

Minutes

The 31st Meeting Of the Niagara River Greenway Commission Beaver Island State Park Grand Island, NY November 17, 2009 3:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 3:07 pm. Secretary Alice Roth 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

Paul Dyster, Vice-Chair & Chair Citizens Advisory Committee

Alice Roth, Secretary

Ron Pilozzi, Chair Local Government Advisory Committee

Ed McDonald, Commissioner

David Hahn-Baker, Commissioner

Angela Berti, representing Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Abby Snyder, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Ron Hayes, NYS Department of Transportation

Christina Orsi, Empire State Development

Rob Daly, NYS Power Authority

Rob Belue, Executive Director Niagara River Greenway Commission

Absent: John Giardino, Commission Treasurer
NYS-Department of State

Executive Director Belue noted for the record that he had received a proxy with voting instructions from NYS-DOS.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 15th, 2009 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Abby Snyder and seconded by Commissioner Ed McDonald. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Robert Kresse welcomed new Commissioner David Hahn-Baker. The Chairman also advised the members that it was discussed and approved by the Executive Committee to establish a new committee, as allowed by statute, consisting of past commissioners of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. The purpose of the committee is to utilize the talents and historic knowledge that past commissioners hold in the growth and development of the

Niagara River Greenway. Chairman Kresse has asked Commissioner Pillozzi to be chairman of the “Commissioners Advisory Committee Emeritus”.

Public Comment- Current Agenda

Margaret Wooster spoke on behalf of the Niagara Relicensing Environmental Coalition. They find all four projects to be consistent with the Greenway. They feel the NYS Parks projects need more detail, but they are in favor of the wild ones project because it is very consistent with the Greenway.

Frank T. Brzezinski spoke on behalf of Main Street in Niagara Falls. They give strong support to the wild ones project because it is consistent with the Greenway and will enhance Main Street in Niagara Falls.

Gladys Gifford from the Presbytery of WNY commented on the Gorge Rim. All communities of faith are in support of the Gorge Rim study.

Richard Soluri from the Village of Lewiston spoke about the fact that there are only two representatives from the Niagara region and no representation from the lower Niagara region. He is in support for a reconfigured parkway, and there have been three studies done that support having a road from Niagara Falls to Lewiston along the Gorge Rim.

There were no further public comments.

Committee Reports

Financial Report

Executive Director Rob Belue gave the 2nd quarter financial report reporting that at the end of the second quarter there is \$55,085.60 in the Niagara River Greenway Commission account. Thru October the balance reflects a \$45,000 balance. This does not reflect the funds from the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF). The contract and schedule “A” has been completed between NYS-OPRHP and Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) and since has been forwarded to the Division of Budget (DOB) for approval where it currently being held. Executive Director Belue asked all those present to do what they can to help push this forward as soon as possible. He will report back to the commission when there is further news about the funds.

Old Business

Project Consistency Review: Chairman Kresse asked the Executive Director to take over this part of the meeting. The Executive Director explained the procedures that would be followed for project review. First, he will provide a brief overview of each proposal and then invite the project sponsors to make a brief presentation. Following the presentation Commission members will be able to ask questions. The process will conclude with a vote on consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Buffalo Museum of Science- Tift Nature Preserve Sustainability Center and Expansion

Planning

The project presentation was made by Mark Mortensen. Commissioner Ron Pilozzi wanted Mark to point out on the map what area the project would take place. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and members were unanimous in their finding that this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

NYS Parks- Niagara Falls State Park 125th Anniversary Celebration

The project presentation was made by Andrew Giarrizzo, NYS-OPRHP. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and members were unanimous in their finding that this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

NYS Parks- Niagara Falls State Park Heritage Park Restoration

The project presentation was made by Andrew Giarrizzo, NYS-OPRHP. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and members were unanimous in their finding that this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Niagara Falls and the River Region Chapter of the Wild Ones Native Plants, Natural Landscaping- Regional Economic Growth Through Ecological Restoration of the Niagara Gorge Rim

The project presentation was made by Doug Brachett. Rob Daly asked for more information about the promotional plan. Mr. Brachett said they are looking into doing an audio/visual component, possibly a fly-over re-creation. Commissioner Ed McDonald asked if he could expand on the economic enhancement and commercial development. Mr. Brachett said it has a lot to do with the tourism components and they will have an economic consultant to assist with it. Christina Orsi asked who the “Wild Ones” are. Michelle Vanstrom stated it is a non-profit group with two chapters, NRGW and Central NY. Christina Orsi also asked how it related to the Parkway. Mr. Brachett said it didn’t mean they were redoing the Parkway and that there are environmentalists on staff to help them. Commissioner Paul Dyster asked if the project would include the relicensing for the Niagara Power Plant. Yes it would. Commissioner Ron Pilozzi asked how it fits in if it is not part of the Parkway. Rob Colucci said that transportation and access is a component of the study. But they are starting with an ecological view. It will assemble a large body of data to help provide a solution. Executive Director Belue reminded everyone they are voting on a study not on the Parkway. Chairman Kresse called for a vote all members found the project consistent with NYPA abstaining from the vote. The vote resulted in a consistent project to the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

NEW BUSINESS

Vice-Chairman Dyster asked if the Niagara River Greenway Commission would consider creating a committee for the “War of 1812 Bi-Centennial”. A formal Commission for the celebration of the Bi-Centennial was not established due to state budget conditions. Under the umbrella of the Niagara River Greenway Commission members of the committee would be able to prepare for and celebrate the “War of 1812 Bi-Centennial” and the Commission would be represented by Vice Chairman Dyster. It was agreed that the Chairman would establish a committee for the “War of 1812 Bi-Centennial”.

Public Comment- Open Topics

Brian Castner, WNY Media: Had an issue finding information about the Niagara River Greenway on line. He asked the Commission if they would keep the public informed about projects and funding.

Thomas Frank, Amherst, New York: Mr. Frank spoke on various subjects.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Ed McDonald seconded by Commissioner Alice Roth. The meeting adjourned unanimously at 4:03 pm.

Alice Roth, Secretary
Niagara River Greenway Commission