

## Minutes

### **The Twenty First Meeting Of the Niagara River Greenway Commission Beaver Island State Park Grand Island, NY March 18, 2008 2:00 pm**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 2:10 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:

Robert Kresse, Chairman, Niagara River Greenway Commission  
Paul Leuchner, Secretary, Niagara River Greenway Commission  
Ron Pilozzi, Commissioner and Local Government Advisory Chair  
Tom DeSantis, Acting for Niagara River Greenway Commissioner Paul Dyster  
Chuck Bell, Acting for Niagara River Greenway Commissioner Brett Sommer  
Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation  
Abby Snyder, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
Ron Hayes, NYS Department of Transportation  
Rene Parsons, NYS Department of State  
Rob Belue, Executive Director Niagara River Greenway Commission

#### Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 18, 2008 meeting of the Niagara River Greenway Commission (NRGC) were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mark Thomas and seconded by Paul Leuchner. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### Comments from the Chairman

Brian Riley who is the Chief Economic Development Officer for the City of Buffalo was introduced. He will serve on the Erie County Standing Committee as the designated representative for the City of Buffalo. With this appointment the Chairman expects that thus Standing Committee will move forward with the review and funding of projects. The Chairman also introduced Ron Pilozzi who is the newest member of the Niagara River Greenway Commission and Chairman of the Local Government Advisory Committee.

#### Committee Reports

##### Financial Report

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 08**

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 18<sup>th</sup>, and the Wild Water Derby in Shortsville, NY on April 26<sup>th</sup>. In addition, Paddles Up Niagara 2008 has been posted to the event calendars at Sea Kayaker Magazine and [www.paddling.net](http://www.paddling.net)

## **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.

## **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.

## **New Business**

*Project Consistency Vote by Commission Members:* Paul Leuchner delegated his roll call duties to Rob Belue. Mr. Belue gave a brief review of the project followed by a roll call vote. Individual Commissioners were invited to comment on projects as the voting occurred. The following projects were put to a vote on consistency with the approved Niagara River Greenway Plan:

### ***-City of Niagara Falls – Jayne Park Restoration – Endorsement Only***

- Commissioner Paul Leuchner commented that this project will forge a strong connection with the Niagara River. He also stated that the ramp was over engineered and should be replaced by a more cost effective design without steps and handrails that could preclude use by people with physical disabilities.
- Tom DeSantis acting for Commissioner Paul Dyster abstained from voting.

### ***-City of Niagara Falls – LaSalle Blueway Trail***

- Commissioner Paul Leuchner commented it will add to the Niagara River Greenway and establish another bluewater trail segment. The trail should be defined using standard signage with the Niagara River Greenway logo and documentation should acknowledge the existence of other established bluewater trails within the Niagara River Greenway. He also stated that the ramp was over engineered and should be replaced by a more cost effective design without steps and handrails that could preclude use by people with physical disabilities.
- Commissioner Ron Hayes advised that the NYS Department of Transportation is willing to assist the City of Niagara Falls with property ownership issues related to this project.
- Tom DeSantis acting for Commissioner Paul Dyster abstained from voting.

***-Niagara Falls Housing Authority – “Our River’s Riches”***

- Commissioner Paul Leuchner applauded this project in terms of its connectivity with the Niagara River and the natural environment and its ability to link generations in a common cause.
- Commissioner Mark Thomas commented that this was an exciting new venture and noted that it was the first non-infrastructure related project to be reviewed by the Niagara River Greenway Commission.
- Commissioner Abbey Snyder abstained from voting.

Following the vote, all projects were determined to either be consistent or consistent with modification with the approved Niagara River Greenway Plan.

**Public Comment**

- Thomas Frank a Resident of the Town of Amherst commended the Niagara River Greenway Commission on its progress to date.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Brett Sommer has requested that future meetings be held at 3:30pm instead of 1:30pm. Other schedule changes were suggested. Rob Belue agreed to poll the commission members for input on suggested schedule changes for meetings. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mark Thomas and seconded by Paul Leuchner.

The meeting adjourned at 2:43 pm

Respectfully submitted,

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Paul Leuchner, Secretary  
Niagara River Greenway Commission