

Minutes of the Executive Committee
Of the
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
May 19, 2009 @ 2:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 2:00 p.m. and the roll was called by the Secretary Paul Leuchner. A quorum of members was present.

Attendees: Robert Kresse, Chairman
Richard Soluri, Vice-Chairman
Paul Leuchner, Secretary
Ron Pillozzi, Commissioner and LGAC Chair
Paul Dyster, Commissioner and CAC Chair
Ron Hayes, NYS Department of Transportation
Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Rob Belue, Executive Director, Niagara River Greenway Commission

Absent: John Giardino, Treasurer

Due to technical difficulties the proceedings were not taped.

Introduction of Guests

Commissioner Mark Thomas introduced Shelley Weinreb who is replacing Ray Goll as the Deputy District Manager for the Western District.

Review and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 17th, 2009 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Mark Thomas and seconded by Commissioner Richard Soluri. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Kresse noted for the record that he had received a letter of resignation from Commissioner Lou Ciminelli. A letter will be sent to Mr. Ciminelli thanking him for his work on the Niagara River Greenway Commission. The Chairman reported that, with the exception of his position, the four year appointments of all other Commission members have expired. These Commission members will continue to serve until reappointed or replaced.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Financial Report

Executive Director Rob Belue delivered the 4th Quarter Financial Report on behalf of Treasurer John Giardino who was absent. As of the close of this fiscal year the balance of funds on hand was reported to be \$119,442.71.

Proposed 2009-2010 Budget

Rob Belue reported that the Niagara River Greenway will be receiving \$300,000 thanks to the assistance of New York State Senator Antoine Thompson. He also stated that a preliminary budget based on funding in the amount of \$419,442.71 was worked out last week at an informal meeting with Robert Kresse and Mark Thomas. Under the provisions of this budget the Commission will step up efforts to promote the Niagara River Greenway plan and engage in activities and events that will focus public interest on the Niagara River Greenway. The proposed budget will include provisions for the hiring of a part time employee to assist in this effort. In addition, the Commission will now compensate the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for some of the in-kind services that are provided. The proposed budget for 2009 through 2010 is expected to be \$250,000 leaving a balance of \$169,442.71 in reserve.

In response to the above there was considerable discussion amongst the Commissioners present regarding the various ways the goals of increasing public awareness could be achieved. Suggestions included the following: a newsletter with updates on projects found to be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, a report card on accountability that shows where and how greenway funding is being used, technical assistance to those who are developing projects that would come before the Commission for review, establishing land and water based activities or events that would involve other municipalities within the Niagara River Greenway, tree planting on Arbor Day to promote the concept of “green for the greenway”, establishing a chronology of events that moves the public through all parts of the greenway creating a sort of legacy, working with the Niagara Parks Commission in Ontario, Canada to develop joint events that celebrate the Niagara River Greenway, participating in joint ventures that promote sport fishing, partnering with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Parks, other agencies, municipalities and stakeholder groups, involvement in the Lewiston Smelt Festival, scheduling an annual media event kicking off the publication of the greenway events calendar, competitive events involving cycling, running, crew, swimming or triathlons, health and wellness activities and the identification and promotion of the diverse forms of recreation that are ongoing within the Niagara River Greenway.

Commissioner Leuchner noted that the level of involvement in all of these activities and events requires dedication and support not only from the Niagara River Greenway Commission but the event sponsor as well. Commissioner Dyster agreed that the Commission needs to clarify the scope of its relationship and comfort level with specific events and activities. Commissioner Pillozzi stated that Commission involvement may only be in the form of an endorsement and in many cases it will not necessary to have its members participate in the event planning process or to even have them on site during the actual event. Commissioner Mark Thomas summed up the discussion stating that the availability of funds marked a great turning for the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

Paddles Up Niagara 2009

Commissioner Paul Leuchner reported that Paddles Up Niagara 2009 will take place on Saturday July 25th, 2009 at Beaver Island State Park. Event details and registration forms can

be found on the Niagara River Greenway Commission web site. Sponsors for this year's event include Anchor Marine, Eastern Mountain Sports, State Farm Insurance, Paths, Peaks and Paddles and the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and others may be joining their ranks in the future. A drawing for free kayak equipment will be held this year compliments of the folks at Eastern Mountain Sports. Arrangements are also being made to have a local media personality participate in the event.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business

Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board Resolution

Commissioner Leuchner provided copies of resolution by the Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board that was received via email on May 14, 2009 and called everyone's attention to paragraph eight of that document. That paragraph stated that "Whereas: Removal of the Robert Moses Gorge Parkway is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan for the region and New York State..." Commissioner Leuchner pointed out that no determination of consistency had been made by the Niagara River Greenway Commission. He also noted it would be unlikely that the project would ever be brought before the Commission since the provisions of Subsection 39.19 would apply. After some discussion a motion was made by Paul Leuchner to send a letter to the Niagara Falls Tourism Advisory Board indicating that the Niagara River Greenway Commission had not made any determination of consistency for this project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ron Pilozzi and subsequently approved. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the City of Niagara Falls since it was believed that a similar resolution contained the same language.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting of the Executive Committee was made by Commissioner Soluri and seconded by Commissioner Pilozzi. The meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Paul G. Leuchner, Secretary
Niagara River Greenway Commission