

**ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 23, 2005  
CAPTAIN'S STEAK AND SEAFOOD RESTAURANT  
OSWEGO, NEW YORK**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Eric Mower who thanked Dave Turner from the City of Oswego for facilitating the meeting and commission member Kim Seager for her loyal work on behalf of Oswego. Eric then invited Mayor John Gosek to greet the group; the Mayor welcomed the commissioners to the port city and thanked Kim and the others for their work. He went on to invite all to tour the award winning waterfront and pointed out that the Governor's dollars had been put to good use over the last 20 years.

Kim Seager invited everyone to stay for the sunset and thanked County Legislator Paul Santore, Christine Gray for putting together the tourism packet, and city resident and advocate for Oswego River Dick Pfund who, with the help of the Canal Corporation, piloted the tall ship *Dennis Sullivan* through the canal system.

**Attendance:**

Attendance was taken (see attached list), and it was determined that a quorum was not present. Eric mentioned that the minutes were in the Commissioners packets but could not be approved because a quorum was not present. He asked if there were any questions concerning the minutes; the minutes were accepted, unofficially, as submitted.

**Adjourned:**

Due to the lack of quorum, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m. A work session followed.

**WORK SESSION SUMMARY**

**Budget:**

Joe Callahan reported:

---federal fiscal year ends September 30, 2005.

---Management Plan project spent less than \$ 121,000 at this time. Of the remaining balance, \$225,000 has been committed, leaving \$154,000 to be committed before fiscal year end. He suggested that the money could be "parked" for the next fiscal year if the commission desired since we do not know what our funding from Congress will be. He noted that the money has not been earmarked for any particular project.

Joe noted the following lines and issues:

---administrative salaries were low because of departure of Christine DeSorbo.

---travel and utilities were high because of office start-up costs, infrastructure improvements and more expensive travel.

---meetings and workshops running below expenditures.

---thanked the City of Oswego for absorbing the cost of this meeting.  
---House and Senate earmarked \$700,000 in the upcoming budget, subject to approval, and have preliminarily agreed upon a number.  
---pointed out that Frank Dean had forwarded to the Executive Committee the relative dollars that were received by other nation heritage corridors and that they had often received less than this commission. Also, the House and Senate were not in agreement concerning the dollar amount that they were to receive and in no instance was a commission allocated the full one million dollars that has been authorized pursuant to law. Therefore, this commission is in good shape for the upcoming year because of the House/Senate agreement and the relatively high dollar amount compared to other national commissions.

Frank Dean reported that the projects discussed at the April 21, 2005, meeting, are underway:

---Cycling the Erie Canal event will occur in July and we have cosponsored the event with Parks and Trails, New York.  
---we also sponsored a national trail day event that occurred on June 1, 2005.  
---canal schooner *Lois McClure*, traveling from Lake Champlain, will be visiting many canal communities along the Champlain corridor and is generating publicity. The Commission is co-sponsoring this tour.  
---web site upgrade, in conjunction with the Management Plan launch, is underway and is being transitioned from a planning site to a visitor oriented site. Money has been set aside for that.  
---we plan to work on additional wayside exhibits and Port Byron exhibits with our allocated funding.  
---we have been busy and are excited about the community impact of these projects.

Frank reported that a request had come in from Commissioner Tom Grasso (which had been discussed at the last meeting) concerning the *Day Peckinpaugh*. Frank explained that the *Day Peckinpaugh* is a large, self-contained motorized cargo vessel-the last of its kind to ply the waters of the canal-that carried grain and other cargo between the Great Lakes, Duluth, Minnesota, to Albany, New York, and on to New York City. This huge vessel fills up a barge canal lock and is 256 feet. Being the size of a football field, it would serve as a good platform for such activities as school programs. The vessel had been in Erie, Pennsylvania, and the New York State Museum has agreed to purchase it to save it from being scrapped. It will be the largest object in the museum collection. Details are being worked out concerning its transport into New York State waters. Tom inquired if the Commission could fund between \$5,000-\$10,000 toward the tow costs which fall in the \$30,000 range. Other donations will make up the difference.

John Callahan passed around pictures from Erie, Pennsylvania, acknowledging the great condition of the vessel and pointing out the value of this artifact for the people of New York State. He pointed out that the Canal Society of New York State is supportive of this effort and that announcements would be forthcoming concerning 'her' schedule as well as which specific agencies would be partnering to bring the vessel back to New York State. Necessary preservation efforts will need to follow.

Eric requested comments from commissioners concerning expenditures to move this project forward.

---one supported the idea and acknowledged support given its low cost

---another added support and pointed out the value of vessel preservation as well as the value of bringing vessels along the canal on trips which would publicize canal history thereby capturing tourism potential. He went on to point out that a recent christening of another historic ship as well as other ships such as the *Lois McClure* would help bring people to the canal and would help to tell the story.

---Kim also supported the expenditure. She mentioned that the vessel used to come through the Oswego area and was glad that it would not be lost to disrepair. She would also be supportive of future projects that would allow it to continue to move along the river and be used as an exhibit.

---Carol supported it and reminded the group of the various kinds of vessels that had plied the canal regularly.

---Judy had a procedural question concerning a motion to expend money without a quorum.

---Eric explained that the Executive Committee had previously been granted authorization from the full Commission to expend money if necessary.

---Stuart, also in favor, stated his concern that this could set precedent and that the Commission should consider setting the standards for similar future proposals. He felt that this would ensure future requests fit into a logical pattern.

---Eric agreed and stated that he would direct the Executive Committee to develop appropriate perimeters and move the project forward.

### **Preservation and Management Plan Update:**

Eric reported that:

---consultants have completed the Draft Plan and Environmental Assessment and that the plans have been printed.

---Eric has chosen to not have his firm bid on the public relations work due to a potential conflict of interest. He provided Frank and David Gaines of the National Park Service with the names of firms in New York State. A bidding process was conducted and a public relations firm hired – Ruechert Advertising and Public Relations from Albany, New York; it is a \$25,000 outreach line item in the budget report.

---The Plan will officially be released to the public on June 29, 2005, at a press event in Waterford at 1:00. Eric requested that the Commissioners attend.

---copies and summaries will be mailed to major stakeholders following the press event and will be posted on the web at [www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org)

---eight public meetings will be held and Eric requested that one or more Commission members attend each one.

---a sign-up sheet was sent around to indicate commissioner availability to attend the public meetings.

---Eric directed attention to the Management Plan schedule included in the Commission packets. He acknowledged the commitment and effort on the part of the commissioners and pointed out that the process is moving into the next phase.

--Frank agreed and offered thanks to the Commissioners, staff, and reviewers at the policy level concerning the Plan. He stated that he felt it was a good plan and that the PR firm was working hard, sending out invitations and faxes, to be ready for the press event in Waterford. Frank again invited Commissioners to attend the series of public meetings beginning on July 11, 2005. He noted that this would begin a 45 day compliance public comment period that would begin with the release of the plan on June 29, 2005. A schedule of the meetings would be posted on the web.

Frank also noted that the thoughts and ideas collected from the public meetings would be folded into a final form and that a final Plan would be sent to the Governor and the Secretary of the Interior in the fall for their signature.

--Marcia continued to pass around the sign-up sheet and again requested that we attempt to have at least one Commissioner at each public meeting. In addition, she pointed out that the photograph of the young girl sitting on the canal boat was being printed on a post card and would be mailed to the almost 3000 people whose names had been accumulated over the last four years. She also noted that a question and answer sheet is being developed which will contain information that will help Commissioners answer potential questions from the public. The public meeting format will consist of a short power point presentation by the consultants and staff, followed by a question and answer session.

---Frank explained that prior to the public meetings, in addition to the press event, there will be editorial board visits and media outreach visits to facilitate publicity concerning the availability of the Plan for review.

Eric requested questions or comments concerning materials presented thus far:

---Larry Stid requested that it be made clear to the public what they could expect at the public meetings as to avoid confusion, emphasizing the route their comments would take.

---Eric explained that there was not sufficient dollars to advertise the meetings so we will rely on the support of the media for coverage. He also stated that the meetings would be varied. He noted that the PR firm would be asked to ensure appropriate newspaper, radio, and TV news coverage to increase awareness. He made it clear that we will be listening to comments.

---Marcia clarified that these are public meetings, as opposed to public hearings so we don't need to have legal notices as would be the case for public hearings. She also noted that the Commissioners should think about what role they would like to play at the public meetings. She will be sure the sign-up sheet is sent to those Commissioners not in attendance today.

---a Commissioner inquired as to the availability of the Draft Plan to the public.

---Eric explained that the Plan would be on the web site and that the news coverage would direct people to it. Also, hard copies would be mailed to 234 communities, along with the aforementioned post card mailing. Key stake holders as well as Commissioners would be issued a hard copy. 1,500 copies of the full Plan and Summary and CD's of the Appendices would be available.

---Hannah noted that the document would be in smaller chunks on the web site for ease of access.

---Frank noted that an additional run of summaries might be printed and available for distribution.

---Kim would like to hand deliver copies to libraries in the Oswego area and would note to them that these are only Draft Plans and should only be kept for a specific period of time.

---Frank noted that appendixes would be in CD form for general consumption. Others would be printed in hard copy which would be distributed to public officials.

Eric closed the discussion regarding the Draft Plan by again thanking the Commissioners for their hard work.

**Commissioner Comments:**

---Russ noted that he had just received the Smithsonian magazine which had a series on the Lewis and Clark expedition and suggested that we look into that for the Eric Canal.

---Eric explained that he and Frank would be having a day long meeting at the Smithsonian to discuss the Erie Canal and to begin a long process to hopefully partner with them and focus their attention on the canal.

---Stuart noted that he, Eric and Erie Canalway staff had attended an Alliance of National Heritage Areas Conference and explained that this Commission was part of a larger national and international movement concerning heritage development. He noted that these conferences helped to enhance the message and built excitement for all involved.

**Public Comment Period:**

No comments.

**Executive Committee Report:**

Larry Stid reported:

---Executive Committee meeting was via phone conference. The primary focus was the completion of the Draft Plan, its printing, the timing of the press event, Commissioner participation in public meetings, likely questions and answers, and the Committee's desire that all have a clear understanding of the objectives of the Plan. A short discussion concerning the election of officers was included as well as a decision to continue with today's meeting with or without a quorum and to thank the folks of Oswego for allowing us the experience of this grand gateway into the Canal from Lake Ontario.

---Frank noted that the Executive Committee conference call had taken place on May 18, 2005, in which we were able to get final comments regarding the Draft.

---Eric pointed out other activities relating to the Executive Committee Report: funding from Congress concluded successfully because of support from Senators Clinton and Schumer and their staff as well as others on the hill in the House including Congressman Walsh at a time when there is less money available. Frank has traveled to DC and Eric has joined him on occasion to make calls on congressional staff and elected representatives

---Pier A remains a complicated project with various parties in lower Manhattan and many changes continue to occur. With the help of the National Park Service, we continue to seek clarification from city hall, governor's office and private developers.

---Establishment of a Foundation is moving forward to assist us with the ability to raise money.

---*Day Peckinpaugh* is one way to relate the story of the Erie Canal. Another is an Erie Canal Hall of Fame and we will continue, over the next year, to move this project forward.

---identifying a documentarian to create a documentary.

---hold election of officers for the coming year. Russ Andrews took on the responsibility of nominating committee chair for this effort.

Russ reported that a nominating committee comprised of himself, Tom Blanchard and Sharon Leighton discussed with incumbents their interest in reelection. All present officers would be pleased to serve again as follows: Eric Mower, chair; Larry Stid, vice-chair; Joe Callahan, treasurer; Meg Levine, secretary

Eric ended by requesting comments from Commissioners on this discussion: No comments.

### **Staff Report:**

Frank reported:

---Visitor Center on Peebles Island had a successful opening on May 13, 2005, with Lieutenant Governor Mary Donahue, Commissioner Castro, and Assemblyman Bob Reilly on hand to speak.

--Frank noted that the status of the transportation bill in Washington is moving along and has passed the Senate and House. This is a six year highway bill that includes special projects that would benefit the national heritage corridor and its communities. Although the exact details are yet to be determined, 8 million dollars of projects are in the House version and another 3 million had been requested from the Senate side. He noted that the President is obviously interested in the final numbers but he seems to side with the slightly lower House version.

---Lockport, Rochester and the signage program are singled out for projects in the House version.

--Frank stated that some heritage areas occasionally receive funds from a separate source on the federal side, the National Park Service Construction Budget which is used to implement some of the recommendations in management plans. With our Management Plan almost complete, we hope to go to Congress and request additional funding over the next few years so as to make an impact on upstate New York along our heritage corridor.

--Frank referred to the upcoming meeting at the Smithsonian. He mentioned that future discussions with them will focus on the possibility of an exhibit there as well as the possibility of a traveling exhibit. He mentioned their yearly folk festival and its potential link to the Erie Canal and their experience in the documentary field.

---Frank noted that he would phone each commission member in the near future concerning commission appointments for reelection and would also be working with the Congress and the Governor's office to determine appointees

---Frank reported on the staffing situation: two and one half college student interns would be working at the Visitor Center until Labor Day. Beth Sciumeca will be working with us as a project manager on a part-time basis. She is a planning person from the Saratoga area and an excellent employee. Duncan Hay is in the Boston office of the National Park Service and has agreed to more actively work with us. The details of his

arrival are being decided. Duncan will be our cultural resource specialist; he has a wealth of knowledge about the Erie Canal and is a native of Albany.

---Marcia turned attention to the meeting packets and highlighted a flyer entitled "I Love Adventure." This piece was done in partnership with the NYS Dept. of Economic Development, the New York State Canal Corporation, Lakes to Locks Passage, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. This piece appeared in the 2005 "I Love New York" travel guide (800,000 copies). In addition, 150,000 copies of the piece were printed as a separate supplement. Erie Canalway provided \$5,000 for this piece.

---Marcia added to Stu's observations concerning the International Heritage Development Conference in Nashville. She noted that the conference was sponsored by the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, a 501c6 advocacy group of which the Commission is a member. She noted that the alliance has formed a new sister organization, a 501c3 membership organization called "Heritage Development Partnership, Inc." The purpose of this organization is to promote the heritage development movement throughout the country. She spearheaded the efforts to create the bylaws and organizational structure for this new group. Membership information is in the meeting packets and she urged everyone to consider joining.

---Marcia pointed out the Lieutenant Governor's press release concerning the opening of the Peebles Island Visitor Center in Waterford. She also noted a week-long series about the canals published in the Albany *Times Union*. She reported on the Governor's press event on May 27, 2005, where he announced the new director of the New York State Canal Corporation, Carmella Mantello, and announced he is requesting a report to investigate the creation of an Erie Canal Greenway and an Empire State Greenway, which would include the Erie Canal Greenway, the Hudson Valley Greenway and the new Niagara River Greenway. John Callahan of the NYS Canal Corporation added that Carmella Mantello was confirmed by the NYS Canal Corporation Board on June 21, 2005.

---Marcia outlined the schedule for the upcoming New York State Canal conference to be held on September 11-13, 2005. The Erie Canalway will have a session on Monday morning at 11:00AM moderated by Marcia, and featuring Eric Mower, Frank Dean, and Christopher Stienon. This session, as well as the luncheon session immediately following, will be "packaged" by the conference organizers with a special price to encourage local officials and media to attend. Larry Stid added that the theme "New York's Canals: What the World is Coming To" is meant to highlight the fact that the canals are becoming an international tourism destination. There has been considerable improvement in Rochester's canal front since the World Canal Conference in 2000 which will be featured during the conference.

---Marcia reported on the status of the private-sector canal marketing initiative that has been underway since last year's canal conference. There have been five meetings at different locations around the state, as well as several conference calls, and the group is making steady progress. She has been involved as a technical advisor. They hope to announce at the Rochester canal conference about the formation of the new group, its mission, organizational structure, etc.

**Next Meeting:**

Discussion ensued about having the next commission meeting in Rochester during the Canal Conference. Marcia will check with the conference planning committee to see if it would be possible to hold a meeting in conjunction with the conference.

Work Session ended at approximately 12:30 pm.

Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by:  
Secretary Megan Levine \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by the:  
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance  
June 23, 2005  
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor  
Commission Meeting

**ECNHC Commission Members**

Eric Mower, Chair  
Joseph M. Callahan, Treasurer  
Russell S. Andrews  
Rocco J. DiVeronica  
Lynn B. Herzig  
Kimberly M. Seager  
Judy Schmidt-Dean  
Stuart Stein  
Larry O. Stid  
Alan N. Vincent  
Carol B. Greenough  
Peter Welsby

**Liaisons to the Commission**

John Callaghan, NYS Canal Corporation  
Ken Lynch, DEC  
John Feltman, DEC  
Tom Blanchard, ESDC  
Dominic Jacangelo, OPRHP

**Staff**

Frank Dean  
Marica Kees  
Hannah Blake

**Consultants**

None

**General Public**

Mayor of Oswego  
Dick Pfund  
Andy Kitzman, Erie Canal Museum  
Christine Gray, Oswego County Promotion and Tourism  
Sharon Rice, Galen Historical Society  
Joseph O'Toole, Wayne County Historical Society  
David Bottar, Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board  
David Turner, City of Oswego  
Jayne Ritz, City of Little Falls  
Nan Ressue, City of Little Falls  
Duncan Hay, NPS  
Bill Leaf, WSYR Radio  
Steve Yablonski, Daily News  
Delen Goldberg, Post-Standard

