

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

**95 Perry Street, 4th Floor – Perry Room
Buffalo, New York 14203
March 18, 2026
12:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Thomas Baines (Chair)
Darby Fishkin
Grant Loomis
Kimberley A. Minkel
Nolan Skipper

Committee Members Absent:

Daniel Castle
Jenna Kavanaugh
Karen Utz

Officers Present:

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

Guests Present: James Bernard, BUDC Project Manager; Peter Dechert, Buffalo Construction Consultants; Alexis M. Florczak, Hurwitz Fine P.C.; Dan Knight, Gilbane Building Company; Brian Krygier, Director of IT, ECIDA; Angelo Rhodes II, Northland Project Manager; W. Morgan Smith, Interim Executive Director, Buffalo Place; and Roger Treichler Jr., Gilbane Building Company.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order by Mr. Baines at 12:09 p.m. Mr. Zanner informed the Chair that a quorum of the Committee was present.

- 1.0 Approval of Minutes of the February 18, 2026 Meeting** – The minutes of the February 18, 2026 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Minkel made a motion to approve the February 18, 2026 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 2.0 Ralph Wilson Park – General Update** – Mr. Knight provided an update regarding the Ralph Wilson Park construction project. With respect to Phases 1A and 1B, Gilbane is hoping to remobilize with respect to the landscaping and roadway work later this month. National Grid poles are still up and are anticipated to be removed the week of April 6th, which will allow the site to be re-energized. Preparations are underway for seeding work to begin in May. With respect to Phase 2, a safety audit was recently performed in Germany on playground equipment for the Park. Storm drainage work in the play garden area has begun onsite. On March 4th, Gilbane received a notice of award for the Phase 2C GMP and is awaiting the final contract amendment for signature. In response to a question from Ms. Minkel regarding weather impacting progress at the Park, Mr. Knight noted that currently, the colder weather is only impacting paving work, and it is unclear if weather will impact the seeding and National Grid work.

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

- a. Downtown Project & Cost Management Update: Ms. Merriweather introduced Peter Dechert, Senior Vice President of Buffalo Construction Consultants (BCC). BUDC and the City of Buffalo have executed the Memorandum of Understanding in connection with access and utilization of the Accelerator Fund for various infrastructure projects in the City of Buffalo. BUDC and BCC will hold a kickoff meeting later this month to discuss the downtown infrastructure improvements, which will act as an extension of the City of Buffalo Department of Public Works. The first project to be advanced will be the Erie Street Greenway, for which Empire State Development has provided \$10 million dollars in capital grant funding. Mr. Dechert thanked BUDC for the opportunity to provide project and cost management services and noted that the BCC team is excited to get started on working on this important initiative. Mr. Skipper added that the momentum in starting these infrastructure projects will help activate other grant sources for additional projects.
- b. Downtown Temporary Intersection Project Update: A design charette series was held March 3rd-5th to review proposed design concepts for the three selected sites, which included site visits, design sessions and public meetings. Positive feedback was received for the concepts, and the project team is refining its designs in order to proceed with securing permits with the City of Buffalo. Ms. Merriweather then shared with the Committee draft renderings for the three selected sites.
- c. Queen City Pop-Up – Black History Month Black Business Expo: The Black History Month Black Business Expo held last month received excellent turnout, with 25 Black-owned businesses participating. BUDC partnered with the City of Buffalo, The Exchange at Beverly Gray, That Brown Bag, and Buffalo Place for this year’s expo. A Women’s History Month event will take place at the end of March at the International House.

4.0 Queen City Hub Revisited – Project Update – Ms. Merriweather and Mr. Smith presented an update regarding Queen City Hub Revisited. Work on this initiative continues. Progress is being made in developing the online dashboard, which will provide updates regarding Downtown Buffalo development, including vacancy rates, available commercial space for conversion, and foot traffic metrics. Collaboration on the advocacy strategy for Queen City Hub Revisited is also progressing, with conversations at the state level also taking place with respect to funding. A toolkit is being developed and will be available to developers, which will assist in the selection of project sites.

5.0 Partner Updates – Mr. Smith reported that the pedestrian bridge located between the former AM&A’s building and Main Place Mall has been removed. Construction for Cars Sharing Main Street from Mohawk to Exchange Street is anticipated to begin in the next few weeks. Summer planning is underway for Thursdays & Main and the Downtown Country Market.

6.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, the March 18, 2026 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner