

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

**95 Perry Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14203
October 15, 2025
12:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Catherine Amdur
Daniel Castle
Darby Fishkin
Nadine Marrero (Chair)
Kimberley A. Minkel
Jenna Kavanaugh
Karen Utz

Committee Members Absent:

Bryan J. Bollman
Dottie Gallagher

Officers Present:

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

Guests Present: James Bernard, BUDC Project Manager; Alexis M. Florczak, Hurwitz Fine P.C.; Angela Keppel, Buffalo Place; Brian Krygier, Director of IT, ECIDA; Angelo Rhodes II, Northland Project Manager; Nolan Skipper, Acting Commissioner, City of Buffalo Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by Ms. Marrero at 12:04 p.m. A quorum of the Committee was present. Ms. Kavanaugh left the meeting during the presentation of agenda item 1 and rejoined the meeting during the presentation of agenda item 3. Ms. Utz joined the meeting during the presentation of agenda item 3.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes of the August 20, 2025 Meeting** – The minutes of the August 20, 2025 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Minkel made a motion to approve the July 16, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Amdur and unanimously carried (5-0-0).
- 2.0 Ralph Wilson Park – General Update** – Mr. Bernard provided an update regarding the Ralph Wilson Park construction project and shared PowerPoint slides from Gilbane Building Company. Seeding activities for the season are wrapping up this week. Trees are being delivered at the Park next week and will be planted in November and into December. Light pole installation is ongoing at the sled hill. Installation of rip rap stone is ongoing at the South Lawn, and concrete pathways will be started next week. Fencing at the small baseball field is complete, and fencing posts and foundation is complete at the large baseball field. Mr. Bernard then shared an update from the Ralph Wilson Park Conservancy. The Conservancy recently released a request for proposals for landscaping and maintenance firms to

provide these services for the Park. A flyer was shared for the Conservancy's event on October 18th to celebrate the opening of the community-built playground on the 4th Street side of the Park.

3.0 Ralph Wilson Park – Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Grant Agreement #14 – Mr. Bernard presented his October 15, 2025 memorandum regarding the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation grant agreement #14. Following the presentation, Ms. Fishkin made a motion to recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) accept the \$3,155,200 grant award from the Wilson Foundation to support the capacity of the Ralph Wilson Park project team as outlined in Mr. Bernard's October 15, 2025 memorandum; and (ii) authorize the BUDC President or Executive Vice President to execute Wilson Grant Agreement #14 and take such other actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Castle and unanimously carried (7-0-0).

4.0 Ralph Wilson Park – 13th Amendment to BUDC-City of Buffalo Subgrant Agreement – Mr. Bernard presented his October 15, 2025 memorandum regarding the 13th amendment to the BUDC-City of Buffalo subgrant agreement for Wilson Foundation funding. Following the presentation, Ms. Utz made a motion to recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) approve the modification to the 13th amendment to the Subgrant Agreement between BUDC and the City of Buffalo to allow the transfer of up to \$234,000 from Wilson Grant #14 to support the City of Buffalo City Engineer position; and (ii) authorize the BUDC President or Executive Vice President to execute the 13th amendment to the Subgrant Agreement as modified and take such other actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Minkel and unanimously carried (7-0-0).

5.0 Ralph Wilson Park – 5th Amendment to Gardiner & Theobald Agreement – Mr. Bernard presented his October 15, 2025 memorandum regarding the 5th amendment to BUDC's agreement with Gardiner & Theobald (G&T). In response to a question from Ms. Minkel, Mr. Bernard stated that the extension of G&T's agreement through 2027 is being done to align its services with the anticipated Phase 2 construction timeline. Ms. Minkel then made a motion to recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) approve the fifth amendment to BUDC's agreement with Gardiner & Theobald to extend G&T's project and cost management services an additional twenty-six (26) months for an amount not to exceed \$1,809,200; and (ii) authorize the BUDC President or Executive Vice President to execute the 5th amendment to the agreement and take such other actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Amdur and unanimously carried (7-0-0).

6.0 Ralph Wilson Park – 15th Amendment to MVVA Agreement – Mr. Bernard presented his October 15, 2025 memorandum regarding the 15th amendment to BUDC's agreement with MVVA. Following the presentation, Ms. Utz made a motion to recommend that the BUDC Board of Directors: (i) approve the 15th amendment to the MVVA Agreement for a not to exceed amount of \$847,440 for additional shoreline work and continued construction administration and quality assurance services during Phase 2 construction; and (ii) authorize the BUDC President or Executive Vice President to execute the 15th amendment to the MVVA Agreement and take such other actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (7-0-0).

7.0 Queen City Pop-Up – Downtown Holiday Program Consultant – Ms. Merriweather presented her October 15, 2025 memorandum regarding a proposed consulting contract with Ari Parson PR for Queen City Pop-up (QCPU) holiday programming. Ms. Merriweather explained that BUDC had issued a request for proposals for design/planning, installation and management of the holiday QCPU program that would include the creation of temporary pop-up vendor booths at Fountain Plaza and program marketing. Several proposals were received, but none met BUDC requirements. With the holiday season nearing, BUDC is proposing to pivot to a winter market trail concept, with the consultant to help lead the marketing effort. In response to a question from Mr. Castle, Ms. Merriweather noted that responses received to the request for proposals were inadequate for a variety of reasons, ranging from lack of expertise, non-responsiveness to RFP requirements, and cost proposals that exceeded project budget. In response to a question from Ms. Marrero, Ms. Merriweather stated that the scope of services proposed

by Ari Parson PR were among the marketing services included in the initial RFP. Mr. Zanner confirmed that the procurement was conducted consistent with the BUDC procurement policy. Following further discussion, Ms. Minkel made a motion to: (i) authorize BUDC to enter into a contract with Ari Parson PR for marketing and public relations services in connection with Queen City Pop-Up holiday program at a cost not to exceed \$25,000; and (ii) authorize the BUDC President or Executive Vice President to execute the agreement and take such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (7-0-0).

8.0 Buffalo's Race for Place – General Update – Ms. Merriweather presented the following updates regarding Buffalo's Race for Place.

- a. Downtown Temporary Intersection Project: BUDC is coordinating with the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works to re-issue an expanded request for proposals for short-term placemaking and wayfinding improvements near the Explore & More Children's Museum, Naval Park and Heritage Point and other projects. It is anticipated that the RFP will be released this week. Completion of the improvements is targeted for Spring 2026.
- b. Waterfront Coordination Updates: A waterfront coordination session will take place on October 30th at 9:30 a.m.
- c. Downtown Project & Cost Management Selection: BUDC continues to coordinate with its partners to advance its agreement with Buffalo Construction Consultants (BCC). BUDC and the City are awaiting the sign off from Douglas Development to utilize the Accelerator Fund to pay BCC for project and cost management services. BUDC is also looking at alternative funding sources for BCC to commence services under the agreement so that projects are underway during the 2026 construction season.
- d. Queen City Pop-Up: BUDC is coordinating with Buffalo Place regarding its tree lighting ceremony and additional programming efforts. Ciminelli Real Estate will host an indoor holiday market on Thursday, December 11th at Fountain Plaza. BUDC is also exploring partnerships to activate outdoor market stalls for 2026 holiday programming.
- e. WUFO Partnership: Ms. Merriweather reported on the Buffalo Niagara MWBE Training Day Conference scheduled for October 21st at 500 Pearl. It is anticipated that 200 MWBEs will be in attendance at the conference.

9.0 Queen City Hub Revisited – Project Update – Ms. Merriweather and Ms. Keppel presented an update regarding Queen City Hub Revisited. Work on this initiative continues. Buffalo Place received a municipal planning grant from Erie County, which will be used to further support the initiative, including the creation of a QCHR dashboard and digital marketing materials strategy, stakeholder engagement, and gap financing.

10.0 Partner Updates – Ms. Keppel reported that Buffalo Place is shifting its focus to its winter programming. Mr. Castle noted that Buffalo Place will have a new Board Chair and will be searching for a new Executive Director following Mr. Schmand's retirement at the end of December.

11.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Ms. Utz, seconded by Ms. Minkel and unanimously carried, the October 15, 2025 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary