

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

**Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning
901 City Hall
Buffalo, New York
April 12, 2016
12:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

James W. Comerford
Dottie Gallagher-Cohen
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)
Steven J. Stepniak

Committee Members Absent:

Thomas J. Dearing
Benjamin N. Obletz
Rev. Darius G. Pridgen

Officers Present:

Peter M. Cammarata, President
David A. Stebbins, Executive Vice President
Brandye Merriweather, Vice President
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary
Mollie Profic, Assistant Treasurer

Guests Present: Debra Chernoff, Buffalo Place, Inc.; Michael Finn, City of Buffalo Department of Public Works; Rebecca Gandour, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning; Jamine Hammon-Burney, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation; and Daniel Leonard, Buffalo Niagara Partnership.

Roll Call: The Secretary called the roll at 12:05 p.m. and a quorum of the Committee was determined to be present.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes of the March 8, 2016 Meeting** –The minutes of the March 8, 2016 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Mr. Stepniak made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried.

- 2.0 BBRP Loan Program – Consistency Recommendations** – Ms. Merriweather presented her April 12, 2016 memorandum to the Committee regarding BBRP loan program consistency recommendations for The Sinclair project at 465 Washington Street and the 400 Oak Lofts project. Ms. Merriweather noted that these two projects were among the three applications received by the March 31st quarterly application deadline. The third application (for the 328 North Oak Street project) requires further follow up and is not ready to proceed at this time. Ms. Merriweather then reviewed the two projects presented for the Committee's consideration, the descriptions of which are set forth in the April 12th memorandum. She noted that a team comprised of representatives from BUDC, the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and the Buffalo Niagara Partnership reviewed the proposals. She outlined the review team's analysis of the projects as being consistent with the Buffalo Building Reuse Project and the Queen City Hub plan. A discussion followed Ms. Merriweather's presentation. Ms. Gallagher-Cohen commented on the low number of applicants for this round of loan funding, and stated that BUDC should get as many loans in the pipeline as possible given the ten year term of the loan fund. Ms. Merriweather explained BUDC's outreach strategy for the loan program and noted that a number

of projects have been identified as potential candidates for the loan program but are not yet ready to proceed with financing. Mr. Cammarata indicated that a fourth application for this round of funding was expected, but was not submitted. The Committee then discussed vacant and underutilized properties and the need for a legislative solution to encourage property owners to maintain and develop their properties. Mr. Mehaffy indicated that the Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning is working with the Department of Permit and Inspection Services on a strategy for vacant properties. Ms. Gallagher-Cohen suggested that Mr. Stebbins reach out to ULI members for information regarding how other communities deal with this situation. The discussion then returned to the BBRP consistency determination for The Sinclair project and the 400 Oak Lofts project. Mr. Mehaffy requested that future items for consistency determinations include a statement that the project complies with BUDC loan program guidelines.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Comerford made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors determine that The Sinclair project located at 465 Washington Street and the 400 Oak Lofts project located at 400 Oak Street are both consistent with Buffalo Building Reuse Project goals and for both projects to proceed to the loan underwriting process. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gallagher-Cohen and unanimously carried.

- 3.0 **BBRP Loan Program – Loan Committee Appointees** – Ms. Merriweather presented a brief update regarding the status of appointments to the BUDC Loan Committee. The bank appointees to the Loan Committee are in the process of being finalized.
- 4.0 **Downtown Infrastructure – Project Updates** – Mr. Finn updated the Committee regarding downtown infrastructure projects. The Genesee Gateway project is under construction and is expected to be substantially completed by the end of this year. Phase I of the Niagara Street project and the Pearl Street conversion project are both expected to be substantially complete this summer. The TIGER grant agreement to fund the lower Main Street section of the Cars on Main Street project has been finalized. Mr. Finn also noted that the grant agreement between the City of Buffalo and BUDC is being finalized to fund the design work for the Northland Avenue road and right-of-way infrastructure project.
- 5.0 **Queen City Pop Up** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding the Queen City Pop Up program. The last day for applicants to submit a response to the request for proposals is Friday, April 15th. BUDC has received seven proposals to date. The program starts on May 5th and will run for a three month period.
- 6.0 **Downtown Development Guide** – Ms. Merriweather reported that BUDC continues to respond to inquiries and requests for information generated by the Downtown Development Guide. The first set of guides has been fully distributed, and more have been ordered from the printer. BUDC and Invest Buffalo Niagara will collaborate on additional outreach efforts in the coming months.
- 7.0 **Buffalo Place Updates** – Ms. Chernoff reported that Buffalo Place awarded Main Street grant program funding to nine of the fifteen applicants that applied for grant funding. Mr. Stebbins suggested exploring with Main Street grant program applicants their eligibility for financing through the BBRP loan program.
- 8.0 **Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus Updates** – Mr. Hammon-Burney presented an update regarding construction activities at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. Both the UB School of Medicine and Children's Hospital buildings are on track for completion in late 2017. BNMC recently awarded a contract for the Ellicott-Goodrich parking garage project. Demolition activities for the parking garage project are expected to take place by the end of this month.

9.0 Buffalo Green Code & Brownfield Opportunity Areas – Mr. Mehaffy reported that the public hearings for SEQRA have been completed. He noted that there is a pending request to extend the public comment period, which is set to expire on April 22nd. He also indicated that Common Council members were pleased with the productive meetings that were held within their respective Council districts.

10.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Ms. Gallagher-Cohen, seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried, the Downtown Committee meeting of April 12, 2016 was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary