

NREC Meeting Minutes: November 4, 2019

Meeting Held at Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper
721 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14203

Members present: Kerrie Gallo (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), Claudia Rosen (Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper), John Jarosz (Niagara Musky Association), Ann Ingleman (League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara), Jajeane Rose-Burney (WNY Land Conservancy), Larry Beahan (Sierra Club), Don Houck (Presbytery of Western New York), Art Klein (Adirondack Mountain Club - Niagara Frontier)

Member absent: Melissa Fratello, (Buffalo Audubon Society)

Call to order: 2:00 pm

1. **Minutes approval** Motion to approve minutes from September 2019 made by Larry, second by John. Motion carries unanimously.
2. **Chair update**
 - a. Discussion regarding follow up items from September 2019 – mapping amendment request to DEC
 - i. There has been no movement on this request for several reasons: the DEC staff member in charge of mapping amendments has left that position, lack of political will
 - ii. The local liaison for these requests is Chuck Rosenberg (NYS DEC) who may be able to help determine who in Albany to speak with next
 - iii. There has been local push back on Grand Island regarding any perceived regulation, may present a hurdle as we move forward with the mapping request
 - A. Governors representative in WNY -Adam Sullivan (sp.?)
 - b. GESC/ ESC Meeting Report
 - i. A presentation from Waterkeeper to the group gave an overview of the role and function of nonprofit organizations in ecological restoration
 - A. The difference in approach between governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations can lead to misunderstanding, in the past this has led the committee astray from the application process
 - ii. Project updates – Buckhorn Marsh Restoration, Ducks Unlimited; Tuscarora Nation Grasslands, HETF; Muskellunge Telemetry Study, NYS DEC Wetland; Avian habitat improvements, Buffalo State Great Lakes Center; Forest Lawn Wetland Creation, BNW
 - iii. Updates from NRGC
 - A. A presentation from NRGC executive director to the group gave ideas regarding strategic thinking in the Niagara River Greenway
 - B. Pushing the GESC /ESC to take a leadership role
 - a. Most physical impact from those committees

3. Financial update

- a. No new financial update from Ann
- b. Continued discussion of the possibility of spending NREC funds on a project
 - i. Kerrie called Myra from the Community Foundation and is waiting on a concrete answer
 - ii. Claudia gave overview of language found in NREC bylaws
 - iii. The group is in unanimous agreement that we would like to move forward with this conversation and that using the funds for some type of project can be a good way to encourage other investments in the greenway
 - A. Given the amount of money that we have, considering small projects and programs (research, monitoring, tree planting, programming)
 - iv. Hope to keep up with inflation and spend funds in a responsible way. In 50 years, there may be another relicensing agreement, we would hope to end up with a "0" balance at the end of this current cycle. If we budget funds for possible projects in 5-year segments, we would be able to readjust and reconsider budgets periodically, to continue to ensure we are on track
 - v. NREC members to consider possibility and set aside time in our upcoming meeting to discuss further.
 - A. Possibilities include: model a competitive RFP, 21st century fund, compiling ideas and directly engaging smaller nonprofits, or NREC itself completing a project
 - B. Project ideas discussed: electronic interpretive "signs" at strategic places along the Greenway (hire a production company that sets up a website with videos or written materials)
 - vi. NREC members should consider the goal of spending funds. Perhaps a project funded by NREC should deliver something the NRGC is proposing on behalf of the whole.

Action Items: Kerrie will help further this discussion by getting input from the Community Foundation. NREC members will bring ideas for future projects as well as ideas for the goal of spending funds to next meeting

4. Consistency discussion

- a. Black Rock Riverside Alliance: Black Rock Harbor Center- Phase 1
 - i. Recommendation for applicant to be more specific in proposal when describing programming, as well as to clarify the lease agreement, the exact location of the Black Rock Harbor Center, and the plans phases of this project
 - ii. Unanimous all in favor that this proposal is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan

- b. Western New York Land Conservancy: DL & W trail and Greenway-Phase 3
 - i. Unanimous all in favor that this proposal is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, one abstention (JaJean, WNY Land Conservancy)
- c. Town of Newfane: Olcott Beach Gateway Sign
 - i. Unanimous all in favor that this proposal is not consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, with a recommendation that any future proposals include native plants
- d. Town of Lewiston: Kiwanis Park Basketball Court
 - i. Unanimous all in favor that this proposal is not consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, primarily due to this meeting the standards of ongoing deferred maintenance. Additional recommendation that any future proposals address discrepancy between proposed budget and contractor estimate
- e. Niagara County Public Works: Krull Park and Oppenheim Park Playground Improvement Project
 - i. Unanimous all in favor that this proposal is partially consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, that the Oppenheim Park Playground Improvement Project is within the greenway, and therefore consistent, while the Krull Park Playground Improvement Project is outside of the greenway, and therefore not consistent. Additional recommendation that prior to applying for funding, applicant should include permeable pavement within the playground

Action Items:

- Claudia to upload GESC/ESC presentations to the NREC website when they become available
- Claudia to send group GESC meeting minutes, NREG executive director summary, 2020 NREC meeting schedule, and 2020 proposed NREC work plan
- Claudia to schedule an hour in the next meetings agenda to discuss possibilities of spending NREC funds
 - Kerrie will help further funds discussion by getting input from the Community Foundation. NREC members will bring ideas for future projects as well as ideas for the goal of spending funds to next meeting
- Claudia to schedule upcoming meetings at alternate location – Reinstein library in Cheektowaga
- Claudia to adjust meeting schedule to only 5 meetings- combining July and August meeting