

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

Via Video Conference Call & Live Stream Audio

**November 18, 2020
9:00 a.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. Pridden

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: Debra Chernoff, Buffalo Place, Inc.; Arthur Hall, BUDC; and Mitch LaRosa, Shared Mobility, Inc.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. The Secretary called the roll and a quorum of the Committee was determined to be present.

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 October 21, 2020 Meeting** – The minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Mr. Hersey made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (6-0-0).
- 2.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – MVVA Change Order** – Ms. Gandour presented her November 18, 2020 memorandum regarding a proposed change order to the Master Service Agreement between BUDC and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates. The change order is for additional grant and design development support for the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project. The cost of this change order is \$31,000. Ms. Gandour noted that funding from the first and fourth grant awards from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation will be used to pay for the change order. Mr.

Finn made a motion to recommend that the Board of Directors approve the change order consistent with the terms set forth in the November 18, 2020 memorandum. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (6-0-0).

- 3.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update on the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project. BUDC is currently working with MVVA on a contract amendment that will pass through to MVVA the federal requirements set forth in the Subrecipient Agreement between BUDC and the Great Lakes Commission. Design development work is expected to be completed by late December/early January. BUDC continues to pursue additional funding sources for the project. Mr. Finn commented on the damage caused by the recent storm to Centennial Park and the Army Corps of Engineers seawall project. It was noted that weather-related events such as the recent storm demonstrate the importance of a project design that addresses long-term sustainability.
- 4.0 Presentation – Electronic Micro-Mobility Demonstration Highlights** – Ms. Merriweather introduced Mitch LaRosa of Shared Mobility, Inc. to present a report on the electronic micro-mobility demonstration program that was conducted at Cathedral Park in September. Mr. LaRosa presented an overview of micro-mobility, which includes the use of e-bikes, e-scooters and associated infrastructure. He explained how e-bikes can serve as “transportation libraries” and increase mobility in disadvantaged communities. He reviewed with the Committee the findings from the survey conducted of the participants at the Cathedral Park demonstration program. Seventy-five percent of the respondents indicated that they had never used e-bikes or e-scooters. Users generally felt safer operating e-bikes as compared to e-scooters. Users indicated that e-bikes were more conducive for trips of longer duration. Mr. LaRosa noted that these are preliminary findings only, and he then outlined several best practices for a developing a micro-mobility program, including targeted pilot programs, a focus on equity, public input and community control. A question and answer session followed Mr. LaRosa’s presentation. Ms. Minkel commented favorably on the program, noting that a micro-mobility program could help bridge the first mile/last mile transportation gap. Mr. Finn noted that thirty percent of City of Buffalo households do not have access to a vehicle, and that this type of program would be an important supplement to public transit.
- 5.0 Buffalo’s Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update on the Race for Place initiative, noting that focus group sessions will be scheduled soon. She also reported on a recent WNY ULI panel at which she presented an update on the Race for Place initiative. Mr. Mehaffy noted that the Stantec report is expected to be issued in early December.
- 6.0 BBRP Loan Program – General Update and Discussion** – Ms. Merriweather presented the BBRP Loan Program update. The Board of Directors approved an extension of the Phoenix Brewery Apartments loan through February 28, 2021. The borrower has signed all required loan extension documents. Ms. Merriweather also reported that she continues to work with a developer on a project that may involve BBRP loan funding.
- 7.0 Queen City Pop Up – Small Business Recovery Efforts** – Ms. Merriweather reported on the recent launch of the 2020 Shop Small All Season Downtown Dollars Giveaway program. This joint initiative of the Queen City Pop Up Program and Buffalo Place is designed to promote downtown retail businesses during the holiday season. The program began November 9th and will run through December 24th.
- 8.0 Partner Updates** – Ms. Chernoff presented an update regarding Buffalo Place. The annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony has been cancelled this year due to the pandemic. Skating activities at Rotary Rink are also on pause for now.

9.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Mr. Comerford, seconded by Mr. Finn and unanimously carried, the November 18, 2020 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary