

Minutes of the Executive Committee
Of the
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
March 18, 2008 12:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 12:40 pm. The Secretary was directed to call the roll call and a quorum of members was determined to be present.

Attendees: Robert Kresse, Commission Chairman
Paul Leuchner, Commission Secretary
Ron Pillozzi, Commissioner
Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Renee Parsons, NYS Department of State
Ron Hayes, NYS Department of Transportation
Ray Goll, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Angela Berti, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rob Belue, Executive Director, Niagara River Greenway Commission

Review and Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 18, 2008 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mark Thomas and seconded by Paul Leuchner. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Chairman Kresse reported that the City of Buffalo has appointed Brian Riley, their new Chief Economic Development Officer as their representative to the Erie County Standing Committee. He noted that with the appointment of this individual the Erie County Standing Committee should be a meeting in the near future

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

Rob Belue reported on behalf of Treasurer John Giardino and advised that the status of the budget will be presented next month in order to allow time to gather data for the 2008-2009 fiscal year report.

Paddles Up Niagara 2008 (Commissioner Leuchner)

Paddles Up Niagara 2008 has been scheduled for July 26, 2008. The event will follow the same format and course as last year. Information about the event has been posted on the Commission web page. As of this date two people from the Toledo, Ohio area have sent in their entry forms. The required marine event permit application has been filed with the United States Coast Guard and a favorable response is expected. There is rumor of a celebrity challenge race this year and if this materializes the participants will be launched prior to the paddling event. Event advertising is planned during Boom Days, the Eastern Mountain Sports Club Days on April 18th, and the Wild Water Derby in Shortsville, NY on

April 26th. In addition, Paddles Up Niagara 2008 has been posted to the event calendars at Sea Kayaker Magazine and www.paddling.net

Following this presentation Commissioner Leuchner reported that the Adirondack Paddlefest in Old Forge, NY will be held on May 16, 2008. He asked for approval to attend the Paddlefest on May 16th to assess what features could be brought back to the annual Paddles Up Niagara event. A motion to approve attendance by Paul Leuchner and Rob Belue was made by Mark Thomas motioned and seconded by Ron Pillozzi. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Directors Report

Rob Belue reported on presentations and meetings that had occurred since the last meeting, budget issues, status of Standing Committee protocols and the posting of projects on the web that are now before the Commission for review. He also reported that the Annual Report of the Niagara River Greenway Commission is being prepared. Mr. Belue advised that members of the commission will soon be receiving notices from the Commission on Public Integrity formerly the Ethics Commission requiring the submission of the annual financial disclosure statement which is due on May 15, 2008.

Old Business

Project Review Process

Rob Belue reported on the recent workshop where commission members met to identify the essential components that could become a part of the consistency review of projects and activities brought before the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Chairman Robert Kresse reported his intention to appoint a committee that would include “outside people” for the purpose of reviewing the workshop findings and formulating a plan for project review. Commissioner Leuchner asked that these “outside people” be identified, but the Chairman declined to do so. Commissioner Leuchner stated for the record his objection to the involvement of unknown parties in the work of this committee.

New Business

Event Endorsements

Rob Belue reported that the event endorsement application has been established that can be used by organizations seeking the support of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Endorsement applications have been received for Boom Days and Eastern Great Lakes Water Safety Expo sponsored by the US Coast Guard. Mr. Belue pointed out that the event endorsements did not involve the commitment or use of Commission funds. To insure a timely response to such requests the decision to endorse an event will be made at scheduled meetings of the Executive Committee. Following discussion, agreement was reached to move ahead with the pending endorsement requests provided legal guidance is first obtained from the legal department at the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation. A motion to this effect was made by Paul Leuchner made the motion and seconded by Mark Thomas. The motion was approved unanimously.

Consistency Determination Voting Procedures

Rob Belue reviewed the procedures that would be followed during the subsequent meeting of the full Commission. A total of three projects are before the Niagara River Greenway Commission for consideration. One of the projects (Jayne Park) is only requesting Commission endorsement rather than funding by a standing committee. The Executive Director will briefly describe the project and call the roll during which Commissioners would comment and vote.

Buffalo News Article-“Wheatfield Raises Objection to Bike Path”

Chairman Kresse reported that the Town of Wheatfield has expressed concern about a proposed bike path that would occupy one of the active lanes of the LaSalle Expressway. Town officials believed that this project was already endorsed by the Niagara River Greenway Commission. A follow up letter to this effect was also received from the Town of Wheatfield. Following discussion, Commissioner Pilozzi stated that he would meet with the Supervisor of the Town of Wheatfield to discuss their concerns and report back at the next meeting.

Consulting Party Request Scajaguada Expressway Project

Commissioner Kresse reported that a letter had been received from the New York State Department of Transportation requesting that the Niagara River Greenway Commission become a consulting party during the project planning and SEQRA review process. The Chairman appointed Paul Leuchner as the Commission representative to serve on this committee.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mark Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Ron Pilozzi. The meeting ended at 1:30 pm.

Paul Leuchner, Secretary
Niagara River Greenway Commission