



Minutes of the February 21, 2024 Meeting

Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, 726 Exchange St., Suite 525, Buffalo, NY

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Daniel Castle at 4:01 PM.

2. Roll Call and Remarks

Members in Attendance: Chair Daniel Castle, (Erie County); Kevin Kelly (Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy); Vice-Chair Brendan R. Mehaffy (City of Buffalo) and Secretary Carol Jasen Sampson (New York Power Authority).

3. Designation of Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and Secretary for 2024-2025

Motion for the current designations to remain as Daniel Castle- Chair, Kevin Kelly- Vice-Chair, Brendan R. Mehaffy: Vice-Chair and Carol Jasen Sampson: Secretary. Moved by Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly, Second by Vice-Chair Brendan Mehaffy.

Approved 4-0

4. Meeting Minutes

Motion to adopt the meeting minutes of September 28, 2023. Moved by Vice-Chair Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly.

Approved 4-0

5. 2023 Annual Report: Activity through January 31, 2024

Ba Zan Lin, Associate Vice President, Community Impact, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo provided an overview of the 2023 Annual Report.

To date, the Committee has reviewed 145 projects and approved support to 104 projects. In all, the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund has received \$34 million in payments from New York Power Authority and committed \$32 million to projects, some projects are multiple year awards. Of the 104 projects, 95 have successfully completed the work the Committee funded; 1 withdrawn; 5 are expected to complete Committee funded work by the end of 2024 and another 3 are expected to complete Committee funded work by the end of 2025.

Motion to adopt the 2023 Annual Report: Activity through January 31, 2024. Moved by Vice-Chair Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly.

Approved 4-0

6. Modification to the 2024-2025 Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Standing Committee Protocols: Eligibility Requirements, Guidelines, Priorities, Schedule & Application

Secretary Carol Jasen Sampson reported that the Protocols have been revised to include language that “Each Application Proposal must be submitted by the deadline, PDF document, via email.” The change in

application submittal via email follows Chair Castle's recommendation.

Motion to adopt the revised 2024-2025 Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Standing Committee Protocols.
Moved by Vice-Chair Mehaffy, Second by Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly.

Approved 4-0

7. Investment Update

Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly reported that based on the cash flows developed by Jean McKeown and Ba Zan Lin, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, short term investments of Greenway funds commencing October 2023 with M&T Bank along with the custodial account (i.e., the Trust account serviced by Wilmington Trust) resulted in interest income released on maturity by the end of 2023 in the amount of \$13,603.64. The current invested treasury holdings are expected to generate additional \$115,734.87 in interest income at maturity by the end of April 2024.

8. Public Comment (reserved for agenda items only)- NONE

9. Presentations of Submitted Projects

1) Buffalo Lighthouse Association: South Buffalo Lighthouse -Site Stabilization Project

Mike Vogel presented and conveyed the Buffalo Lighthouse Association Inc., a not-for-profit corporation formed to preserve the historic lighthouse service structures of Buffalo Harbor and interpret them and the city's rich maritime history for the public, is strategically engaged in fostering the city and region's redevelopment of the waterfront through public-use projects. The twin restorations of the 1833 Buffalo Light and 1903 South Buffalo Light "bookend" the Outer Harbor, adding impetus to redevelopment while continuing the Inner Harbor's heritage theming and adding a needed educational component to the overall project. The last few years have brought especially damaging gales and blizzards to these sites. The 1903 South Buffalo Light and Fog Signal Building sits on a concrete crib attached to the Stony Point breakwater, and it is especially exposed to the full fury of Lake Erie storms. The concrete walls of the fog signal building and the concrete surface of the station foundation crib have been eroded by massive storm waves channeled through the harbor south entrance. Stabilizing the concrete has become a priority in the ongoing restoration project, for visitor and worker safety as well as historic preservation. The Standing Committee initially awarded \$50,000 in funding in the 2016 cycle, after questions on access, viewability, and location within the Greenway boundaries were answered or settled. Additional awards were made in 2017 (\$129,300), 2019 (\$179,000), 2022 (\$137,800), and 2023 (\$247,236) for a total of \$743,336. The original application to the Greenway Commission, attached to the 2016 start-up application and still on file, includes the letters of endorsement from governmental officials. The letter also includes comments by consulting parties and the Association response, all previously reviewed and accepted by the Standing Committee. The Association occupies the site as the holder of a federal Historic Property Lease. The terms of the standard Historic Property Lease require approval of buildings, fences and other permanent property changes from both the United States Coast Guard and the New York State Historic Preservation Office. In addition, projects such as this, along the 1826 Lighthouse Pier, also requires the approval of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Those approvals have been granted. The Lighthouse Association is requesting a total of \$105,000 for concrete repair of the fog signal building. The total project cost is \$305,000. The Lighthouse Association will pursue additional donations, including materials from construction companies on the adjoining Bethlehem Steel development site.

2) Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: Wayfinding and Signage Project Phase 2

Beth Dowing and Lauren Becker from Flat Hat Exhibits, LLC presented and conveyed the Buffalo Olmsted Park System Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage Project is a comprehensive effort to plan, design, and implement mapping, informational, directional, and interpretive signage throughout the entire Olmsted-designed park network in the City of Buffalo. Preserving and promoting the Olmsted

legacy is one of the primary principles identified in the Niagara River Greenway Plan, and it is central to the mission of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy (BOPC). The Buffalo Olmsted Park System is a significant historical and cultural asset in Buffalo and the Western New York region that greatly contributes to the value of the Niagara River Greenway. Wayfinding throughout – and interpretation of – the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System represents a tremendous opportunity to inform and enhance the park user experience along the Niagara River Greenway corridor and to communicate its value to the residents of Western New York. Phase 1 of the Wayfinding & Signage Project, including the preparation of the signage manual, refurbishment of existing signs and a portion of new signs, began in 2020. Due to the pandemic as well as the enormous amount of time required to research, prepare and receive approvals for the signage manual and specifications, Phase 1 was finally completed in early January 2024. The BOPC is separating the remainder of the project into 2 additional phases. Phase 2 will encompass signs in Delaware, Cazenovia and Riverside parks. Activities will include establishing a signage and wayfinding Steering Committee comprising representatives of the City of Buffalo, the BOPC, and other Niagara River Greenway partners to coordinate wayfinding interpretation for signage, full implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding signage plan, and development of a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Buffalo Olmsted Park System. This proposed Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage will 1) increase public appreciation for Olmsted parks, 2) enhance a direct and meaningful connection between park users and the landscape, and 3) help visitors find their way in the broader world by connecting the past with the present and future. Once interpretive themes, stories, and relevant artifacts are identified as part of the broader Interpretive Plan, points of interest will be selected for an Interpretive Signage Plan featuring the history of the parks and Buffalo and highlighting the ecological value of this beloved system of green spaces. Additionally, to further advance interpretive content and public access opportunities, components of the Interpretive Signage Plan will be integrated between physical and online resources on both the BOPC website and with mobile application technology. This is expected to be completed in a final phase. The Conservancy is requesting \$420,000 for design and facilitation of the wayfinding and signage project. The Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee funded Phase 1 of the project in 2020.

3) Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper: Expanding Blueway/Greenway Connections through the Buffalo Niagara Blueway

Katie Winkler presented and conveyed that over the past five years, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper (BNW) has implemented the Buffalo Blueway through the creation of new and/or upgraded public water access sites along the Buffalo River and Outer Harbor. BNW now seeks to expand the Blueway beyond the limits of the Buffalo River and City of Buffalo into other Western New York municipalities and rebrand the Buffalo Blueway as the Buffalo Niagara Blueway. As with all projects that BNW undertakes, collaboration with partners and landowners is of the utmost priority. BNW will work closely with all relevant parties to ensure that the Buffalo Niagara Blueway meets the needs of the communities as well as aligns with current and future Greenway and Blueway planning efforts – reinforcing where the green meets the blue. BNW presents the project in two phases. In phase one, BNW will utilize the Buffalo Niagara Blueway Environmental Justice mapping analysis, which identified and mapped all publicly owned and publicly accessible waterway-adjacent lands, to target up to five municipalities for future waterway access improvement opportunities. Preliminary design concepts, specific to each municipality, will be developed internally by BNW to show potential trail connections (trailways, bike routes, etc.) between their publicly accessible sites and the Niagara River Greenway and Shoreline Trail system. Preliminary design concepts will be presented by BNW to each of the targeted municipalities. Discussions will include the need for coordination and cooperation from adjacent municipalities in the next steps, the benefits of Blueway and Greenway trail systems, and opportunities and strategies for pursuing funding for full design and implementation. In phase two, BNW will install up to 20 Blueway markers and interpretive signs at existing public water access sites that have a paddle craft launch or water access in order to increase the visibility of

underutilized sites educate the public on topics of interest particular to the site. The applicant has not previously sought funding from the Standing Committee. The Niagara River Greenway Commission found this application to be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan. From the inception of the Buffalo Niagara Blueway, BNW has worked closely with the State of New York (via Empire State Development), the City of Buffalo, Erie County, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure that the goals of the project reflect that of the community. Of the current Buffalo Niagara Blueway sites, two Blueway sites are located on NYS DEC properties, one site is located on ECHDC property, three sites are located at Erie County Parks, two sites are located at City of Buffalo Parks and one site is on private property. Future Buffalo Niagara Blueway sites will be located on publicly owned properties. BNW is requesting a total of \$394,150 (\$56,650 in phase one and \$337,500 in phase two) for enhancing public water access throughout the Niagara River Greenway corridor. Phase one funds are requested in 2024 and phase two funds in 2025.

4) Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association: Inclusive Rowing on the Buffalo River- Phase 2

Eileen Flaherty presented and conveyed in 2009, lifelong rowers and rowing coaches from the Western New York community formed Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association (BSRA) to provide increased resources and greater access to the sport of rowing for the communities of Western New York. BSRA represents the first new rowing organization and facility in Buffalo in over 100 years. Located on the Buffalo River, the BSRA facility offers numerous programs that include people of all ages and skill levels. In concert with BSRA's inclusivity and universal access mission, BSRA's goal is to provide recreational and competitive training opportunities for individuals with physical and mental disabilities. This project will address the adaptive rowing and kayaking goals by installing the necessary infrastructure for handicap-accessible kayak and rowing ramps, complete with transfer bench and transfer slide boards, that allow people of all abilities to sit, slide over and drop into a kayak, canoe or rowing shell. The BSRA also seeks to ensure the stabilization of the shoreline to protect it and the rowing/boating infrastructure from erosion and degradation to conform with environmental/ecological concerns as well as to provide and sustain additional public access to the waterfront. The BSRA seeks to complete the development of its Ohio Street waterfront public access site on the Buffalo River to become the City's only universal access rowing center. The BSRA has already invested over \$94,000 into design through a Greenway grant and partnerships with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. The remainder of this project including shoreline stabilization and seawall engineering, a fully accessible system of ramps, docks, and assemblies needed for universal access to expand our adaptive rowing program, a more robust landscape architectural site design is expected to be finished in 2024 pending funding and contractor availability. BECGFSC awarded BSRA \$61,000 for the Design of the inclusive Rowing Project in 2021 to complete construction on the boathouse and \$314,310 for Phase 1 of this project in 2023. Additional funding to implement ADA compliance construction is required. The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association provided a letter proving consultation with the Greenway Commission. BSRA owns the land at 405 Ohio Street and 20 feet of land on the other side of Dead Man's Creek. The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association is requesting \$257,792 to continue construction of this universally accessible ADA-compliant rowing facility. The proposed project timeline would extend from April 15 to December 2024

5) Cazenovia Community Resource Center, Inc. (Sail-Buffalo Sailing School): Sailing School Classroom

David Guarino and Robert Howard presented and conveyed that funds are requested to enhance and increase long-term access to the Buffalo River, Buffalo Outer Harbor, and to Lake Erie primarily through the creation of a 16-foot by 56-foot aquatic education classroom on the Sail Buffalo campus located along the Buffalo River waterfront at 2 Fuhrmann Blvd. Additional project components are creation of a paver/patio to the greenhouse and the purchase of additional kayak equipment. The requested aquatic education classroom will serve as the principal instruction facility for the 400 children who participate in Sail-Buffalo's ten-week summer day camp program and for hundreds of adults whose interests focus on sailing

and obtaining ASA credentials. The addition of the classroom will substantially increase enrollment and participation of disadvantaged children through agency partnerships. Subjects covered include sailing technology, aquatic science, agricultural science, and leadership skills. The proposed facility will be equipped with the latest instructional technology including a 75" TV screen and related audio-visual equipment and speakers. Furthermore, the applicant foresees a need to expand access to its greenhouse and creating an outdoor learning space which aligns with its commitment to promoting environmental education and healthy living among youth. A needed walkway and outdoor patio area as ingress and egress to the existing greenhouse will help provide a welcoming educational space for children to connect with nature and learn valuable skills. Lastly, the requested kayaks and life jackets are a crucial component in the multi-station day programming and will enable youth to experience waterborne activities. The proposal includes a letter of consistency from the Niagara River Greenway Commission and a letter of approval from the U.S. Coast Guard, from whom Cazenovia Community Resource Center, Inc. licenses the property. Cazenovia Community Resource Center, Inc. requests funding support in the amount of \$118,400 for costs for construction of the classroom and greenhouse open area and kayak equipment. Funds for the operation and maintenance (\$2,500) of this facility are currently available in Sail-Buffalo's general operating account. \$43,000 in equipment match is provided by the applicant. Work on this project will begin in the Spring of 2024 and is estimated to take up to 50 days.

6) Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment: Alt Nature Trail and Alt Nature Center Improvements
Dave Reilly and Nicole Gerber presented and conveyed the Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment has worked in conjunction with the Town of Grand Island Town Board for the past five years to establish the Alt Nature Center and Alt Nature Preserve. The Alt Nature Preserve in the center of Grand Island is a historic property of approximately 36 acres that includes rare forested land, home to a number of NYS threatened bird species, and an 1860s homestead. It is one of the few remaining farmsteads in the community and was recently established with a conservation easement through the WNY Land Conservancy. The Alt Nature Center, housed inside the historic schoolhouse, was recently renovated under the management of the environmental non-profit Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment and will be a space for environmental education; for teaching and training about ecological gardening, native plants, and habitat protection; and to serve as an information center for free public access to the trails on the Alt Nature Preserve. To complete the renovations and establish a functioning nature center a water line needs to be laid from Whitehaven Road to the Nature Center, a septic system needs to be installed, and the interior bathroom plumbing needs to be finished. To complete the Alt Nature Trail, the former Alt Boulevard — which has been adjoined to the Alt Nature Preserve — is being transformed to a publicly accessible trail for birdwatching and nature hikes. Completion of this work requires the planting of native plants to support bird and wildlife species, grooming of the trail, establishment and landscaping of a trail head, and development of signage. The expected completion date is October 2025. Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment has a land access agreement with Nicole Gerber, the private landowner for the property and co-founder of the group. Per the agreement the "Alt Nature Center," and lands and other outbuildings appropriate for environmental education are provided to CCWE for the headquarters of CCWE, environmental education, community gatherings and collaborations, wildlife tours, and similar purposes. The undeveloped Alt Boulevard has been included on Town of Grand Island Long-Range Planning maps as a future location for hiking trails. Operation and maintenance will be the responsibility of Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment and will be accomplished through volunteer work. No costs will be incurred by Niagara River Greenway for operation and maintenance or administration of this project. The proposal includes a letter of consistency from the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment requests \$95,000 for amenity upgrades and trail and trailhead development toward the creation of the Alt Nature Trail. \$121,000 in private funds has been procured and utilized for the renovations to the Alt Nature Center and the applicant anticipates submitting to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for trail development.

10. Other Business

Chair Castle reported that the next Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee meeting will be Friday, March 15, 2024 at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo office, 8:30AM and it will entail the Announcements of Awards to applicants seeking Greenway project funding in the current round of requests.

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Chair Chair Mehaffy, Second by Vice-Chair Kevin Kelly
The meeting adjourned 5:10 PM.