



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, 2022, Meeting

Via Videoconference (ZOOM)

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Daniel R. Castle at 4:04 PM.
2. Roll Call and Remarks:
Members in Attendance: Daniel Castle, (Erie County); Kevin Kelly, (Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy); Brendan R. Mehaffy (City of Buffalo) and Carol Jasen Sampson (New York Power Authority).
3. Designation of Chair, Vice Chair(s), and Secretary for 2021-2022:
Motion to continue the current Committee members designation of Dan Castle as Chair; Brendan Mehaffy & Kevin Kelly as Vice-Chair's; and Carol Sampson as Secretary. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Kevin Kelly.
Approved 4-0
4. Meeting Minutes
Motion to adopt the meeting minutes of October 8, 2021. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Kevin Kelly.
Approved 4-0
5. Approval of the Annual Report: Activity through January 31, 2022:
Motion to approve the Annual Report: Activity through January 31, 2022. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Kevin Kelly.
Approved 4-0
6. Approval of Modifications to the 2022-2023 Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Protocols:
Motion to approve the 2021-2022 Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Protocols modifications. Moved by Brendan Mehaffy, Second by Kevin Kelly.

Approved 4-0
7. Public Comment (reserved for agenda items only):
None

8. Presentations of Submitted Projects:

Chair Castle reminded the presenters they will be given seven minutes for their PowerPoint, followed by Q&A.

1) **Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens:** Botanical Gardens Expansion Project
David Swartz presented, the Botanical Gardens and its location to the southernmost anchor in the Niagara River Greenway, and a recent dedicated 1.4-mile bicycle path now connects Lake Erie and the Botanical Gardens. The Botanical Gardens is requesting the Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund to support a portion of the capital costs of the expansion which will impact cyclists, joggers, and walkers in and around South Park. Of the 33,000 square-foot planned expansion, approximately 4,700 sf. would welcome these users and be free without having to pay admission. These spaces include the entrance atrium, restrooms, the shop, and café. Cyclists and those that are visiting South Park would be able to rest and refresh themselves at the Gardens. These amenities would motivate cyclists and other visitors to set out and see one of the region's great cultural attractions and to walk or cycle in Frederick Law Olmsted's South Buffalo. The Botanical Gardens engaged with the City of Buffalo, the County of Erie, and the State of New York in the planning of the expansion through one-on-one presentations. The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy has been directly involved in the planning of the expansion and the surrounding land use. They also assisted in developing the Botanical Gardens' Master Plan.

The Buffalo & Erie County Botanical Gardens is requesting a **total of \$200,000**, approximately 7.5% of the total cost of **construction and equipment**. The Botanical Gardens has raised \$13.2 million to date. Several local foundations have made \$3.8 million in commitments, and many local businesses have contributed \$730,000. Individuals and families have committed over \$1.25 million. New York State has committed \$2.25 million through Empire State Development and other state and municipal grants, to date. The County of Erie has committed \$5 million to the expansion. The overall proposed project cost is \$23 million and the total cost for construction and equipment is estimated at \$19.5 million. No funds received from the Greenway request will be used to defray any existing financial obligations or any previous operations or maintenance costs.

Question on public accessibility to the amenities if they are in the pre-ticket area and will they be open prior to construction completion. Mr. Swartz conveyed the amenities (café, gift shop & bathrooms) are within the pre-ticket area. There is no construction phasing, and amenities will be available upon construction completion, January 2025.

2) **Buffalo & Erie County Navel & Military Park:** Marine Drive Pedestrian Access and Safety Project
Chair Castle stated that this application has been withdrawn.

3) **Buffalo Heritage Carousel, Inc.:** Inclusive Access Project (Ramp Reconstruction & Weathervane)
Carima El-behairy presented, the vision of Buffalo Heritage Carousel, Inc. (BHC) is to provide family-oriented recreation with an educational value at the terminus of the Erie Canal. The 1924 wooden menagerie carousel, carved and manufactured in North Tonawanda, has been fully restored on the Buffalo Canalside waterfront to celebrate the region's industrial heritage and present-day clean energy initiatives. The restoration project received funding support from two BECGFSC awards, totaling \$464,820.

In the past, carousels in climates similar to Western New York's were typically open-air roundhouses and operated seasonally. A weathervane belonged on most traditional carousels, not just as an ornamental piece, but as a practical means of predicting the weather. Wind direction is reported by the direction from which it originates; weathervanes work by moving to minimize air resistance and are designed to turn and point into prevailing winds, indicating the direction from which the wind is blowing. Thus, weathervanes are key indicators for changing weather patterns and approaching storms and would encourage patrons to move indoors.

In addition to being the final piece of the Buffalo Heritage Carousel, the Canalside boardwalk on the Buffalo River waterfront presents an ideal location for a weathervane, particularly one representing local history and heritage. Western New York winds are ideal predictors of oncoming weather, and the Buffalo River is a popular area for WNY's sailing culture. BHC proposes to be the first attraction at Canalside where the public can freely interpret weather patterns, highlighting its close proximity to the Buffalo waterfront's windfarms and the BHC's own self-sustaining solar roof renewable technology. BHC has already been approached as an attractive location for environmental studies on how wind patterns affect snowfall and ice buildup in the surrounding area. A custom weathervane is the perfect addition to BHC's sustainable resources for renewable energy education and demonstration, celebration, and appreciation of the past history and heritage.

Universal Access, this project addresses a major accessibility issue for the disabled community. At present, the BHC ADA-access ramp that encompasses one third of the carousel has been roped off and taken out of use, rendering 33% of the carousel inaccessible to riders and 99% of the disabled visitors. The reconstruction of the ramp is vital to BHC operating an inclusive experience and continuing to attract visitors of all ages and abilities of all ages and abilities to a year-round attraction at Buffalo's Canalside.

The City of Buffalo currently owns the land where the carousel is located, and the City anticipates selling the land to the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp for \$1.00. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corp then will enter into a 40-year lease, at \$1.00 per year, with the Buffalo Heritage Carousel. The MOU with the City of Buffalo and the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation— included in the application—contains an option to obtain site control. The application includes a letter proving consultation with the Greenway Commission, and the letters of support from various elected officials, community groups and non-profit organizations.

The BHC is requesting funds totaling **\$97,372** for the **construction of a custom weathervane/lightning rod and ramp removal and bridge installation** for disabled patrons. The BHC will contribute \$6,900 in-kind for design and administration of this project, and the total project cost is \$104,272.

Question on the separate cost for each project and completion. The Ramp Removal & Bridge installation cost is \$76,372, completion Fall 2022. The Weathervane/ Lightning Rod project is anticipated to be completed Summer 2022.

Question if the installation of the lightning rod is to meet code. The installation is to be sure our

visitors are safe and currently the carousel is shutdown during thunderstorms.

4) **Buffalo Lighthouse Association:** South Buffalo Lighthouse Restoration and Reuse Project Mike Vogel presented, the project fits with Niagara Greenway Commission principles, goals, and criteria with intention to make the Buffalo South Entrance Lighthouse more open to visitors. The work is part of an overall effort to redevelop the former Bethlehem Steel complex, and this effort also has strategic implications for Buffalo's ongoing waterfront renewal efforts. 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 station is reachable mainly by boat; there is limited contractor and association access through the secured industrial complex, although continued work on the former steel plant site may open land access in the future.

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. An additional \$129,300 was awarded in 2017, and another \$179,000 investment was made in 2019 cycle. 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 light station and its lighthouse are owned outright by the Buffalo Lighthouse Association. Matching funding efforts will include a corporate donation effort by the Association's South Buffalo project team, as well as in-kind support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (owner agency for the breakwater system). In addition, project work started in 2016 quickly drew offers of materials and work contributions, including railing materials and professional underwater inspection services, that are expected to continue. The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation provided some program funding in 2016, as well. There currently are private donations that have totaled more than \$3,500 specified for the South Buffalo project. The operation and maintenance plan was included with the original application and is available in greater detail in the federal deed transfer application approved by National Parks Service and General Services Administration.

The Lighthouse Association is requesting a total of **\$137,800 for lighthouse column transitional cornice flashing, lantern room restoration, stair column repairs and restoration, and mobilization.** The total project cost is \$1.19 million. No funds received from the Greenway request will be used to defray any existing financial obligations or any previous operations or maintenance costs. Corporate funding appeals have been unsuccessful to date. The Association's South Buffalo Lighthouse team plans to refocus those requests on South Buffalo interests, stressing community identification with "their" lighthouse.

5) **Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy:** Grand Staircase Restoration at Hoyt Lake in Delaware Park Vice-Chair Mehaffy requested to be excused and asked for Jason Paananen (City of Buffalo Alternate) to participate for the remainder the meeting.

Greg Robinson presented, in 2018-2019 the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy undertook an extensive community engagement process to update improvement priorities of the master plan entitled its Five-Year Plan (5YP) 2020-2024. As identified in the 5YP, the Grand Staircase restoration received the second highest request by the public for priority funding in Delaware Park's Lake district. With the granite stairs falling deeper into disrepair, the Conservancy received an outpouring of concern from residents and park users over the course of 2020's park season. The Grand Staircase restoration project has risen as a critical need priority for safety, access, and overall connectivity.

In taking that critical need and bringing it to the public forefront, the Grand Staircase Restoration project at Hoyt Lake in Delaware Park has now become the Conservancy's signature Olmsted 200 Celebration project in Buffalo for 2022. The staircase is one of the oldest Olmsted-designed features in Delaware Park and is one of the most used and iconic visual attributes of the viewshed rising up from Gala Water (Hoyt Lake) to Lincoln Parkway, the new Buffalo Albright Knox Gundlach complex and the Buffalo History Museum of the 1901 Pan American Exposition. The Grand Staircase is a vital link in connecting the park to its users and many seasonal visitors.

The staircase project itself is straight forward, as a design build restoration. This is a heavy masonry project requiring the stabilization of the foundation underneath the stairs, as well as cleaning and reusing as many of the original and unbroken granite slabs as possible and replacing and resetting those which have cracked or split. All lands identified as Delaware Park are owned by the City of Buffalo and are under Conservancy management. The Conservancy has an active public-private agreement through 2031 with the City of Buffalo for the ongoing maintenance of the parks, and to implement capital project priorities. Final design plans for construction will be developed in conjunction with this project and vetted with the City of Buffalo's Department of Public Works, and through the Conservancy's Design Review Committee.

The proposal includes a letter proving consultation with the Niagara River Greenway Commission, and indication of support from the City of Buffalo Delaware District Council member. This project will comply with any and all SEQRA regulations relevant to the project. All necessary studies of existing conditions will be a part of the initial technical site analysis phase of the project.

The Conservancy is requesting BECGFSC support to award **\$220,000** in funding for the completion of the **Grand Staircase Restoration** at Hoyt Lake from its 2021 fund distribution. This funding will be used to supplement the local funds raised from the public toward completing the matching fund requirement from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation. The total project cost is \$700,000, and BOPC has raised \$580,000 so far. The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy confirms that funds requested will not be used to defray any obligation existing as of August 31, 2007.

Question, will this project address the light poles on the side of the stars. The project addresses only the stairs. Question, who owns the light fixtures. The City of Buffalo owns the poles and National Grid owns the light luminaire and conduits.

6) **Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy:** Delaware Park Point of the Meadow Shelter Enhancement Project

Greg Robinson presented, the Point of the Meadow Shelter enhancement project will upgrade facilities and enhance access to a comfort facility along the Jesse Kregal pathway in Delaware Park

in the City of Buffalo. Delaware Park, the largest of Olmsted's designed greenspaces in Buffalo is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Point of the Meadow Shelter is a contributing structure to that historic significance.

In 2017 the City of Buffalo and Buffalo Olmsted Park Conservancy (BOPC) invested \$280,000 in restoring the historic clay tile roof and improved pathways surrounding and leading to the shelter entrances in addition to installing wayfinding and interpretive signage. However, the interior facility remains unimproved and out of date with current ADA standards. In 2018-2019 the BOPC conducted a community engagement process to establish park improvement priorities for the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System. Enhancement for the Point of the Meadow Shelter interior was identified as a top investment priority for Delaware Park. Additionally, it is a priority of the city and BOPC to enhance seasonal restroom facilities with HVAC to increase year-round services and promote winter recreation. In Delaware Park this building links the grand meadow and highly utilized ring road with Hoyt Lake and Rumsey Woods, and services linkage to the Jesse Kregal Pathway along the Scajaquada Corridor, the Shoreline Trail and Niagara Corridor. Enhancement of the building as a connective node in Delaware Park will be a tremendous benefit to the Niagara River Greenway by providing safe and comfortable services that enhance every recreation or visitation experience.

All lands identified as Delaware Park are owned by the City of Buffalo and are under BOPC management. Final design plans will be developed as a part of this project and will be vetted with the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works and the community, prior to construction. Following the implementation of this restoration project the BOPC will continue to engage residents on volunteer projects and other enhancements. The proposal includes a letter proving consultation with the Niagara River Greenway Commission, and confirmation that this project will comply with any and all SEQRA regulations relevant to the project. All necessary studies of existing conditions will be a part of the initial technical site analysis phase of the project.

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is requesting the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee to provide **\$425,500** in funding for **planning, design, and construction** from the 2021 disbursement of the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund. Matching funds have been secured from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. The total project cost is \$558,000.

Question, will this this project similar to the Rumsey shelter, design/construction and SHIPO involvement. Yes, this project was cited in our capital plan, right behind Rumsey. It will follow the standard design and construction bids. SHIPO will be consulted. Project completion will provide a year-round facility.

7) Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy: S. Arboretum Center & Clubhouse Enhancement Project Greg Robinson presented, The South Park Arboretum Visitor Center and Clubhouse, is a comfort station with restroom and concessions serving all park users and specifically those recreating on the golf course. The facility is the only publicly accessible building for comfort facilities in South Park. Built during the Works Progress Administration era, the building and its facilities are in desperate need of updates to infrastructure and ADA accessibility. The South Park Arboretum Visitor Center and Clubhouse enhancement project will upgrade facilities and enhance access to a comfort facility in South Park in the City of Buffalo. The building will be expanded to serve as a visitor center for the developing Arboretum collection.

In 2017 the BOPC commissioned a Feasibility Study for the restoration of South Park as an Arboretum. The study determined the restoration of the Arboretum was highly feasible and recommended 11 phases of restoration at a total cost of \$13,860,000. In 2018-2019 the BOPC conducted a community engagement process to establish park improvement priorities for the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System (BOPS). Enhancement for this South Park facility was identified as a top investment priority for South Park, along with priorities for establishing the Arboretum. Additionally, it is a priority of the city and BOPC to enhance seasonal restroom facilities with HVAC to increase year-round services and promote winter recreation.

Final design plans for this South Park facility will be developed and will be vetted with the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works and the community, prior to construction. Following the implementation of this restoration project the BOPC will continue to engage residents on volunteer projects and other enhancements. The BOPC, as a part of their ongoing role as park stewards, will work through a newly established park-user engagement entity, the Olmsted Community Alliance.

The proposal includes a letter proving consultation with the Niagara River Greenway Commission. This project will comply with any and all SEQRA regulations relevant to the project. All necessary studies of existing conditions will be a part of the initial technical site analysis phase of the project. This phase of the project will commence in the summer of 2022.

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is requesting the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee provide **\$92,000** in funding for the **planning, design, and administration** of South Park Arboretum Visitors Center and Clubhouse Project from the 2021 disbursement of the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund. \$200,000 in matching funds have been identified from Erie County to begin project construction. The total project cost is \$810,500.

Question, will this be a standard design/construction project. Yes, the Conservancy is waiting for design proposals, The project will be done in phases.

8) Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association, Inc.: Inclusive Rowing on the Buffalo River
Eileen Flaherty presented, 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 Juniors (ages 13-18), Youth Learn-to-Row (ages 11-16), Adult Learn-to-Row, Adult Learn-to-Row, Modified Sculling, (ages 12-16), Masters (adults all ages), Scholastic (high schools), We Can Row (breast cancer survivors), and Adult Sculling programs. 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 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 the Buffalo

Niagara Waterkeeper. The BSRA has utilized the experience and expertise of its consulting engineers and architects at Wendel. The final planning for the proposed project including shoreline stabilization and seawall engineering, design of a fully accessible system of ramps, docks, and assemblies needed for universal access to an adaptive rowing program, a more robust landscape architectural site design and construction contract development for bidding is complete and include a topographic survey and site plans for preparation, improvement, grading, and planting. 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 Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association provided a letter proving consultation with the Greenway Commission and the letters of support from Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Physical Therapy Program, and Wendel. 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 **\$200,000** from the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund for the **construction** component of this universally accessible ADA-compliant rowing facility. A potential \$327,160 from the other funding source is to be determined. The total project cost is \$527,160. BSRA confirms that funds requested will not be used to defray any obligation existing as of August 31, 2007.

Question, regarding the seawall, was there consultation with US Corp of Engineers and public access to the rowing associations site that is private property. The design consultant conducted a comprehensive evaluation of soil samples that were provided to the Corp. The docks are open to the public and the adjacent property is owned by the City, providing access to the rowing site. When the clubhouse is open it is used by non-rowers.

9) Buffalo Museum of Science-Tifft Nature Preserve: Tifft Nature Preserve Accessible Trail Meghan Dye presented, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences (BSNS) plans to transform an existing three-quarter mile trail loop at Tifft Nature Preserve into a trail accessible to all visitors. The trail begins at the Herb and Jane Darling Environmental Education center and leads visitors through woods and around the Heritage Boardwalk to enjoy the cattail marsh. Currently, the entrance to the Education Center is uninviting and the trails are uneven and seasonally wet, making them difficult to impossible for visitors with strollers, wheelchairs, or limited mobility to traverse. Navigation is challenging due to inconsistent and dated signage in poor condition, there are infrequent rest areas, and the boardwalks and trails are narrow. The plans for improvement include concrete walkways leading to the entrance and emergency exits of the Education Center, a welcome kiosk at the trailhead, a compacted stone dust trail surface, simplified trail intersections, a complete rebuild of the Heritage Boardwalk to make it wider with helical pile support, and a viewing platform above the Heritage Boardwalk. The accessible trail project is driven by visitor request, and this project will position Tifft as a valued quality of life asset for all members of the Western New York Community. The BSNS conducted a feasibility study in 2020 and the trail described in this proposal was identified as the most practical and desirable trail to modify.

A letter of consistency was included with the application. The letter of support from the City of Buffalo South District Council Member was also included. Tifft Nature Preserve is owned by the

City of Buffalo and the property is operated by the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences under a lease agreement since 1982. The museum has management authority and responsibility for the property and works collaboratively with the City of Buffalo on all aspects of preserve management. The City of Buffalo was consulted throughout this project as Tifft property owner and provided helpful feedback and insight throughout the process. CHC Learning Center, a frequent visitor to Tifft, was also consulted to better understand the needs of visitors of all abilities. The Erie County Office for People with Disabilities visited Tifft to review the scope of the project and will continue to be engaged throughout implementation of this project.

Funding from Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds supported the feasibility study and initial trail design. Additional funding has been secured from the Montgomery Family Foundation for the construction phase and the comprehensive funding strategy for the project includes projected additional funding from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, and the John R. Oishei Foundation. Capital improvements at Tifft have historically been supported by a diversified revenue stream, including support from the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee.

Tifft Nature Preserve requests funding support in the amount of **\$500,000** from Buffalo & Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee for the **construction** costs. The total project cost is \$1,151,453.

Question, are the existing piers being used and has DEC been contacted due to the contamination on the site. The piers are to be removed and we have had conversations with DEC on this project.

Question, is the \$500k for preplanning and construction. The design is complete, Greenway funding will be used for permitting and construction.

10) City of Buffalo: Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park Greenway Construction
Andy Raab presented, over the past year and a half 22 focus group members, 1,164 community participants and a team of local youth and technical stakeholders came together with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), University at Buffalo Regional Institute, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Buffalo Urban Development Corporation, and the City of Buffalo to determine how Buffalo sees the future of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park.

A conceptual plan was unveiled by MVVA in May of 2019 and was revised over the past year and half to include trails and pathways. Preparation of construction documents continues through 2022 in collaboration with major partners such as the Buffalo Water Authority, Buffalo Sewer Authority, United States Army Corps of Engineers and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, including local, State and Federal agencies with the focus on developing a world class public destination that serves the many cultural, athletic and recreational needs of Buffalo with increased water access and improved pathways, shoreline, edge habitat and overall landscape quality.

The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial 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 the new pedestrian/bicycle bridge. It will serve as the main access for

components of Empire State Trail, Greenway, and Shoreline Trail, as all pass-through Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park.

The proposal includes a letter proving consultation with the Niagara River Greenway Commission. The University at Buffalo Regional Institute has developed a community engagement process, and the community stakeholder groups as well as local, regional, and elected representatives have been involved in every step of the way through conceptual design and continues through schematic, design development, and construction.

The City of Buffalo is requesting **\$1,500,000** from the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund, all for **construction**. The BECGFSC supported \$750,000 for the Centennial Seawall Supplemental from the 2019 funds. The following are also pledged contributors: City of Buffalo (\$3 million), Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation (\$50 million); Army Corps (\$4 million); Tony Hawk Foundation/City of Buffalo (\$550,000); New York State (\$10 million); Waterkeeper/NYS ESD (\$TBD); and various other sources of funds/grants are currently being applied for in coordination with schematic design partners.

Question, will the construction start this summer. The City is planning to hire a construction manager to begin construction this summer.

Question, is the City using ARP funds for this project. No, the City has \$3M bond funds for this phase of the project.

Question, do the bond funds include the removal of the Hudson Street bridge. Yes, this will address an access issue.

11) Western New York Land Conservancy: Planting Trees in the Riverline Communities
Jajeane Rose-Burney presented, the Western New York Land Conservancy (WNYLC), a regional not-for-profit land trust, aims to transform the 1.5-mile, 40-acre corridor into The Riverline, an iconic, innovative, and inspiring nature trail and greenway. The Riverline is in its design phase. This grant application focuses on planting 125 trees in neighborhoods surrounding The Riverline, creating ribbons of green into the community. WNYLC intends for this tree planting project to catalyze additional tree planting in The Riverline communities and throughout the City of Buffalo.

The conceptual designs of the Riverline was developed with community input in 2021, and through this work, the Land Conservancy found that residents were hopeful of the benefits that The Riverline could bring to their neighborhoods. There has been strong support for preserving the natural, forested look and feel of The Riverline, and there is a desire for more greenspaces in neighborhoods surrounding The Riverline, including more trees. The lack of tree canopy has many impacts on environmental quality and human health in these communities. The lack of a tree canopy reduces air quality for residents, impacting children the most. The urban heat island effect is worsened with a lack of tree canopy, meaning higher temperatures in the summer and higher cooling costs for residents.

The Riverline corridor is owned by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). It runs from downtown Buffalo at the DL&W terminal to the Buffalo River across from Riverbend, and travels through the Old First Ward, The Valley, and Perry neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are racially diverse, have high rates of poverty, and have experienced disinvestment and job loss over

the last half century. These communities and The Riverline corridor are entirely within the Niagara River Greenway Focus Area. Tree plantings will all take place in the Focus Area.

In 2019, the Greenway Commission awarded a Greenway Plan consistency determination for The Riverline project. That proposal focused on the concept and schematic design phase of The Riverline. Concept designs are complete, and schematic designs are ongoing. Planting trees in communities surrounding The Riverline is aligned with that proposal and is integral to the overall effort to create The Riverline. WNYLC also provides the letters of support from the various federal, state, and local elected officials, and other community stakeholders.

The Land Conservancy is requesting **\$75,000** from the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund standing committee for the **planting of trees in neighborhoods surrounding The Riverline**. WNYLC will contribute \$15,000 in matching funds. The total project cost is \$90,000.

Question, is the tree planting on the NFTA ROW. No, planting is within identified community sites. Question, have you been in contact with Retree WNY and the City Forester. We have had conversations with both along with 4 years of community engagement regarding Riverline. Question, would this project qualify for the Ecological Greenway Committee. Yes, it would qualify but WNYLC has large requests to the Ecological Committee that would hamper the ability to get funded.

9. Other Business

Chair Castle expressed, on behalf of the entire BECGFSC, the presentations were very helpful for us to understand what is being proposed and the nuances of each. He mentioned the Committee will need to make some hard decisions this year as we have a total of approximately \$3.7M of application requests, but only \$2+M to award. Our goal is to fund as many of these projects as we can in a meaningful way. As the deliberations proceed, it is likely that someone will be in touch with further questions and clarifications.

The next Greenway Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 18th at 8:30 am and it is anticipated to be a virtual meeting.

10. A motion to adjourn was made by Jason Paananen, Second by Kevin Kelly.
Meeting adjourned 6:17 PM.