Albany, Ohio. Staff attending were Sara Zeigler, Bethany Staats, Morgan Joeright, Jackie Russell, and Alex Klosterman.

ROLL CALL:

The following CIC Members answered Roll Call:

Member Colleen Briscoe	P
Member Marlene Brisk	P
Member Jennifer Chrysler	P (3:08)
Secretary Ron Davies	P
Treasurer Everett Gallagher	P
Member Amit Greenshtein	P
Member Matt Shull	P (3:08)
President Philip Smith	P
City Manager Joe Stefanov	P (3:33 – 4:01)

Guests: Neil Collins, Doug McCullough

Klosterman announced that Chrysler, Shull, and Stefanov would be arriving late. With a quorum present, Smith deferred a motion to excuse those absent pending their arrival and commenced the meeting.

ACTION ON MINUTES:

Gallagher moved and Smith seconded to adopt the November 11, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes. The CIC approved the motion with six yes votes and none opposed.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF TIGER INNOVATION LLC 2025 CONTRACT:

Russell presented the 2024 contract evaluation document outlining nine key responsibilities of Tiger Innovation LLC over the past year and reported to the CIC on each:

- 1. Sustain and build positive, value-added formal and informal partnerships with key stakeholders.**

Russell noted that Collins continued to build relationships with The Ohio State University, Denison University, and Columbus State Community College. Collins began building new Due to a new relationship with Healthy New Albany, Collins initiated a new TIGER Talk segment, Healthy Habits for Innovators. Marburn Academy leadership has begun attending TIGER events.

- 2. Attract early-stage, scalable businesses that choose to operate and grow their business from Innovate New Albany.**

Russell recounted how, due to the move to the temporary Innovate space, the CIC directed Collins to not fill vacancies in early 2024.

3. Work with businesses to secure valuable sponsorship support for Innovate New Albany in New Albany, central Ohio, and beyond.

Russell shared that Collins had surpassed the \$10,000 sponsorship goal by \$1,000. Additionally, Porter Wright provided free services but did not renew its financial commitment; Russell expects Porter Wright to renew once construction is completed in the new space.

4. Help early-stage companies in New Albany connect with business support resources and potential customers.

Russell noted that TIGER events have been very successful and the expert office hours program experienced the highest attendance ever due to a change in formatting. Whereas expert office hours used to be held every few months with 16 experts on the call, Collins has begun hosting program about once per month with five to eight experts. Collins explained that past expert office hours offered too many options, leading to a ‘paradox of choice’ by which potential attendees were overwhelmed and chose not to attend. Collins noted that the change has also resulted in higher attendance; Briscoe asked and Collins explained that most missed appointments occur due to administrative errors like events not making it onto someone’s calendar or registrants using multiple personal or professional email accounts to register. Collins shared that anecdotally, one of the past four appointments resulted in a no-show. Russell shared that Collins is working on a website plugin to allow registrants to add events directly to their calendars.

5. When opportunities present themselves, publicize stories about Innovate New Albany activities to build awareness about the value of the incubator to New Albany both internally and externally within the organization.

Russell acknowledged that this has been a difficult metric to track in the past. The city will begin to track this metric through the city’s monthly report.. Russell noted a 38.8% increase in LinkedIn followers and indicated that, given continued growth, LinkedIn could become a widely effective way to publicize stories.

6. Facilitate effective everyday on-site operation of Innovate New Albany.

Russell noted that this goal will change in 2025 since Brick House Blue staff will take over administrative tasks including mail, key fobs, and rent. Russell shared that Collins had toured 112 people through the Innovate New Albany space in 2024 to help build interest in the new Brick House Blue at Innovate New Albany space.

7. Recruit a pool of speakers/business experts with skills and willingness to provide valuable information related to innovation and entrepreneurship, plan and execute events throughout the year.

Russell explained that all 2024 TIGER talks were held in person and noted that there were 39 talks, not 38 as noted in the contract evaluation document. The 39 talks attracted over 1600 attendees. Russell attributed this success to speakers proactively contacting Collins for opportunities to present. Collins added that artificial intelligence (AI) related topics helped drive the TIGER talk growth; as many as 65 people attended one AI talk. Russell noted that several of the most anticipated TIGER talks were recorded and posted on the Innovate New Albany YouTube channel.

In addition to outperforming past metrics, A new series of programming, ‘So You Want To...’ launched in 2024 with ‘So You Want To Buy A Business’ with others planned for the near future.

Russell and Collins agreed the program would attract a new group of attendees since it will be hosted in the evenings. Smith suggested that Collins register the “So You Want To” trademark.

8. Provide technical and graphic support for Innovate New Albany.

Russell explained that Collins has been an active part of the redesign for Innovate New Albany at Brick House Blue. Collins added that the Innovate New Albany email blasts are rich in graphics and that email subscriptions have increased by over 100 people for a total of 3,900 subscribers. in 2024. Anecdotally, a recent email received over 2,100 views.

9. Maintain software accounts needed as a foundation for operating the Innovate New Albany program.

Russell noted that Collins maintained the Innovate New Albany software programs in 2024.

Russell presented the proposed professional services agreement with Tiger Innovation LLC for 2025 and announced several updates to better reflect Tiger Innovation LLC’s new role in the new Brick House Blue at Innovate New Albany space.

1. Verbiage was updated to reflect terminology in the recently revised CIC Code of Regulations.
2. Collins is no longer responsible for maintaining the office space, as this will become the responsibility of Brick House Blue.
3. Two new programmatic expectations were added:
 - a. Collins will host two local training programs per year for New Albany residents to train to use software programs like Canva and Mailchimp.
 - b. Collins will host business boot camps: expert-led programs to help small businesses address specific growing pains through a four-week event series at least once per year.
4. Specific metrics have been developed to better track Collins’ performance in existing categories. Russell pointed out several new metrics requiring Collins to spend 16 hours per week in the Brick House Blue at Innovate New Albany space, plan 100 hours of programming, continue building community partnerships by having four higher education speakers, four economic development speakers, and four community organization speakers throughout the year, as well as maintaining sponsorships of at least \$10,000.

Russell explained that the proposed professional services agreement included a 5% increase in compensation and the ability to reimburse Collins for expenses for developing the Innovate YouTube channel up to approximately \$7,000. Russell noted that city attorney, Ben Albrecht has reviewed the contract. Smith commented that the CIC subcommittee invested significant time and energy into developing the proposed professional services agreement. Briscoe noted a shift away from office management and toward programming. Davies asked and Smith confirmed that next year’s contract evaluation would be conducted in the same manner; each objective will be evaluated against its set performance metric to gauge Collins’ success.

Greenshtein asked and Collins explained that the stipends for new programs are not established dollar figures because programmatic costs could vary per speaker. Collins cited travel costs, experience, and time spent developing curriculum as variables that would be considered were a speaker to receive payment. Collins added that speakers within the same program could be paid the same amount, and noted that no Innovate New Albany event speaker has ever been paid. Briscoe and Brisk noted that these contingencies had been discussed at length by the subcommittee.

Collins was excused. Gallagher moved and Chrysler seconded to approve the Tiger Innovation LLC 2025 contract. The CIC approved the motion with nine yes votes and none opposed.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE THE INNOVATE NEW ALBANY FURNITURE DISPOSAL/
DONATION:**

Russell explained that an inventory of Innovate New Albany furniture had been established for the first time during the move to the temporary space. Russell reminded the CIC that not all of the furniture in the temporary space would be utilized in the final space. Several current tenants moving out of the space asked to keep the excess furniture. Joeright and Smith clarified that no one items had a value that exceeds \$1,000.. Staats added that most of this furniture was donated to Innovate New Albany and no related value has ever been recorded on a financial statement. Chrysler explained that to research and assign values, collect payments, or manage disposal in some other way would likely cost more in employee hours than the furniture is worth.

Gallagher moved and Briscoe seconded to approve the Innovate New Albany furniture disposal/donation. The CIC approved the motion with nine yes votes and none opposed.

REVIEW AND APPROVE THE BRICK HOUSE BLUE 2025 BUDGET:

Russell shared that Brick House Blue expects to open the space with 70% of the dedicated desks and 60% of the offices leased. Smith and Chrysler added that this far outperforms the coworking industry standard. Briscoe asked and Smith answered that the budget does reflect some amount of projected growth. Smith noted that Brick House Blue at Innovate New Albany would likely be cash-neutral in its first year. Chrysler reminded the CIC of Brick House Blue's incentive contract provision to encourage growth.

Russell called attention to the three percent credit card fee and clarified that no fees are associated with leasing office spaces. Gallagher suggested this be done for one-time purchases like meeting room rentals. Russell noted that payroll expenses contemplate a full-time community and event manager and a part-time event support staff member. Russell explained that other Brick House Blue staff may rotate in and out of the space in supporting roles and that a portion of payroll expenses were allocated to corporate operators. Gallagher asked and Smith explained that there would not be confusion regarding the actual employer of record; Brick House Blue employees would not expect a city pension or other benefits.

Greenshtein and Shull expressed concern over Brick House Blue's projected growth given the high pricing. Chrysler shared that the CIC had been surprised by the pricing in the original pro forma, but after a significant amount of research, the city had determined that Brick House Blue's price points were near market rate. Greenshtein asked and Brisk explained that the CIC never expected to be cash-neutral during the first year; the projected budget significantly outperforms expectations. Briscoe asked and Joeright explained that the contract with Brick House Blue lasts until 2034 with an exit option if Brick House Blue does not have 50% occupancy after 36 months. Briscoe asked and Joeright clarified that the CIC is bound to the contract for 10 years if Brick House Blue performs adequately. Greenshtein asked and Smith and Brisk confirmed that the city expected to cover an operational loss for several years. Davies asked and Joeright confirmed that the city does have the authority to audit numbers provided by Brick House Blue.

Smith moved and Brisk seconded to approve the Brick House Blue 2025 budget. The CIC approved the motion with six yes votes and none opposed.

OTHER BUSINESS:

a) Broadband Study Update

McCullough recounted several months spent reviewing contracts and agreements that helped him assemble a comprehensive history of New Albany Net. Furthermore, FCC mapping, direct service inquiries using the addresses of CIC members, discussions with service providers, and a community survey have helped develop a better picture of residential broadband service throughout the community. Through this research, McCullough concluded that no service providers are misrepresenting their

offerings, but some are only able to provide service by specific means like cable, fiber, or satellite, which has produced a patchwork of service providers at varying price points and levels of service. Anecdotally, McCullough shared search results for his home address on the FCC map displaying nine service providers; the FCC map sometimes shows providers serving an address but does not specify whether said service is a landline phone, a cellular device, fiber, or cable internet.

McCullough shared search results from two New Albany addresses with vastly different lists of providers, levels of service, and price points. McCullough noted that differences like this are common in many cities and shared that several case study cities will be included in the final deliverable. Gallagher shared and McCullough agreed that Upper Arlington's fiber-to-the-home program has received positive feedback; Dublin may also be comparable, as well as several communities outside the state of Ohio. McCullough explained that service providers had asked to be made aware of significant disparities or frustrations throughout the community in conversations over the past several months. Gallagher mentioned a long history of New Albany residents being frustrated by Verizon cellular dead zones and McCullough explained that this broadband study was primarily designed to address fixed service concerns, but that cellular and other concerns like city-wide WIFI could be considered in the future.

McCullough shared that the community survey had received 210 responses spread evenly across all neighborhoods in New Albany. Most respondents indicated having "good" internet service; cable is the predominant method of service, which McCullough explained is not as effective as fiber. As a result, most respondents also indicated having experienced problems with their internet, and more than 50% of respondents claim that their current service level does not meet their needs. More than 87% of respondents think the city should further investigate broadband access throughout the community, and over 80% support the city supporting new service options. Brisk shared that this feedback aligns with conversations she has shared with residents for years. McCullough explained that the intention of the broadband study is to produce a deliverable document including our interpretations of the survey data and industry feedback to include service providers' improvement plans.

McCullough added that throughout the broadband study, he had engaged in discussions about right of way for fiber and suggested additional research in this area to include a strategy for managing popular routes to reach the business park. McCullough explained that these routes should be maximized with residential service in mind; it would be to the detriment of New Albany residents if conduit was filled with corporate fiber, leaving no room for residential service providers. McCullough suggested a legal mechanism by which the city could require providers using central corridors to the business park to offer residential service; if a provider declined, the city could direct their fiber into other corridors around residential areas. Gallagher asked and McCullough agreed to formulate recommendations around this issue in the final deliverable. Chrysler reminded the CIC that the city had passed comprehensive right-of-way permitting legislation several years ago; more concrete findings would be necessary to justify devoting significant time to this issue. Chrysler explained that the city's first preference would be to raise the concern with service providers to see whether a solution could be identified.

Smith asked and McCullough confirmed that actionable recommendations will be provided by Q1 2025.

b) \$1,000 Holiday Party Sponsorship from the CIC

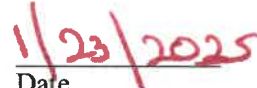
Russell asked the CIC to sponsor the Innovate New Albany Celebration of Innovation holiday party with a \$1,000 donation.

Smith moved and Briscoe seconded to approve a \$1000 sponsorship for the Innovate New Albany Celebration of Innovation holiday party. . The CIC approved the motion with six yes votes and none opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Shull moved and Smith seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.


Secretary, CIC Board of Trustees


Date