

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

**Via Video Conference Call & Live Stream Audio**

**May 19, 2021  
9:00 a.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Trina Burruss  
James W. Comerford  
Michael Finn  
Dottie Gallagher  
Thomas R. Hersey, Jr.  
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)  
Kimberley Minkel  
Darius G. Pridgen

Committee Members Absent:

Darby Fishkin

Officers Present:

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

Guests Present: Tuona Batchelor, Erie County Department of Environment & Planning; Art Hall, BUDC Senior Project Manager; Lisa Hicks, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning; Jamee Lanthier, ECIDA Compliance Officer; and Michael Schmand, Buffalo Place, Inc.

- 1.0 Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. A quorum of the Committee was present. Ms. Burruss and Ms. Gallagher joined the meeting during the presentation of item 2.0. Ms. Gallagher left the meeting following the presentation of item 6.0. Mr. Pridgen joined the meeting during the presentation of item 7.0.

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.

- 2.0 Approval of Minutes of the April 21, 2021 Meeting** – The minutes of April 21, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Mr. Comerford made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Minkel and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 3.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – MVVA Master Service Agreement Amendment** – Ms. Gandour presented her May 19, 2021 memorandum regarding the proposed amendment to the

Master Service Agreement with Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (“MVVA”) for the Centennial Park Project. Ms. Gandour explained that BUDC’s consultant, Gardiner & Theobald, Inc. (“G&T”) is recommending two construction document packages for the next phase of the project. The first construction document package, which contains core park and shoreline elements, is estimated to cost \$4,509,042 and will be paid with funding from the fourth and fifth grant awards from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. The second construction document package is estimated to cost \$929,386 and primarily relates to inlet and shoreline elements. The fourth grant award can pay for a portion of the second package, but these grant funds can only be accessed when a minimum of \$10,000,000 in additional funding is secured. Ms. Gandour indicated that the source of this additional funding will likely be through the Great Lakes Commission. The Committee discussed the proposal and inquired as to the financial and operational sustainability of the project. Ms. Merriweather commented that resiliency and sustainability have been key components and consideration throughout the design process and indicated that staff could collect more information from the Project team relating to these issues.

Mr. Finn suggested that the Committee consider the construction document packages separately, with construction document package one to be conditioned on the presentation of a sustainability report to the Board and construction document package two to be conditioned on securing additional funding for the waterfront/seawall. After a discussion, Mr. Finn made a motion to amend the item as suggested. The motion was seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried (7-0-0). Ms. Burruss left the meeting at this point. Ms. Minkel then made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors approve construction package one subject to the presentation of a sustainability report to the Board. The motion was unanimously carried (6-0-0). Mr. Hersey then made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors approve construction package two subject to securing additional funding for the waterfront/seawall. The motion was seconded by Ms. Minkel and unanimously carried (6-0-0).

- 4.0 Buffalo’s Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Buffalo’s Race for Place. BUDC is continuing the engagement process with its stakeholders. Proposals have been received for the RFPs relating to the Mohawk Ramp and transportation demand management services and are under review. Ms. Merriweather also indicated she will be participating in a Massachusetts DOT panel on May 28, 2021 on Race for Place and the Future of Mobility report.
- 5.0 BBRP Loan Program – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather reported that BUDC is working with two potential applicants for the BBRP loan program. Responses to the current RFP are due June 30, 2021. Ms. Merriweather also noted the Phoenix Brewery Apartments loan has been paid in full.
- 6.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park– General Update** – Ms. Gandour reported that the project is moving out of design development and moving into construction document phase as discussed earlier in the meeting. With respect to funding, BUDC has received notice of additional funding for playfield elements in the core park and are awaiting details as to this funding. Additional grant funding applications for the seawall and football field are being prepared. Ms. Merriweather added that BUDC is working with the Great Lakes Commission to secure additional funding for shoreline and inlet design.
- 7.0 Downtown Infrastructure – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather reported that work is progressing on the Entertainment District infrastructure project. BUDC is participating in bi-weekly construction meetings with Watts and other stakeholders. Discussions are continuing with the expansion of the business improvement district. Work continues with the Arts Commission on the public art component of the project. BUDC is also working with the Office of Strategic Planning with respect to the Accelerator Fund.
- 8.0 Queen City Pop-Up – Small Business Recovery Efforts**– Ms. Merriweather reported BUDC is continuing to explore additional concepts for the Queen City Pop-Up Initiative and has reached out to graduates and businesses regarding resources and programming. The Small Business Social Distancing Initiative expires on November 15, 2021, and discussions are ongoing to make permanent certain elements of the initiative relating to public space utilization.

**9.0 Partner Updates** – Mr. Schmand reported that the Farmers' Market has resumed, and the Thursday at Main concert series at Fountain Plaza is set to begin July 8, 2021. Projects are lining up for the Better Buffalo Fund and participants in the Main Street Grant Program continue to work on their projects.

**10.0 Adjournment** – Prior to adjournment, Mr. Mehaffy noted that Committee member Thomas Hersey is retiring and that this is his last Downtown Committee meeting. Mr. Mehaffy and members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for Mr. Hersey's public service and wished him well in retirement. There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Mr. Hersey, seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried, the May 19, 2021 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Kevin J. Zanner  
Secretary