

NREC Meeting Minutes: Monday November 2nd 2020

Meeting held virtually 2 – 4 pm

Members present: Kerrie Gallo (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Claudia Rosen (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Ann Ingleman (League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara), Jajeon Rose-Burney (WNY Land Conservancy), Larry Beahan (Sierra Club), Bob VanHise (Adirondack Mountain Club - Niagara Frontier), Don Houck (Presbytery of Western New York), Edward Sirianno (Buffalo Audubon Society)

Members absent: John Jarosz (Niagara Musky Association) – votes provided via email

1. Day-to-Day Business

- a. July minutes approval – Larry made a motion to approve July NREC meeting minutes and it was seconded by Don, all in favor and the motion passes.
- b. Chair update - Kerrie provided an update from the last GESC meeting and the decisions made about which projects to fund.
 - i. The Joseph Sutherland Farm and Nature Preserve project was partially approved. The GESC decided to provide the acquisition fees for the purchase of the property but not support the restoration activities at this time. Recently, the property owner entered a legal battle with the Town of Niagara, another buyer bought land.
 - ii. The GESC decided not to support the Town of Porter Fort Niagara Beach Shoreline Stabilization project. The applicant resubmitted a revised proposal and the GESC members came to a consensus that outside of another funding cycle that was not an appropriate process.
 - iii. WNYLC – GESC asked to choose 2 of the 4 projects for this round of funding. They selected Love Road on Grand Island (BOS owned property) and the addition to Niagara Escarpment preserve in Lockport.
 - iv. Discussion about the appropriate consultations with Haudenosaunee. It can be challenging for applicants to get timely consultation. The GESC is having conversations with Christine Abrahams and Rene Rickard. In the meantime, applicants are asked to strike references to Haudenosaunee if unable to consult with them.
 1. Jajeon asked about how to address the Indigenous heritage question in the proposal. Without timely consultation it is a challenge to know when and how to answer that question.
- c. Financial update – Ann has not received statements yet but expects to get them by mail soon.
 - i. **Action Item: Ann or Kerrie will send statements to group when they receive them.**
- d. NREC Activities update – Kerrie discussed the list of activities that was provided to NREC prior to the meeting.
 - i. Kerrie attended a meeting with Greg Stevens from the NRCG to discuss a potential Greenway project opportunity at the Fontana Boat House
 - ii. BNW staff conducted a site visit to check on the status of Tern Island - a Buffalo Audubon project funded by the HERF – ESC

2. Niagara River Greenway Commission Project Proposals Actions: Review proposals and vote consistent or not consistent

- a. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Greenway Restore Corps

- i. Kerrie discussed the situation within the greenway where there is often no funding available for the long-term adaptive management of projects. BNWs Restore Corps program is meant to pivot the existing volunteer program to do that long term adaptive management and stewardship on these projects, starting with projects on Niagara River Greenway, sites are examples, could be another entities sites that need another helping hand
 - a. This project benefits the public through improving water quality and wildlife habitat. The public benefit of conservation and restoration extends beyond being publicly accessible (habitat, ecosystem service, green space, etc.)
 - b. Bob asked about the precedent for putting public funds on private land. The precedent is already set, the GESC did fund habitat restoration projects on private properties and NREC voted consistent.
 - c. Some conservation happens on private property, but it is by and large a public benefit, landowner does not gain benefit
2. Motion: To recommend that the project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway plan, with a comment about the importance of weighing public vs. private benefit of projects on a case by case basis made by Jajeen and seconded by Larry
3. Ayes: Don, Jajeen, Larry, Ann
4. Opposed: John, Bob
5. Abstain: Kerrie, Ed
6. **Motion Carried**
- ii. Action Item: Claudia will add an item to next NREC meeting agenda to have a conversation about projects on private land.

- b. Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association, Adaptive Rowing on the Buffalo River
 - i. Motion: To recommend that the project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway plan made by Jejean and seconded by Bob
 - ii. Ayes: Kerrie, Jeajeen, Bob, Don, Larry, Ann, John
 - iii. Opposed:
 - iv. Abstain: Ed
 - v. **Motion carried**

- c. Wheatfield Veterans Memorial Inc., Wheatfield Veterans Memorial
 - i. Motion: To recommend that the project is not consistent with the Niagara River Greenway plan and to reiterate NRECs previous comments made by Larry, seconded by Ann
 - ii. Ayes: Kerrie, Jeajeen, Bob, Don, Larry, Ann, John
 - iii. Opposed:
 - iv. Abstain: Ed
 - v. **Motion carried**

- d. Village of Youngstown, Youngstown Water Street Shoreline Stabilization and Mitigation Project
 - i. Motion: To recommend that the project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway plan made by Don, seconded by Kerrie
 - ii. Ayes: Kerrie, Jeajean, Bob, Don, Larry, Ann
 - iii. Opposed: John
 - iv. Abstain: Ed
 - v. **Motion carried**

- e. Aquarium of Niagara, Aquarium of Niagara Outdoor Plaza Project / Laboratory Upgrade
 - i. Bob – requested a map of the proposed project and more information on its potential impact on the existing work at Whirlpool Street.
 - 1. Would like a zoomed out or overlay view that shows the contexts of proposed improvements with existing condition
 - 2. Would like explanation on whether or how Proposed improvements have an impact on the NYS project at Whirlpool Street
 - ii. Motion: To recommend that the project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway plan with the two comments above made by Kerrie, seconded by Jeajean
 - iii. Ayes: Kerrie, Jeajean, Bob, Don, Larry, Ann, John, Ed
 - iv. Opposed:
 - v. Abstain:
 - vi. **Motion carried**

3. 2021 Proposed Workplan and Meeting Schedule

- a. Claudia presented draft 2021 meeting schedule, please contact her if you notice any conflicts.
- b. **Action Item: Claudia and Kerrie will develop 2021 workplan and send to NREC**

Action items:

- **Ann or Kerrie will send statements to group when they receive them.**
- **Kerrie and Claudia will develop workplan and send to NREC**
- **Claudia will add an item to NRECs next meeting agenda to discuss the public vs. private benefit of projects**