

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

**65 Niagara Square
901 City Hall
October 19, 2022
12:00 p.m.**

Committee Members Present:

Catherine Amdur
Daniel Castle
Darby Fishkin
Brendan R. Mehaffy (Committee Chair)
Kimberley Minkel

Committee Members Absent:

Trina Burruss
Darius G. Pridgen
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: John Cleary, Gilbane Building Company; Cristina Cordero, Gardiner & Theobald (via telephone); Alexis Florczak, Hurwitz Fine P.C.; Soma Hawramee, ECIDA Compliance Officer; Kelly Maloney, Gilbane Building Company; Antonio Parker, BUDC Project Manager; and Michael Schmand, Buffalo Place.

Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 12:06 p.m. A quorum of the Committee was present.

1.0 Approval of Minutes of the August 17, 2022 Meeting – The minutes of the August 17, 2022 meeting of the Downtown Committee were presented. Ms. Minkel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (5-0-0).

2.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Project Update Presentation by Gardiner & Theobald – Ms. Merriweather introduced Kelly Maloney from Gilbane Building Company to present the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park project update. Ms. Maloney reported that the project is currently in the pre-construction phase. Gilbane estimates that it will begin bidding out work within the next month. Bids for the tree clearing for Phase 1 construction are due next week and work is anticipated to begin in November or December 2022. Ms. Gandour added that an informational event regarding the tree removal work is being coordinated by G&T and the City. Also, on November 3rd, a M/WBE community outreach and matchmaking event will be held. The GMP contract between Gilbane and the City is currently being negotiated which will hopefully be in place by the end of 2022. In response to a question from Ms. Amdur, Mr. Cleary stated that Phase 1 construction is estimated to cost between 55 to 75 million dollars, depending on the final scope of the project, which is not yet finalized. In response to a question from Ms. Minkel, Ms. Gandour indicated that the Imagine LaSalle website is currently in place to provide details on the project, which will be transferred to the Ralph Wilson Park Conservancy.

Ms. Merriweather added that the BUDC website will also feature a webpage that will connect to the project's website.

- 3.0 Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park – Biohabitats Proposal for Shoreline Monitoring Services** – Ms. Gandour and Ms. Merriweather presented their October 19, 2022 memorandum regarding the Biohabitats proposal for shoreline monitoring services at Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park. Christina Cordero explained Biohabitats' current role in the project and the proposal to have Biohabitats perform post-construction shoreline monitoring services. The proposal would involve having BUDC's consultant Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates contract for these services. These services involve post-construction obligations, which is a potential expansion of BUDC's present role in the project. BUDC staff is seeking input from the Downtown Committee given these circumstances. There was an extended discussion following the presentation. Committee members expressed hesitation in having BUDC hold the contract due to the precedent it could set and because the monitoring work could turn into an extended remediation project in the event that plant life does not take hold along the shoreline. There was also discussion whether the obligation could be limited to the initial four-year timeframe set forth in the proposal and whether the obligations could be assigned to another party such as the Ralph Wilson Park Conservancy or the City of Buffalo.
- 4.0 Buffalo Building Reuse Project – Loan Program Payment Resolution** – Ms. Merriweather presented her October 19, 2022 memorandum regarding invoicing for past fees owed to BUDC in connection with Buffalo Building Reuse Loan Program. Following the presentation, Ms. Minkel made a motion to recommend that the invoice be presented to the Board of Directors for approval and for the Board to authorize the President or Executive Vice President to take such actions as are necessary to facilitate prompt payment. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fishkin and unanimously carried (5-0-0).
- 5.0 Buffalo's Race for Place – General Update** – Ms. Merriweather presented an update regarding Buffalo's Race for Place. BUDC continues its work with the Project for Public Spaces and GoBike Buffalo on the placemaking grant received for the Ellicott Node. BUDC is working with Wendel to adjust the scope of the first phase of the project and to potentially turn the library underpass work into a multi-phase approach to maximize project impact. The selection team assembled to review the responses to the request for proposals (RFP) for the Inner Harbor and Waterfront Public Realm master plan has selected four respondents for interviews, which will occur next week. A waterfront coordination meeting was held last week to re-engage waterfront stakeholders. It is anticipated that additional meetings will be held before the next quarterly meeting takes place. Mr. Parker is looking for a location for the holiday edition of the Queen City Pop-Up. On October 20th, Ms. Merriweather will be a guest speaker at the AIA annual meeting and will highlight Race for Place, Centennial Park, Northland, and Build Back Better.
- 6.0 Partner Updates** – Mr. Schmand reported that the last downtown farmer's market of the year will take place on October 20th. Rotary Rink will be open for free ice skating as of November 25th. The annual tree lighting ceremony will take place on December 3rd. Mr. Schmand also reported on the Main Street Grant program, noting that since 2006, \$1.3 million in grant funds have been disbursed to 38 projects, which has generated \$1.8 million in private investment. The 2022 grant awards will be announced in the coming months. Mr. Castle reported that on Friday October 21st, the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee will celebrate its 15th anniversary. The Committee has committed approximately \$30 million to improvements along parklands, shorelines and trails.

7.0 Adjournment – There being no further business to come before the Downtown Committee, upon motion made by Ms. Minkel and seconded by Mr. Castle, the October 19, 2022 meeting of the Downtown Committee was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin J. Zanner
Secretary