

MINUTES
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Citizens' Advisory Committee
Beaver Island Clubhouse
Grand Island, NY
September 6, 2006 7:00 pm

The 5th meeting of the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Niagara River Greenway Commission was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Commissioner Paul Dyster who then introduced the Commission members in attendance, Chairman Bob Kresse, Commissioner Paul Leuchner and Greenway Administrator, Rob Belue. Also in attendance was Mark Mistretta from Wendel-Duchscherer. There were approximately 50 people in attendance.

The first item on the agenda was review of the minutes from the last meeting. A motion was made by David Colligan to accept the minutes, seconded by Gay Molnar. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

In Chairman Paul Dyster's opening comments, he emphasized the purpose of tonight's meeting was to open discussion and get input on the process that the Commission should use to determine (of determining) the greenway boundaries rather than the specific boundaries themselves. Tonight's presentation by Wendel-Duchscherer is the same as the one seen at the last LGAC meeting.

Mark Mistretta of Wendel Duchscherer gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the project purpose, criteria for project selection, a funding summary, process for project selection, boundary selection and the next steps. This was followed by a public feedback period.

- Gerry Lizarczyk – resident of Grand Island – commented on (formation of) how the international border between Canada and the U.S. had been determined.
- Dave Colligan – North and south boundary issue – wants the greenway to mirror the Canadian side. Need anchors and destination points.
- Michele Vanstrom – questioned Niagara County's part in funding.
- Clinton Brown – impressed with ideas of boundaries. Feels the mapping should show river centered between US and Canada. Third tier should be determined by flora and ecology not political boundaries.
- Jim Hufnagel – questioned how Tier 2&3 will qualify for projects and funding.
- Margaret Wooster – agreed with Clint Brown on Tier 3 comments – questioned legality of 3rd boundary according to legislation, doesn't feel criteria are clear enough.
- Mary Ann Roland – asked if the Niagara Heritage Trail is included. Mark Mistretta answered that the Federal project is within Tier 1 & 2. More detail is needed. Paul Dyster clarified the NHA designation and funding.
- Tom Frank – addressed the issues of boundaries and reason for the purpose of the NRG by NYPA.
- John Jordan – feels the tiered approach could dilute the funding, might need to be done by years. High-priority projects along river would be done first.

Presentations were also given by the following:

- Lewiston Historical Association
 - Mr. Lee Simonson spoke on the importance of creating a historical greenway, including the Underground Railroad. The Association believes there should be a monument recognizing escaping slavery to freedom at a point on the river where the slaves crossed over to Canada.
- Customhouse Restoration
 - Tom DeSantis and Bill Bradberry presented a project overview to date on the Customhouse Restoration. Mr. Bradberry advocates building on the history and heritage of our area and the Underground Railroad story of the people and places significant in the city.
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- Blackrock Riverside Good Neighbors Planning Alliance
 - Calib Basiliko spoke on the citizen based action planning group.
 - John Montigue – Buffalo State Maritime Center – discussed projects created by the University involving inner city kids and adults on boat building and collecting boats important to the area.
 - Margaret Szcapanec – Blackrock Canal Park – also known as Ontario Street Boatlaunch presented concept for Blackrock Canal Park.
- Niagara Experience Center
 - Dr. Gary Praetzel of Niagara University Hospitality and Tourism Management did a presentation promoting the Niagara Experience Center. The Experience Center would also deal with the Underground Railroad theme, among others. It was designated to encourage visits to other sites in the region, including many along the river.

A public comment period followed:

- Jay Grossman – promotes keeping the Robert Moses Parkway, has a plan to preserve it and put in a North/South bikeway.
- Jim Hufnagel – Niagara Heritage Partnership – spoke on uses of closed section of the Robert Moses Parkway and promoted its removal and access to the Niagara Gorge.
- Mary Ann Roland – read a letter from Tom Yotts regarding Niagara Falls Historical Preservation Commission promoting recognition of area and preservation and interpretation.
- Jay McCarthy – represents citizens action group – introduced waterfront micro park concept. Asked for inclusion in the Niagara River Greenway Plan and direction on how to participate.
- Bob Baxter – Niagara Heritage Partnership – Does not agree with inclusion of Sanborn, Pendleton, etc. in the Greenway plan and (other) suggested OTHER ideas for the Robert Moses Parkway area.
- Margaret Wooster – Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper – disagrees with wide boundaries. Reiterated the need for strict guidelines and principals, will submit to Wendel.
- Tom Frank – spoke on an upcoming bike race on September 10, 2006 at LaSalle Park.

The next meetings will be as follows:

- September 12, 2006 from 2:00p-5:00p - Stakeholders Concept Workshop at the Beaver Island Clubhouse.
- September 13, 2006 from 2:00p-5:00p – Niagara River Greenway Commission Concept Workshop at the Beaver Island Clubhouse
- September 18, 2006 – Niagara River Greenway Commission Executive Committee Meeting at the Beaver Island State Park Conference Room

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm with 1 opposed vote.