

NREC Meeting Minutes Monday, March 28th, 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 Jarosz (Niagara Musky Association), Bob VanHise (Adirondack Mountain Club – Niagara Frontier), Don Houck (Presbytery of Western New York), Edward Sirianno (Buffalo Audubon Society), Larry Beahan (Sierra Club), Marisa Riggi (Western New York Land Conservancy), Louis Long (Niagara Musky Association)

1. Day-to-Day Business

- a. February minutes' approval
 - i. Kerrie went over the progress on action items listed in the February meeting minutes. NREC members were asked to send their thoughts on if they are or are not interested in dispensing NREC funds and ideas on how that program could work.
 - o Discussion on the need for infrastructure to distribute funds. The most complicated part of distributing funds will not be choosing a group or a project, but it will be administering the funding, reporting, and tracking. There will need to be staff (Waterkeeper) to organize the effort.
 - a. John suggested picking groups or projects NREC supports and not allowing funds to go to any NREC-member organization.
 - b. Ann suggested funding existing proposals (to the GESC or ESC). Provide extra funds to those projects NREC supports. This could capitalize on the structure already in place for those standing committees.
 - c. Claudia and Kerrie will digest this feedback and follow up with NREC.
 - o Kerrie gathered information about the Gratwick Park improvements. The second shelter is now in place and a year-round trailer restroom will be placed there permanently.
 - o Kerrie will continue looking for Scott Kitchen's previous comments, regarding investing NYPA monies and will let the group know if she finds them.
 - ii. Motion by Jajeon, second by Don to approve the February meeting minutes. All members present vote in favor and the minutes are approved.
- b. Chair update – Kerrie
 - i. Kerrie attended the GESC / ESC meeting on February 5th. The Stonehaven project was approved for funding by the GESC and the committee heard updates about the Mosquito Junction project at Tiff Nature Preserve and the Tern Island project.
 - o The committee discussed leaving the sheet pile in place for a couple of years as an adaptive management approach at Tern Island. The NYS DEC is committing to a long-term maintenance plan. Kerrie will share more updates as they are available. NREC members can send questions to Kerrie and copy Ed.
- c. Financial update – Ann
 - i. Ann will share the next financial statement when it is available.

2. Ecological Standing Committee – Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Fund – Project preproposals

Action: Review proposals and vote on whether to ask for full proposal

- a. Stonehaven Preserve, Western New York Land Conservancy
 - i. The property was appraised for less than what the Boy Scouts listed it for. The WNYLC will put in an offer below the listing price. If the WNYLC offer is not accepted, the Town of Lewiston may buy it and own it as a publicly accessible nature preserve.
 - o The Town is willing to spend Town funds (in addition to requesting GESC funds) to make a stronger offer. The GESC can require a conservation easement and/or that it is maintained as a publicly accessible nature preserve. Town has put in an offer and is currently going through negotiations.
 - ii. The WNYLC is submitting this HERF preproposal even though funding for the project was approved by the GESC because the NYS DEC funds, that could potentially contribute to the offer, would go through HERF.
 - iii. HERF could also supplement Town of Lewiston Funding. The Town will probably come to the GESC during next round asking for the same purchase price that the WNYLC offered.
 - o **Motion:** by John to advance pre-proposal to full proposal, second by Ann
 - o **Ayes:** Bob, Larry, John, Kerrie, Ann, Don
 - o **Opposed:** None
 - o **Abstain:** Jajeen
 - o **Motion Carries**

- b. Ellicott Island Park Living Shoreline Implementation, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
 - i. The Living Shoreline project at the Ellicott Island Bark Park will utilize nature-based strategies to stabilize the shoreline and address issues of erosion.
 - ii. Discussion about the dogs and the project area. The living shoreline area will be permanently fenced off from the dogs, and there will be other areas established for intentional dog access. More details will be available during full proposal stage. BNW is working closely with the Friends of Ellicott Creek Park.
 - o **Motion:** by John to advance pre-proposal to full proposal and ask for additional information and specifics about dog access at the project site. Second by Don.
 - o **Ayes:** Bob, Larry, John, Ann, Don, Jajeen
 - o **Opposed:** None
 - o **Abstain:** Kerrie
 - o **Motion Carries**

- c. Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Centennial Park Inlet Shoreline Restoration and Habitat Creation, City of Buffalo
 - i. BNW is a part of the core team that is working on the Centennial Park Project. This application is from the City of Buffalo, and BNW will not receive these funds. A BNW staff member wrote the proposal and submitted on behalf of City of Buffalo.
 - ii. Discussion on maintaining Black Rock Canal.
 - o Kerrie explained that the Canal is dredged routinely by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The project footprint does not extend any further into the water than the original boundary of the property at Centennial Park. The team is not allowed

- to do any work in the channel and extensive modeling has been done to ensure that there will be no adverse impacts on the channel or downstream.
- Coastal resiliency is a key feature of the project, which will address flooding and habitat creation.
- iii. The WNYLC has been funded by Wilson Foundation to grow the plants to be used at the site. They will collect locally sourced native seeds and propagate them.
- **Motion:** by John to advance pre-proposal to full proposal, second by Don
 - **Ayes:** Bob, Larry, John, Ann, Don
 - **Opposed:** None
 - **Abstain:** Jajeon, Kerrie
 - **Motion Carries**
- d. Freshwater mussel propagation for restoration and water quality improvement in the Niagara River drainage, University at Buffalo
- i. Suggestion to have a subject expert review the full proposal and project plan and encourage collaboration with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Motion:** by John to advance pre-proposal to full proposal, second by Larry
 - **Ayes:** Bob, Larry, John, Ann, Don
 - **Opposed:** None
 - **Abstain:** None
 - **Motion Carries**

Action Items

1. Claudia and Kerrie will digest NREC funding idea feedback and follow up with the group.
2. Claudia will revise and send out meeting minutes within 2 weeks.
3. Claudia will take a look at the NREC schedule and see if moving the next meeting to a Monday morning would be a possibility.