

NREC Meeting Minutes Monday, June 21st

Meeting held virtually 2 – 4pm

Members present: Kerrie Gallo (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Claudia Rosen (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Jajeon Rose-Burney (WNY Land Conservancy), Don Houck (Presbytery of Western New York), Larry Beahan (Sierra Club), Edward Sirianno (Buffalo Audubon Society)

Members absent (*votes provided before meeting*): Ann Ingleman (League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara), Bob VanHise (Adirondack Mountain Club - Niagara Frontier), John Jaroz (Niagara Muskee Association)

1. Day-to-Day Business

- a. May minutes' approval
 - i. Motion by Don to approve the NREC May meeting minutes, second by Jajeon. All in favor and the motion passes.
 - ii. Discussion of revising the NREC bylaws to allow for online voting.
- b. Chair update – Kerrie
 - i. Kerrie discussed the upcoming GESC Meeting which will be held on June 29th in the afternoon at Beaver Island State Park. Kerrie will circulate the agenda for this meeting.
 - ii. Jajeon requested to have a date for the GESC presentations set early in the year to allow applicants time to plan ahead.
- c. Financial update – Ann
 - i. Claudia will share Q1 financial statement

2. GESC / GEF – project proposals

Action: Review proposals and vote on whether to fund or not fund

- a. Aqua Lane Park Pollinator Conservation Site (Greenway Trail), Pollinator Conservation Association
 - i. Discussion of meadow markers for project site to prevent encroachment.
 - **Motion:** by Larry to approve funding, second by Don.
 - **Ayes:** Kerrie, Don, Ed, Larry, Ann, Bob, John
 - **Opposed:** None
 - **Abstain:** Jajeon
 - **Motion carries**
- b. Greenway Land Protection Program Lower Niagara River and Niagara Escarpment, Western New York Land Conservancy
 - i. The WNYLC received consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan for this project in 2017. The Greenway Land Protection program includes 4 areas, and

they plan to focus one area at a time, finding priority properties for land conservation and landowners that want to protect their properties. This proposal is focused on expanding the program to the lower Niagara River and Niagara Escarpment.

- ii. Discussion of project location and precedent for GESC funding projects in the Niagara Escarpment.
 - 1. Including the escarpment in Greenway priorities opens up possibilities because much of the land near the Niagara River is heavily developed or Tuscarora Nation land. Much of the open space that is realistic to protect is a few miles from the River.
- iii. Discussion of protecting land under the supervision of the Tuscarora Nation.
 - 1. WNYLC is actively working with the Tuscarora on a property they would like to protect. Other organizations have given land back to nations across WNY.
 - **Motion:** by Larry to approve funding, second by Don
 - **Ayes:** Kerrie, Don, Ed, Larry, Ann, Bob, John
 - **Opposed:** None
 - **Abstain:** Jajeen
 - **Motion Carries**

3. Bitcoin Mining Updates – Kerrie

- a. Kerrie gave updates about Waterkeepers efforts that relate to NREC and the Niagara River Greenway. Claudia will reserve more time for collaborative sharing space and member updates at future meeting.
- b. BNW participated in the NYS legislative session. Kerrie described several relevant topics:
 - i. Drinking water emerging contaminates testing bill for PFAS
 - 1. Kerrie will share a recently published study from the Great Lakes about PFAS and PFOAs. The study found evidence of PFAs in rain at Sturgeon Point.
 - ii. Cryptocurrency mining
 - 1. Bill for temporary moratorium to put regulations up to speed and make sure cryptocurrency mining was included in NYS climate goals.
 - 2. Using decommissioned energy plants and NYS has no way to regulate how much energy they are using. Their emissions are not captured in NYS climate goals.
 - 3. Bill died in environmental committee
 - iii. Wetlands Bill
 - 1. Amend legislation to increase protections for freshwater wetlands, below 12 acres but of “unusual importance” could be regulated.
 - 2. Not passed
 - iv. Green Amendment Ballot Initiative

1. Amend NYS Constitution Bill of Rights to provide every citizen a constitutional right to clean air and clean water.

Action Items:

1. Claudia will share Q1 financial statement
2. Kerrie will send GESC June 29th meeting agenda
3. Claudia will save time for member updates at future meetings