

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

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

**October 21, 2020  
12:00 p.m.**

**Committee Members Present:**

James W. Comerford  
Michael Finn  
Darby Fishkin  
Thomas R. Hersey, Jr.  
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)  
Kimberley Minkel

**Committee Members Absent:**

Trina Burruss  
Dottie Gallagher  
Darius G. Pridgen

**Officers Present:**

Peter M. Cammarata, President  
Brandye Merriweather, Vice President, Downtown Development  
Rebecca Gandour, Vice President, Finance & Development  
Mollie Profic, Treasurer  
Kevin J. Zanner, Secretary  
Atiqa Abidi, Assistant Treasurer

**Guests Present:** Jenna Bichler, Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency; Debra Chernoff, Buffalo Place, Inc.; Arthur Hall, BUDC; and Daniel Leonard, Wendel Companies.

**Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 12:05, with Ms. Minkel serving as chair of the meeting. The Secretary called the roll and a quorum of the Committee was determined to be present. Mr. Mehaffy joined the meeting during the presentation of item 4.0, and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting was held via video/telephone conference in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 202.1 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 September 18, 2020 Meeting** – The minutes of the September 18, 2020 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Mr. Comerford made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried (5-0-0).
- 2.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Ralph C. Wilson Foundation Grant Agreement #4** – Ms. Gandour presented her October 21, 2020 memorandum regarding a grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for the Centennial Park project. The amount of the grant is \$4,662,000 and will be used to contract with BUDC consultant Michael Van Valkenburgh, Inc. (MVVA) to prepare construction drawings and documents, fund early construction activities related to the placement of fill

for the pedestrian bridge approaches, the purchase of granite blocks for use throughout the park, and a contingency for additional due diligence work. In response to a question from Ms. Minkel, Ms. Gandour stated that the initial grant amount was \$4,775,000, but was reduced after additional efficiencies were worked into this aspect of the project. Committee members also commented on project sustainability. Ms. Minkel requested that regular updates regarding sustainability measures be presented at future meetings of the Committee. There being no further discussion, Mr. Hersey made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors accept a \$4,662,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for costs associated with advancing the redevelopment of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park to the construction phase and authorize the BUDC President or the BUDC Vice President- Finance & Development to take such actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

- 3.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Gardiner & Theobald Change Order** – Ms. Gandour presented her October 21, 2020 memorandum regarding a proposed change order to the Gardiner & Theobald (G&T) project management agreement. Ms. Gandour explained that the change order would authorize G&T to self-perform additional cost estimation work for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project at a cost of \$32,000. In response to a question from Ms. Fishkin, Ms. Gandour indicated that this work was originally slated to be performed by a sub-consultant at a cost of approximately \$115,000. Ms. Fishkin made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors approve a change order to the project management contract with G&T in the amount of \$32,000 for additional cost estimation work to be performed by G&T for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project, the cost of which will be paid with funds from the first grant award from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, and to authorize the BUDC President or BUDC Vice President-Finance & Development to take such actions as are necessary to implement this authorization. The motion was seconded by Mr. Comerford and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

Following the presentation and vote on item 3.0, Ms. Merriweather reported on the third amendment to the MVVA agreement. The third amendment does not impose any additional obligations upon BUDC. Its purpose is to obligate MVVA to comply with the pass-through federal grant requirements in the subrecipient agreement between BUDC and the Great Lakes Commission.

- 4.0 Presentation – Ellicott Node Concept Draft Plan Preview** – Ms. Merriweather introduced Dan Leonard of the Wendel Companies to preview the Ellicott Node Concept draft plan. Mr. Leonard shared with the Committee a set of slides relating to the “Draft Design Strategy”, including several different maps of the Ellicott Street corridor. He reviewed the project deliverables, which include: (i) a 2-D urban design plan; (ii) a 3-D massing model; (iii) developer/property owner engagement; (iv) confidential engagement report; and (v) project visualizations. The overall recommendation is for a series of incremental modifications and improvements to the Ellicott Street corridor. The report will include cost estimates for individual improvement projects, which Mr. Leonard reviewed with the Committee. Specific recommendations include streetscape improvements to better link the central business district with the medical campus, improving connectivity among the Uniland parcels on either side of Ellicott Street and creation of flexible event areas for the M&T surface lot. Mr. Leonard noted that next steps for the project include soliciting public input. A walking tour of the Ellicott Node project area is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Committee members were encouraged to attend.
- 5.0 BBRP Loan Program – General Update and Discussion** – Ms. Merriweather presented the BBRP Loan Program update. She reported that the Loan Committee made a recommendation at its meeting earlier this month for the Board of Directors to approve an extension of the Phoenix Brewery Apartments loan through February 28, 2021. The proposed extension will include an increase in the annual interest rate. A request for proposals for BBRP loan program funding will be issued in the next several days. Ms. Merriweather noted that BUDC has received a proposal for BBRP loan funding, and is working with the applicant to obtain more information regarding the project.
- 6.0 Buffalo’s Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather reported on the Race for Place initiative. She thanked Committee members and staff for participating in the shared mobility

demonstration for electric bikes and scooters that was held in Cathedral Park last month. Survey results from the shared mobility demonstration will be shared at a future Committee meeting. She also provided updates on the Stantec micro-mobility study and an upcoming WNY ULI event at which Ms. Merriweather will present an update on the Race for Place initiative.

- 7.0 Downtown Infrastructure – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented a brief update regarding the Chippewa Street/entertainment district project, noting the construction remains on track to begin in 2021.
- 8.0 COVID-19 Impacts – Small Business Reopening Efforts** – Ms. Merriweather reported on continuing efforts to assist small businesses in the City of Buffalo. New initiatives are expected to be announced soon. Mr. Mehaffy noted that an item will be presented to the Common Council with respect to utilizing public space during the winter months to accommodate social distancing requirements.
- 9.0 Partner Updates** – Ms. Chernoff presented an update regarding Buffalo Place, including reports on the Main Street grant program, the Better Buffalo Fund and the farmer’s market.
- 10.0 Adjournment** – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Ms. Minkel, seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried, the October 21, 2020 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Kevin J. Zanner  
Secretary