

Minutes

**Twenty Fifth Meeting
Of the
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
Grand Island, NY
November 18, 2008 3:00 pm**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 3:05 pm. Secretary Paul Leuchner was directed to call the roll and a quorum of members was determined to be present.

The following Commissioners or their designated representatives were in attendance:

Commissioner Robert Kresse, Chairman
Commissioner Richard Soluri, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Paul Leuchner, Secretary
Tom DeSantis for Paul Dyster, Chairman, Citizens Advisory Committee
Jason La Monaco for Ron Pilozzi, Chairman, Local Government Advisory Committee
Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Dan David, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Ron Hayes, NYS Department of Transportation
Patrick Curley, New York Power Authority
Rob Belue, Executive Director Niagara River Greenway Commission

Absent: Commissioner John Giardino, Treasure
Commissioner Louis P. Ciminelli
Commissioner Brett Sommer

Executive Director Rob Belue noted for the record that Renee Parson, NYS Department of State had submitted a proxy along with instructions for voting on projects that were before the Commission today for a determination of consistency.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the Niagara River Greenway Commission were reviewed. A spelling error was noted on page 4 of the minutes and corrected. A motion was made to approve the minutes as corrected by Commissioner Richard Soluri and seconded by Tom DeSantis. The minutes were approved unanimously. .

Comments by the Commission Chairman

Chairman Robert Kresse stated that he had no comments, but noted that there was no heat in the meeting room and that meeting business should be transacted quickly.

Financial Report

Executive Director Rob Belue reported on behalf of Treasurer John Giardino who was absent. As of October 30, 2008 there is a balance of approximately \$ 98,500. The Executive Director summarized his on going efforts to get funding for the next fiscal year.

Report from the Executive Director

Executive Director Rob Belue reported on his activities since the last meeting of the Commission. He noted that support was provided during the Great Lakes Program Managers Conference and the New York State Canal Conference hosted by the Canal Society of New York. In addition, Mr. Belue advised that he was invited to represent the Niagara River Greenway Commission at future meetings of the Niagara Remedial Action Plan group. Mr. Belue noted that there will be a presentation on the work of this group at the January 2009 Commission meeting. Mr. Belue reported that announcements of upcoming Standing Committee meetings would be sent to Commission members in the near future. He also advised that there is a conflict with the date selected for the next meeting of the Local Government Advisory Committee. Notice of the new meeting date will occur as soon as the schedule conflicts are resolved.

Project Review and Determination of Consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan

City of Buffalo- Times Beach Enhancements

Executive Director Rob Belue provided a brief overview of the project which involves the installation of a boardwalk and decorative fence along the Fuhrmann Boulevard perimeter of the Times Beach nature preserve. Additional project details were reported on by Ms. Karen Fleming representing the City of Buffalo and Doug Ackerman who spoke on behalf of the NYS Department of Transportation. Commissioner Paul Leuchner expressed concern over the planned use of greenway funds for no other purpose but to meet the obligations for project cost sharing with the State of New York. He also noted that the proposed decorative fence was not ecologically necessary as stated in the project documentation and had concerns about parking. NYPA representative Pat Curley asked several questions about the relationship of the project to the adjacent property currently under the ownership of the US Coast Guard. Following up on this line of questioning Ron Hayes representing the NYS Department of Transportation asked what would happen to the project if the Coast Guard facility was moved to another location. The Chairman called for a vote. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation representative abstained. Commissioner Paul Leuchner stated that even though the project was consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan it should be given a low priority since it could leave other more important projects unfunded. The remaining Commission members found that the project was consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Town of Wheatfield- River Road Greenway Multi-Use Trail Project

A brief project overview was given by Executive Director Rob Belue. Additional details were provided by Harvey Albond who stated that he was representing the Town of Wheatfield. The proposed project consists of a feasibility study to determine the best location for waterfront trails in the Town of Wheatfield. The Chairman called for a vote and all Commissioners found that the proposal was consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper-Niagara River Riparian Restoration Program

The Executive Director provided a brief overview of the project and additional details were provided by Kerri Bentkowski representing the Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper. The proposal consists of a three

year pilot project that will provide technical assistance to members of the public who are interested in managing waterfront property in an environmentally compatible manner. There will be a training program, various demonstration projects, technical resources and a "Restore Corps" of volunteers who would be engaged in environmental restoration and enhancement. Commissioner Paul Leuchner cited a recent article in the Buffalo News in which the Audubon Society and the Buffalo Niagara River Keeper received funding from the Wendt Foundation. Ms. Bentkowski noted that this grant was for a different project. Commissioner Leuchner also warned that regulatory permits would be needed for these projects and that the Corps of Engineers should be approached about the possible issuance of a general permit for this type of work. The Chairman called for a vote and the project was found to be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan by all Commission members except for Tom DeSantis who abstained.

Old Business

None

New Business

Chairman Robert Kresse announced that there will be a public meeting on December 8, 2008 on the future of the Robert Moses Parkway in Niagara Falls. Executive Director Belue called attention to a handout that listed recently approved grants awarded by the NYS Department of State. .

Public Comment

Dorothy Westhafer, Chair, Grand Island Commission for Conservation of the Environment: Stated that a fence shows that someone cares for the land, but noted that the City of Buffalo should consult with Michael Gaynor to develop lower cost alternative designs.

Thomas Frank, Amherst, New York: Spoke about various upcoming events.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mark Thomas and seconded by Patrick Curley. The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 pm.

Paul Leuchner, Secretary
Niagara River Greenway Commission