

## NREC Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2022

**Members present:** Kerrie Gallo (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Claudia Rosen (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Jajeon Rose-Burney (WNY Land Conservancy), Ann Ingleman (League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara), John Jaroz (Niagara Muskee Association), Louis Long (Niagara Muskee Association), Bob VanHise (Adirondack Mountain Club – Niagara Frontier), Larry Beahan (Sierra Club), Don Houck (Presbytery of Western New York)

**Members absent:** Edward Sirianno (Buffalo Audubon Society)

### **1. Day-to-Day Business**

- a. November minutes approval
  - i. Action items from the November NREC meeting are still in progress. Kerrie will check-in on the Gratwick Park project and report back to NREC. Kerrie and Claudia will finalize the 2021 NREC activities summary and send to NREC.
  - ii. Motion by Ann, second by John to approve the November meeting minutes. All present vote in favor and the minutes are approved.
- b. Chair update – Kerrie
  - i. After the last NREC meeting, NREC approved the budget via email for Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper to continue to chair NREC.
    - o John Jaroz introduced NREC to Louis Long, the new Conservation Director at Niagara Muskee Association. John will continue in his role as the NMA representative on NREC. Louis will attend NREC meetings to learn as he takes on his new role.
    - o Kerrie and Claudia will follow up with NREC regarding adding costs for Deaf Access Services translation fees to the NREC budget in 2022.
  - ii. A GESC reporting discussion is in progress. The GESC is collecting past due reports and updating finances and accounting,
- c. Financial update – Ann
  - i. The most recent financial statement was forwarded to NREC. The next financial statement is expected in March and will include a year-end report for 2021.

### **2. Niagara River Greenway Commission – project proposals**

*Action: Review proposals and vote on consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan*

- a. Delaware Park Point of the Meadow Shelter Enhancement Project, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy
  - i. The Olmsted Parks Conservancy is requesting consistency for a project that will improve the interior of the Point of the Meadow Shelter at Delaware Park. The improvements will bring the shelter into compliance with ADA requirements and upgrade the HVAC system so the facility can be used year-round.
  - ii. Kerrie suggested this recommendation: The improvements to ADA accessibility and to increase/change the use from seasonal to year-round are consistent with the NR Greenway Plan. Activities planned due to a general maintenance need or due to

disrepair and neglect over time are not consistent with the Greenway Plan. The Commission should discuss the difference in proposal elements.

- Don – the NRGCC should discuss maintenance funds coming from some other source besides the Greenway. There should be matching funds included in the proposal.
  - **Motion:** by Jajeane that the project is partially consistent with the Greenway Plan, including the above recommendation, second by Don.
    - i. Discussion on motion: concern over applicant misrepresenting needs, NREC asking for a clearer line to be drawn between maintenance and new improvements.
  - **Ayes:** Kerrie, Jajeane, Don, John, Bob, Larry, Ann
  - **Opposed:** None
  - **Abstain:** None
  - **Motion Carries**
  
- b. South Park Clubhouse Enhancement Project, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy
  - i. John voiced concerns over what the club house will be used for and its accessibility to the public. Don stated that the use of South Park has increased throughout the pandemic and the upgraded facility would benefit new park users.
    - **Motion:** by Larry that the project is consistent with the Greenway Plan and urge NRGCC to discuss what is eligible and ineligible in terms of maintenance, second by Don.
    - **Aye:** Kerrie, Jajeane, Don, Bob, Larry, Ann
    - **Opposed:** John
    - **Motion Carries**
  
- c. The Aquarium of Niagara Discovery Center Project, Aquarium of Niagara
  - i. The Niagara Gorge Discovery Center is connected to the rest of the Greenway and is accessible via the tram in the parking lot so it will likely get a lot of use.
    - **Motion:** by Don that the project is consistent with the Greenway Plan, second by Bob.
    - **Ayes:** Kerrie, Jajeane, Don, Bob, Larry, Ann, John
    - **Opposed:** None
    - **Motion Carries**
  
- d. Gill Creek Master Plan and Hyde Park Lake Living Shoreline, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
  - i. This project will include finalization of the Gill Creek Master Plan, community engagement, and a specific living shoreline project at Hyde Park Lake.
    - **Motion:** by Larry that the project is consistent with the Greenway Plan, second by John.

- **Ayes:** Jajeau, Don, Bob, Larry, Ann, John
  - **Opposed:** None
  - **Abstain:** Kerrie
  - **Motion Carries**
- e. Tiff Nature Preserve Accessible Trail, Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences
- **Motion:** by Bob that the project is consistent with the Greenway Plan, second by John.
  - **Ayes:** Kerrie, Jajeau, Don, Bob, Larry, Ann, John
  - **Opposed:** None
  - **Abstain:** None
  - **Motion Carries**

### 3. Review 2022 Meeting Schedule

- a. Claudia reviewed new dates in the NREC Meeting Schedule. There were changes made due to updates to the GESC schedule. Claudia will share the updated, final meeting schedule with NREC.

### 4. Greenway Funding Cycle Webinar / Workshop

- a. An idea proposed by Waterkeeper as an activity in 2022. The Greenway Funding Cycle Webinar / Workshop will engage potential Greenway funding applicants.
- b. Goal to share information about the Greenway Funding process and resources for successful applications. Hope to have more diverse applicants through the process. The webinar would be open to the public and identified partners will be invited.
- c. NREC is supportive of the idea. Waterkeeper will be able to lead the webinar with funds already allocated in the 2022 NREC budget.

### 5. Extra Funds Discussion

*Action: Discuss if NREC would like to take action to spend additional monies earned in 2022*

- a. NREC has a pot of money available outside of the administrative fees to Waterkeeper. Revisiting the question of spending that money. Ideas discussed in the past include a small grant program.
  - i. Discussion of who would manage a potential small grant program. John is in favor of a direct project completed by NREC, interpretative signs.
    - i. In general, NREC is in agreement that some of the money should be spent. NREC members will send ideas regarding how to spend the money (via a small grant program or some other mechanism) to Claudia and Kerrie by 1/18/2022.
    - ii. A separate meeting will be set to discuss.

## **5. Birds on the Niagara Online Auction Donation**

- a. There is an opportunity for NREC to support the Birds on the Niagara event through donating an auction item or a sponsorship. Buffalo Audubon is managing funds raised through the auction and sponsorship in a separate account for the Birds on the Niagara Event.
  - i. NREC could make a monetary donation. In the bylaws, the only limitation is money spent must be for activities that further NREC's mission. Kerrie will confirm this.
- b. Larry – would like to sponsor something specific for the event. NREC could pay for a speaker's fees. Larry is not averse to supporting the event as a whole.
- c. Ann – concern about setting a precedent, but the event is aligned with NREC's mission. Would prefer to sponsor something that relates to ecological restoration of the Greenway.
  - i. Claudia will look into opportunities for sponsorship of the event.

## **6. Member Updates**

- a. WNYLC is looking to purchase a former boy scout camp along the Niagara Escarpment. May request Greenway funds.
- b. Bob asked about the timeline for seasonal work at Tern Island this Spring. Kerrie will ask Ed for more information on the plan for Tern Island.
  - i. There was recent ESC committee discussion regarding the sheet pile wall and a decision will be made soon on whether to keep it in place or remove it.

## **Action Items:**

1. Kerrie and Claudia will follow up with NREC regarding adding costs for Deaf Access Services translation fees to the NREC budget in 2022.
2. Claudia will share the updated, final meeting schedule with NREC.
3. Claudia and Kerrie will formalize the Greenway Funding Webinar / Workshop idea and share with NREC.
4. NREC members will send ideas regarding how to spend NREC funds (via a small grant program or some other mechanism) to Claudia and Kerrie by 1/18/2022.
  - a. Claudia will set a separate meeting to discuss.
5. Kerrie will ask Buffalo Audubon about the plans for Tern Island in the Spring of 2022.
6. Claudia will ask Birds on the Niagara organizers for sponsorship opportunities.

## **Carried over from last meeting:**

1. Claudia and Kerrie will update the Activities Summary at the end of the year.
2. Kerrie will check on status of Gratwick Park improvement project.
3. Kerrie will ask the question of investing Standing Committee funds and see if NYPA is willing to revisit the conversation.