

Minutes

**The Tenth Meeting
Of the
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Niagara Arts & Cultural Center (NACC)
Niagara Falls, NY
August 22, 2006 7:00 pm**

Call to Order and Introduction of Commission Members and guests

Commission Chairman Robert Kresse called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. and introduced Kathy Kudela, Executive Director of the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center (NACC) and Clinton Brown also representing the NACC both of whom welcomed everyone and provided a brief overview on the history and function of the NACC.

The following Commissioners or their designated representatives were in attendance:

Robert Kresse, Chairman
Rob Belue, Administrative Coordinator
Brett Sommer, Commissioner
Chris Schoepflin, Commissioner
Paul Leuchner, Commissioner
Ron Hayes, Commissioner
Dick Soluri, Commissioner
John Giardino, Commissioner
Abby Snyder, Commissioner
Paul Dyster, Commissioner
Ron Moline, Commissioner
Chris Jacobs, Secretary of State
Elise Cusack, Commissioner
Dom Jacangelo, NYSOPRHP

Members of the public attending this meeting were asked to introduce themselves and prospective speakers expecting to make comments during the public comment segment were asked to sign up on the forms provided.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the ninth meeting of the Niagara River Greenway Commission was made by Paul Dyster, seconded by John Giardino. The motion carried and the minutes were approved without change.

Report of the Chair

Chairman Kresse made brief comments on the mission of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Following his remarks, City of Niagara Falls Mayor Vincent Anello welcomed the Commission members and made a short presentation about Niagara Falls and its relation to the work of the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

Status/Update of NRGC Plan Development

Mark Mistretta of Wendel Duchscherer presented an update on the draft plan. He noted that there have been several working group meetings since the last commission meeting. The following tasks were reported to be completed or in progress:

- Development of an outline for the overall plan
- Agreement on five demonstration projects
 - Signage
 - Story Telling
 - International Connections
 - Environmental restoration
 - Economic Vitality
- Criteria for projects
- Funding Summary
- Strategy for Boundaries
 - Tiered strategy
 - 1st Tier – Primary Zone-closest to the river, generally following designated coastal zone or local waterfront revitalization program
 - 2nd Tier – Contributing Zone
 - 3rd Tier – Complimentary Zone Commission members were asked to attend the next meetings of the Local government Advisory committee and stakeholders to get more insight on the boundary issue
 - A pre-draft of the Niagara River Greenway Plan is expected to be ready by the end of September or the start of October.

Financial Report

- John Giardino presented a brief line-by-line financial statement (see attached).

Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) Report

Chairman Ron Moline presented a brief report on the 4th meeting of the LGAC held on July 17, 2006. The next meeting will be held on August 31st at 2:00 p.m. at Beaver Island State Park. The meeting will focus on boundary definition and project selection criteria.

Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Report

Chairman Paul Dyster presented a brief report on the 4th meeting of the CAC held on July 19, 2006 at Beaver Island State Park. Many presentations were made by various groups. The next meeting will be held on September 6, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at Beaver Island State Park.

Events Committee Report

Chairman Paul Leuchner reported on the Paddles Up Niagara 2006 event held at Beaver Island State Park on July 29, 2006. There were 140 participants and 116 kayaks and canoes. The event included canoe and kayak tryouts, a learn to paddle clinic for children, boating safety and history displays and a group paddle down the Niagara River. Event sponsors included Modern Disposal, Wegmans and the NYS Office of Parks Division of Marine Services. The net cost to the Commission was \$792.80. As a result of this event the new Paddles Up Water Trail was established and a color trail brochure is expected to be available to the public in the spring of 2007.

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee consisting of Dick Soluri, John Giardino, and Paul Leuchner endorsed the nomination of the NYS Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation as ex-officio member of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. A motion supporting this nomination was made by Paul Leuchner and seconded by Elise Cusack. The motion carried and was supported by all Commission members. .

Old Business

No old business.

New Business

- Future meetings of the Niagara Greenway Commission were recommended for the fourth Tuesday of each month. However, several Commission members had schedule conflicts on that particular day precluding attendance at future commission meetings. Further discussion will be take place at the next scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee.
- Web-site hosting
 - Rob Belue made Commission members aware of a proposal by Synor Design to continue the Niagara River Greenway Commission website at a rate of \$150.00 per month with billing quarterly. A motion was made by Elise Cusack and seconded by Richard Soluri to accept this proposal. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Public Comment Period

- **Paul Gromosiak** –Town of Niagara resident– stated that the tiered boundary approach was fascinating, but wondered how long it would be before there were even more tiers. .
- **Marjorie Gillies** – Niagara Beautification Committee – Supports the work of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Notes the importance of unique resources, the need to improve access and preserve sensitive environmental resources, the need to maintain trails and resources that are a part of the greenway, and the value of interpretive signage.
- **Michelle Vanstrom** – Niagara Frontier Wildlife Habitat Council – Raised some issues of potential bias and asks if the greenway planning process will address the

removal of the Robert Moses Parkway. Demanded a formal response to this question.

- **Joan Johnston** – Niagara Heritage Partnership – Repeated the comments of Michelle Vanstrom concerning the removal of the Robert Moses Parkway.
- **Thomas Frank** – Adhoc Member of the Niagara Frontier Bicycle Coalition which he stated was associated with the Niagara River Keeper. Comments about the NYPA Relicensing process, studies by the International Joint Commission and a potential event referred to as paddles, peddles and portage.
- **Margaret Wooster** – Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper – Formally stated that Thomas Frank does not represent the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper as he had stated previously. Ms. Wooster noted that every group at the last CAC meeting supported a narrow greenway boundary. Believes this thought should be followed. She asked where the southern boundary will be located. They want to be sure the entire Buffalo waterfront is included.
- **Arthur Klein** – Sierra Club - Congratulated the Paddles Up committee. The Sierra Club does not support using waterfront property for recreational vehicle parks as has been proposed in North Tonawanda.
- **Larry Helwig** – Councilman of Town of Wheatfield – Complimented North Tonawanda for its efforts in converting an old railroad bed to a public use trail. The Wheatfield Waterfront Association has proposed a trail linking North Tonawanda and Niagara Falls. Tier one should include this proposed

Chairman Kresse spoke on the proposed House of Representatives bill HR 6019 which would establish the Niagara National Heritage Area and bring one million dollars per year to the area for projects and enhancements. He encouraged everyone to support the passage of this bill.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Elise Cusack and seconded by Chris Jacobs. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Leuchner, Secretary
Niagara River Greenway Commission