

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

Via Video Conference Call & Live Stream Audio

**April 21, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Trina Burruss
James W. Comerford
Michael Finn
Darby Fishkin
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)

Committee Members Absent:

Dottie Gallagher
Thomas R. Hersey, Jr.
Kimberley Minkel
Darius G. Pridgen

Officers Present:

Brandye Merriweather, President
Rebecca Gandour, Executive Vice President
Mollie Profic, Treasurer
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary
Atiqa Abidi, Assistant Treasurer

Guests Present: Daniel Castle, Deputy Commissioner, Erie County Department of Planning and Environment; Art Hall, Senior Project Manager, BUDC; Jamee Lanthier, ECIDA Compliance Officer; Seth Piccirillo, Buffalo Niagara Partnership and Michael Schmand, Buffalo Place, Inc.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. A quorum of the Committee was not present. Information items 4-8 were presented in the absence of a quorum. Ms. Burruss joined the meeting at 9:18 a.m., at which time a quorum of the Committee was present. Items 1-3 were then presented with a quorum present.

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 March 17, 2021 Meeting** – The minutes of March 17, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Burruss made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 2.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Edith Wilson & Linda Bodgan Memorial Garden Grant** – Ms. Gandour presented her April 21, 2021 memorandum regarding proposed grant funding in the amount of \$1,000,000 from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. This grant funding will be utilized to support the construction of an entry garden and dog park in memory of Mr. Wilson’s late daughters, Edith Wilson and Linda Bodgan. Mr. Comerford made a motion to recommend that the BUDC Board of

Directors accept the \$1,000,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to support the construction of the entry garden and dog park for Centennial Park and authorize the BUDC President or BUDC Executive Vice President to take such actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 3.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Design & Access Grant** – Ms. Merriweather presented her April 21, 2021 memorandum regarding proposed funding from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Design & Access Grant that is administered by the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo. The \$50,000 grant will be used to provide funding to support a project manager to assist with final planning, design and construction coordination for the Centennial Park project and provide technical assistance to the BUDC team. Ms. Burruss made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors accept \$50,000 in funding from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Design & Access Grant to support a project manager to assist BUDC in the redevelopment of Centennial Park and authorize the BUDC President or BUDC Executive Vice President to take such actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried (5-0-0).
- 4.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – General Update** – Ms. Gandour presented a general update regarding the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project. BUDC is working with the project design team to wrap up comments on the 100% design development phase. Many of the comments involve the shoreline aspects of the project, and BUDC is coordinating with its regulatory partners (Army Corps of Engineers, NYSDEC) on that issue. Once that process is complete, changes will be communicated to stakeholders. Ms. Merriweather also commented on the ongoing efforts to address the budgetary aspects of the project.
- 5.0 Buffalo’s Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Buffalo’s Race for Place. This initiative continues to evolve. The City of Buffalo was recently featured as a “City to Watch” by the Smart Growth Network. Ms. Merriweather reported on her participation, along with representatives from Stantec and GBNRTC, on the April 9th Smart Growth panel presentation regarding the Future of Mobility. Over 1300 persons participated in the session, and BUDC received a lot of positive feedback regarding the presentation. Mr. Mehaffy reported that proposals for the Mohawk Ramp site are due later this month, and that there is significant interest from developers. The transportation demand management proposals are under review.
- 6.0 Downtown Infrastructure – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update on the construction of the Entertainment District infrastructure project. BUDC is coordinating with Watts and the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works on the project. The review of responses to the request for proposals for the public art component of the project is underway. Mr. Castle offered comments on the County’s renovation of the convention center lobby and possible façade improvements to the building along Franklin Street.
- 7.0 BBRP Loan Program – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather informed the Committee that the Phoenix Brewery Apartments loan has been repaid in full. The second quarter request for proposals for BBRP loan program funding has been issued. BUDC is currently working with two prospects for BBRP loan funding.
- 8.0 Partner Updates** – Mr. Schmand presented an update on the potential expansion of the Buffalo Place business improvement district. He also reported that the Farmers Market will resume operations soon as well as the Thursday & Main concert series.

- 9.0 Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Mr. Comerford, seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried, the April 21, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary