

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the
Downtown Committee
of
Buffalo Urban Development Corporation**

Via Video Conference Call & Live Stream Audio

**March 17, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Michael Finn
Darby Fishkin
Thomas R. Hersey, Jr.
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)
Kimberley Minkel
Darius G. Pridgen

Committee Members Absent:

Trina Burruss
James W. Comerford
Dottie Gallagher

Officers Present:

Peter M. Cammarata, President
Brandye Merriweather, Vice President, Downtown Development
Rebecca Gandour, Vice President, Finance & Development
Mollie Profic, Treasurer
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary
Atiqa Abidi, Assistant Treasurer

Guests Present: Jenna Bichler, Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency; Art Hall, BUDC; Jamie Hamann-Burney, Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus; and Michael Schmand, Buffalo Place, Inc.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. The Secretary called the roll and a quorum of the Committee was determined to be present. Mr. Pridgen joined the meeting following the presentation and approval of the meeting minutes.

The meeting was held via video/telephone conference in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 202 issued by Governor Andrew Cuomo on March 12, 2020, as amended. The meeting was also live-streamed to the general public and recorded. A transcript of the meeting will be made available at a later date.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes of the February 17, 2021 Meeting** – The minutes of February 17, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Minkel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 2.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Ralph C. Wilson Foundation Grant Agreement #6**
– Ms. Gandour presented her March 17, 2021 memorandum to the Committee regarding a proposed \$3,060,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for the Centennial Park project. These grant funds will be utilized for several purposes over the next several years as outlined in the Committee memorandum, including funding for increasing staff capacity at BUDC and the City of Buffalo

Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Finn commented on the importance of the staff capacity funding for the City. In response to a question from Ms. Fishkin, Ms. Gandour indicated that a portion of the grant funding can be used to pay a portion of staff salaries relating to work on the project. Mr. Pridgen then commented on recent flooding issues relating to the Harbor Pointe condominium development that is located in close proximity to the Centennial Park project, and asked for a dialogue between the project team and Harbor Pointe. Ms. Merriweather indicated that the project team would be advised of the issue. She also noted that the park design process is taking into account weather-related impacts and the design will not negatively impact Harbor Pointe. Ms. Gandour added that the project team has collected a lot of data on weather-related impacts and is designing the project with resiliency and sustainability in mind. Mr. Finn indicated that Lake Erie water levels are two feet higher than normal, which has impacted the shoreline. At the conclusion of the discussion, Ms. Minkel made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors accept a \$3,060,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to enhance capacity to engage in long-term planning, project and funding management, as well as construction coordination for the improvements to the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park, and to authorize the BUDC President or the BUDC Vice President-Finance & Development to take such actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pridgen and unanimously carried (6-0-0).

- 3.0 **BNMC Complete Trip Deployment Pilot Program** – Mr. Hamann-Burney presented a report regarding the BNMC Complete Trip Deployment Program. The United States Department of Transportation recently selected BNMC as one of five U.S. sites to pilot this program, which is designed to help communities identify ways provide more efficient, affordable and accessible transportation options for underserved populations. This pilot program will be conducted in partnership with several project stakeholders, including the NFTA and the University at Buffalo. The project is divided into three phases—planning, design and deployment and demonstration, with potential funding of up to 8.2 million dollars. The project is expected to take place over a period of three years.
- 4.0 **Buffalo’s Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Buffalo’s Race for Place. She commented on information gathering and surveys that are being utilized to develop strategies for recruiting diverse talent to Buffalo. Mentorship is expected to an element of the recruitment strategy. Ms. Merriweather also reported on the ongoing dialogue regarding the expansion of the Buffalo Place business improvement district.
- 5.0 **BBRP Loan Program – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented a brief update regarding the BBRP Loan Program, including an update regarding the repayment of the Phoenix Brewery Apartments loan and recent outreach efforts on several new residential projects that may be potential candidates for BBRP loan funding.
- 6.0 **Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project. BUDC is working with the project team on cost estimating, budgeting and value engineering items. Project resiliency, sustainability and maintenance continue to be important considerations for the project. BUDC and the City of Buffalo continue to seek additional funding sources for the project.
- 7.0 **Downtown Infrastructure – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather reported that construction of the Entertainment District infrastructure project is expected to begin in early April. Another construction meeting was recently held for the project.
- 8.0 **Queen City Pop Up – Small Business Recovery Efforts** – Ms. Merriweather presented a brief report regarding the Queen City Pop Up program. Due to the pandemic, alternative concepts involving the use of outdoor space are under consideration, with more details expected soon.

- 9.0 Partner Updates** – Mr. Schmand presented an update regarding Buffalo Place. With the improving weather, all of the projects utilizing Main Street grant program funding are nearing resumption of, or currently under construction. He also reported on the return of the Farmers Market to Main Street.
- 10.0 Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Mr. Hersey, seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried, the March 17, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary