

Housing and Neighborhood Committee Virtual Meeting
Draft Meeting Minutes
April 10, 2026
9:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Board Members Present via Microsoft Teams: Board Chair David Robinson, Committee Chair Shay Ajayi, and Commissioners Selia Mosquero-Bruno and Bob Patricelli

Staff Present via Microsoft Teams: David Steuber, Anthony Lazzaro, Derek Peterson and Sean Harrison

Guests Present via Microsoft Teams: Ken Johnson (NINA)

Committee Chair Shay Ajayi called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and the minutes of the October 3, 2025 meeting were approved on a voice vote.

1. Introductions

Ken Johnson, Executive Director of the Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (NINA) introduced himself to the Board.

2. New Projects

a. Hartford Heritage Homes – 279 and 285 Farmington Avenue

Mr. Peterson walked Committee members through two new restorations, the ninth and tenth of the Hartford Heritage Homes Program. 279 and 285 Farmington Avenue are two vacant historic properties that will be restored for homeownership as part of the next phase of the Hartford Heritage Homes program, created by CRDA and NINA in 2018. The program targets vacant or underutilized historic properties in Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood where renovation offers the best opportunity to eliminate blight, grow real estate values, and build community pride. The Connecticut State Bond Commission awarded \$2.5 million to further NINA's efforts through the use of both grants and loans. To date, the Heritage Home

fund has financed the creation or restoration of twelve units of housing, with another 18 units identified. 279 and 285 Farmington will be the ninth and tenth projects of the program, with CRDA contributing an average of \$69,000 per residence across those ten projects.

Both 279 and 285 Farmington Avenue are a short, one-block walk from both the Mark Twain House and Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. The properties were constructed in 1910 as single-family homes but were eventually converted to commercial uses before being abandoned by their owners in 2007 and 2015 (respectively). The City of Hartford took title and sold the properties to NINA in March 2025.

NINA has requested to draw an additional \$260,000 from the CRDA/Heritage Homes account, \$100,000 as a bridge loan for state historic tax credits and \$160,000 as a grant for construction costs. The buildings are currently in very poor condition, and NINA plans to restore both to their original historic appearance. Each home has 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and a total of 2,900 square feet of finished living space on two floors. The total cost for both renovations is \$1,604,000. Total sales revenue based on recent appraisals is projected at \$770,000, consisting of \$385,000 each for 279 Farmington Avenue and 285 Farmington Avenue, based on recently appraised values. A construction budget and an affordability study is attached for each home.

Mr. Peterson then walked the committee through the sources and uses of funds for the project(s).

Mr. Peterson mentioned that Hartford Heritage Homes is an initiative of CRDA and Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (NINA), a non-profit community development corporation whose mission is the revitalization of the Asylum Hill neighborhood. Since 2006, NINA has rehabilitated blighted historic houses and built new homes for sale at prices that are affordable for low to moderate income households.

In May 2025, NINA was honored with an Award of Merit from Preservation Connecticut for its restoration of the Linus Plimpton House (847 Asylum Avenue). NINA received 22 written offers from prospective purchasers, spanning every corner of the city, as well as seven from towns around the region and six from out-of-state.

Staff recommend providing \$260,000 in financing to NINA for the restoration of 279 and 285 Farmington Avenue, consisting of \$160,000 in grant funds and \$100,000 as a bridge loan. The grant will subsidize construction, including \$50,000 for 279 Farmington Avenue and \$110,000 for 285 Farmington Avenue. The \$100,000 loan (3% interest, 36-month term) will finance construction including \$50,000 for 279 Farmington Avenue and \$50,000 for 285 Farmington Avenue. The loan will be secured by a second priority lien, behind the LISC construction loan, and will be repaid from State Historic Tax Credit proceeds upon completion of the project. Eversource has agreed to be the tax credit purchaser for the project.

Mr. Patricelli and Committee Chair Shay Ajayi thanked Ken Johnson for all the work NINA has done in the Asylum Hill Neighborhood to encourage affordable homeownership opportunities, and encouraged both groups to try and do more together.

Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno asked if there would be income qualifiers to own the homes. Mr. Johnson answered that these two properties specifically will be market-rate sales, but other projects have required income restrictions.

Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno asked if there was a restrictive covenant on selling the home, and Mr. Johnson answered that the buyer must consider this their principal residence and stay in the home no less than 7 years.

Mr. Robinson echoed thanks and praise to Ken Johnson and the NINA team. Mr. Robinson asked about the purchase price of the home and Mr. Johnson replied that it was a negotiation with the city of Hartford.

Mr. Johnson described the existing condition of the two homes and how they would be renovated.

A motion to approve the following resolution was made by Commissioner Patricelli and seconded by Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno.

Resolution: The Executive Director is authorized to provide financing to Northside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance, Inc. (NINA) for the restoration of 279 and 285 Farmington Avenue, Hartford, CT. CRDA will provide a total of \$260,000 in financing consisting of: (1) a \$100,000 construction loan at 3% interest with a 36-month term (to be repaid from State Historic Tax Credit proceeds); and (2) a \$160,000 grant to subsidize construction costs. Approval is subject to: 1) All other financing being secured and approved; and 2) Other fiduciary terms deemed necessary and appropriate by the Executive Director and CRDA counsel.

The resolution passed unanimously.

3. Loan Servicing Updates

CRDA Senior Accounting Analyst Sean Harrison reported that a notice of past due payments and an event of default letter was sent in January to the owner of 237 Hamilton St. At that point, the default interest rate went into effect. There are three months delinquent at this time. Discussions are currently ongoing with the city regarding unpaid taxes and liens on the property.

CRDA Executive Director David Steuber reported that we are in conversation with the developer and hopeful that we'll see a payment made soon, but that we wanted the board to be aware of that circumstance and we'll continue to keep you updated as further

conversations take place. Mr. Steuber anticipated that the property would be converted to a significant number of residential units in the neighborhood of about 250 units. And it's encountered challenges that that was in anticipation of further financing and the developer is continuing to explore options and potential other senior private lenders who might come into the project. They're also contemplating a potential pivot of the project, kind of in the direction of possibly including some component of storage in addition to residential units, but that deal has yet to come together.

Mr. Peterson then addressed the remaining housing meeting dates from a memo addressed to the Commission. Mr. Robinson moved a motion to accept the new schedule, with an amendment to move the June meeting from the 5th to the 12th. Mr. Patricelli seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr Lazzaro asked the Committee if a discussion about 3580 Main (a.k.a. Fuller Brush) could be added to the agenda, which Mr. Patricelli moved and Mr. Robinson seconded. The motion passed. Mr. Lazzaro reported the developer experienced unanticipated construction cost overruns during the construction. They had to secure additional funding to complete the project. During this period, they fell behind on their debt service payments to CRDA, which ultimately triggered a default interest rate and associated penalty fees and late fees. Despite the delays, Shelbourne has made meaningful progress in completing the project. They cured the arrearage and alone has brought the loan into good standing. CRDA met with folks in the city of Hartford and the city has agreed to reset the default interest rate back to the base interest rate and to waive the accrued penalty interests and any applicable late fees on its loan. Correspondingly, CRDA looked at the same circumstances and agreed with that scenario. We are requesting that CRDA do the same, which would set the default interest rate back to the normal interest rate or the base rate, waive the accrued interest penalties, and any late fees that were due.

Ms. Mosquera-Bruno asked how far along the construction was and Mr. Lazzaro reported 80-85% complete.

Mr. Patricelli made a motion to set the default interest rate to the base interest rate, and waive accrued interest penalties and late fees due. Mr. Robinson seconded and the motion passed.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Patricelli commented on promoting more projects in the neighborhoods similar to NINA's program and asked about other neighborhood organizations that CRDA could partner with. Mr. Steuber responded that we have other projects of similar profile to NINA but do not have another active partnership similar to the NINA program, suggesting that most of CRDA's efforts are around multi-family apartments vs. two and three family style homes, which tend to be the expertise of the Hartford Land Bank among others. Ms. Mosquera-Bruno mentioned that she is partnering with the city where a housing development fund is a CDFI. Mr. Peterson mentioned a predevelopment

loan to the Hartford Housing Authority for homeownership opportunities at Dutch point that was board approved in May of 2025.

The next meeting of the Housing and Neighborhood Committee is scheduled for May 1, 2026, subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

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