



# Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee

City of Buffalo • Erie County • Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy • New York Power Authority

## Minutes of the February 23, 2021 Meeting

Via Videoconference (Microsoft Teams)

1. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Thomas Hersey, Jr. at 4:07 PM.
2. Roll Call and Remarks:  
Members in Attendance: Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., (Erie County); Alan J. Bozer, (Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy); Brendan R. Mehaffy (City of Buffalo) and Carol Jasen Sampson (New York Power Authority).
3. Meeting Minutes  
Motion to adopt the meeting minutes of October 22, 2020. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Alan Bozer.  
Approved 4-0
4. 2020 Annual Report  
Motion to adopt the 2020 Annual Report. Moved by Carol Jasen Sampson, Second by Brendan Mehaffy.  
Approved 4-0
5. Designation of Chairman, Vice-Chairman(s) and Secretary for 2021-2022  
Vice-Chair Bozer reminded Chairman Hersey that the designation of committee members was inadvertently skipped and further requested that the meeting be recorded. Secretary Sampson fulfilled the recording request. Mr. Mehaffy presented a motion for Thomas J. Hersey Chairman, Alan J. Bozer and Brendan R. Mehaffy Vice-Chairs and Carol Jasen Sampson Secretary, Second by Ms. Sampson.  
After much discussion, the initial proposed motion was brought again to the table for a vote. 3-Yes: Hersey, Mehaffy and Sampson.  
1- No: Bozer
6. 2021-2022 Buffalo & Erie County Protocols  
Motion to adopt the 2021-2022 protocols. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Carol Jasen Sampson.  
3-Yes: Hersey, Mehaffy and Sampson.  
1- Abstention: Bozer
7. Public Comment (reserved for agenda items only) – NONE

## 8. Public Presentations of Submitted Project Applications for 2020 Grant Cycle

Chairman Hersey welcomed the nine applicants. The order of the nine presentations adhered to the agenda listing, followed up with question(s) & answer(s).

### 1) Buffalo & Erie Co. Botanical Gardens: Connecting Bike Paths & Telling the Niagara River Greenway Story

David Swartz communicated that the Botanical Gardens has experienced an exponential growth of visitors within the past decade. The project seeks to expand program space to fulfill growing demand, incorporate spaces that meet functional needs and generate earned revenue ensure sustainability, and includes amenities that meet visitor expectations and experience. The project aims to make connections between important resources such as the Olmsted Parks, Buffalo's cultural historic architectural treasures, Buffalo waterfront, Tiff Nature Preserve and other cultural experiences aimed at young families, including Explore and More at Canalside. A multi-year greenway request of \$400,000 over two-years for construction costs.

Committee members requested supplemental information on a breakdown of the funding request and if the funds are to be spent outside the Botanical Gardens footprint. Another inquiry was asked if Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy have approved what is being proposed.

### 2) Buffalo & Erie Co. Naval & Military Park: Master Plan Ph 2 & 5 Walkway & Bus Stop/Entry Improvements

Paul Marzello, Ken Swanekamp and Terry McGuire communicated that the Naval Park is the #3 attraction in WNY. The proposed projects focuses on priorities identified in the Naval Park Master Plan, and will bring improvements to the stretch of land between the canal and Marine Drive/Erie Street immediately adjacent to the BNMP's offices and docked ships. In addition, the proposed project will also enhance waterfront space that is currently under-utilized by the public, and proposes landscaping, lighting and walking trails that connect the site while creating inviting and enhanced spaces for public use. A greenway request is in the amount of \$365,367. Project construction is anticipated to start summer 2021.

Committee members inquired on coordination with other partners such as the City of Buffalo and Mr. Mazello responded there are bi-weekly meetings conducted with the City and County.

### 3) Buffalo Heritage Carousel, Inc.: Buffalo Heritage Carousel

Carima El-behairy provided a history of the carousel that will now be an anchor at Buffalo's Canalside and powered by the sun. The Buffalo Heritage Carousel goal is to provide entertainment and education about renewable energy technologies in a way that stimulates lifelong learning about our environment and responsible use of its natural resources. The main objective of the proposed project application is to finish the enclosure for the carousel in a building, protecting the carousel and educational/event spaces from the elements. The

requested greenway funds is in the amount of \$167,000, for the construction completion of the carousel, with the grand opening to the public scheduled for 2021 Memorial Day. Committee members inquired if the construction was impacted by COVID-19. Ms. El-behairy explained that construction costs were increased due to COVID, due to the increase and availability of building materials and the temporary halt in construction. Further, the unanticipated cost for utility relocation is under review and notification to the Committee will be sent upon receipt on this additional and required cost.

4) **Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: Prospect Park Pathways & Furnishings Project**

Greg Robinson communicated the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy (BOPC) proposed project application is a comprehensive plan, design to implement pathway reconstruction and park furnishing upgrades at Prospect Park in the City of Buffalo. BOPC sought community input and through that effort, the determination was to advance this enhancement as the first step. The total project cost is \$610,000 and BOPC is requesting greenway funds in the amount of \$500,000.

5) **Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association: Adaptive Rowing on the Buffalo River Ph. I Design & Ph. 2 Const.**

Eileen Flaherty and Mark Kotzewski communicated the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association (BSRA) is located on the Buffalo River in Buffalo's Old First Ward community since 2010. It has offered rowing programs to increase recreational use as well as advancing efforts protect natural resources and rebuild the community.

The objective for BSRA's proposed project application is to fill the gap for individuals who want to experience the waterfront and the sport of rowing in a safe, ADA approved facility. BSRA's design incorporates ramps, plazas, signage, transfer benches, parking, locker rooms and elevator for access to the veranda overlooking the Buffalo River. Through this proposed project, BSRA is committed to incorporating adaptive sport access to the public. Further, BSRA's universal access site would be situated along the waterfront connecting to the Greenway and Shoreline Trails providing the community and visitors with expanded opportunities to recreate both on and off the water.

BSRA is requesting \$311,000 of Greenway funds; \$61,000 for design and \$250,000 for construction.

Committee members inquired if the cost stated is for full design, if other funding partners are sharing in this investment and if they would accept partial funding. Public access and cost to visitors was also asked. In response, BSRA has received strong interest in funding construction but not as much for design. BSRA is trying to make the ramp fully accessible to the public, make the site accessible 24/7 and open as possible without jeopardizing security, especially for the boathouse.

6) **City of Buffalo: Ralph C. Wilson Jr.: Centennial Park Greenway Construction**

Andy Rabb communicated that the Ralph C. Wilson Jr.: Centennial Park (former LaSalle Park) lies completely within the Niagara River Greenway which follows the entire western edge of the City of Buffalo along the water. Both the Shoreline Trail and Empire State Trail also pass

directly through the park. Current request is to fund construction of the shared use Greenway pathways within the park. These pathways will connect to the Greenway along the shoreline, over to the new pedestrian/bicycle bridge. The Park is owned by the City of Buffalo and maintained by the Buffalo Division of Parks and Recreation.

The University at Buffalo Regional Institute developed a community engagement process, and the community stakeholder groups as well as local, regional and elected representatives have been involved through conceptual design and continues through schematic, design development, and construction.

The City of Buffalo is requesting a multi-year grant award of \$3,500,000 for Greenway construction.

Committee members questioned the expectation for the Greenway Committee to give a multi-year commitment in the aggressive requested amount. The Committee needs to consider other projects planned within that timeframe. The Committee will take the request under consideration due to the strong commitment towards this park and will discuss the mechanics on how to address this request.

7) **County of Erie: Shoreline Trail Enhancement Project**

Mark Rountree communicated the Isle View Park and the Shoreline Trail are among the most heavily used park-and-trail systems in WNY. As connecting features of the Niagara River Greenway, they provide an integral public access ribbon along the Niagara River. Investment in improving Isle View Park will aid in the economic revitalization and redevelopment of the River Road industrial corridor through improvement of the aesthetic appearance of River Road, and by providing an important recreational amenity for businesses in that area. In conjunction with Phase one, Phase Two will focus on the renewal and enhancement of connections to the Shoreline Trail within Isle View Park and implement the majority of the Parks recommendations of the Erie County Parks Master Plan, elevating the Park into a destination along the Shoreline Trail. Certain improvements include trail realignment to waterside, ADA compliant and new playground to the south side of the park.

Erie County's application request of \$315,000 (design) will serve to alien with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation award of \$1,064,068 (construction) for this project.

Committee members inquired if additional Greenway funds would be sought for this project and Mr. Rountree indicated that Erie County would be requesting next year approximately \$500k to \$660k for construction.

8) **Sail-Buffalo Sailing School: 2021 Capital Improvements to Sail-Buffalo Sailing School**

Pierre Wallinder communicated since its establishment in 2008 Sail Buffalo (d/b/a Cazenovia Community Center, Inc.) has become the region's largest and most active sailing academy targeting both children and adults, many of whom come from low income families residing in the Buffalo inner city.

Sail-Buffalo is requesting funds to provide capital improvements to the Sail-Buffalo campus including restoration of essential dock pilings, installation of new dock additions, construction of a new kayak launching system, heightened security systems, solar panel expansion, large tree removal and landscaping enhancement, acquisition of four new

student dinghies and a safety/ utility boat. Each of these capital improvements contributes directly to heightened public access to the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers.

Sail-Buffalo is requesting a total of \$71,690 from the Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund and to address a Committee member inquiry, will not defray staff management costs.

9) **WNY Land Conservancy: Nature's Habitat Certification Program**

Jajeen Rose communicated that the WNYLC, a regional not-for-profit land trust, proposes to develop and lead the Nature's Habitat Certification in the City of Buffalo. Through this program, WNYLC will connect and enhance the region's critical wildlife habitats, improve water quality and beautify neighborhoods. WNYLC will partner with the Blackrock Riverside Alliance (BRRRA) who will lead an effort to certify Erie County as a National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat.

The Land Conservancy is requesting \$325,938 from the Greenway fund standing committee for the first three years of the program.

Committee members inquired if WNYLC explored the opportunity to seek Greenway Ecological Standing Committee funds. Mr. Rose responded that the Ecological Committee focus is on habitat projects not certification.

9. **Other Business**

Ms. Sampson reported that the next meeting of the Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Standing Committee will be held on Friday, March 19, 2021 at 8:30 AM, via videoconference. At that meeting the Committee will announce greenway grant awards.

10. A motion to adjourn was made by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Alan Bozer.  
Meeting adjourned 6:45 PM.