

**ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 12, 2005
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Eric Mower.

Attendance:

Attendance was taken (see attached list), and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made by Judy Schmidt-Dean to approve the April 2005 minutes. The motion was seconded by Alan Vincent. The motion was approved unanimously.

Budget Report:

- Fiscal Year 2005: The management plan has been paid for in full. The primary objective has been achieved over the course of the past three years. With the addition of Cultural Resource Specialist Duncan Hay and three summer rangers, the administrative salaries are higher than budgeted, as well as travel due to the number of public meetings held over the summer publicizing the plan. The \$100,000 HUD funding will be carried over into FY 2006 as the federal fiscal year ends on September 30.
- Fiscal Year 2006: A preliminary budget was presented, which included increases in administrative salaries and travel.
 - The administrative increase included paying part of Duncan Hay's time, a couple of summer rangers, and two more employees—a Communications and Marketing Specialist and an Interpretive Specialist.
 - Travel was increased by \$10,000 to help towards increase in gas prices and community outreach by the staff. Travel budget may need to be re-accessed in three to six months.
 - Project development includes some of \$205,070 is carryover money from the FY 2005 budget.
 - The federal assessment is estimated at \$10,000, which is a mandatory assessment by congress or the administration against National Park Service projects across the board. In summary, while Congress and the President have approved the budget at \$650,000, the actual total is \$910,000. This amount includes the authorized amount of \$650,000 plus the approximately \$150,000 carried over from FY 2005 plus the \$100,000 HUD funding that was received from Congressman Walsh less the estimated congressional assessment.
- Transportation Enhancement Funding: The President signed into law the transportation enhancement funding for over \$8,000,000 earmarked throughout the corridor. In some cases the commission and staff will be involved in projects like the Erie Canal Museum in enhancing their exhibits. Another is the signage and identity project.

A motion was made by Peter Welsby to approve the FY 2005 budget. The motion was seconded by Alice Roth. The motion was approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Bob Reilly to approve the FY 2006 budget. The motion was seconded by Spike Herzig. The motion was approved unanimously.

Erie Canalway Preservation and Management Plan Update and Schedule:

Christopher Stienon from Beyer Blinder Bell (BBB) gave a presentation on the plan.

Summary of Public Comments Received on Draft Plan: BBB categorized the comments they received at the meetings during the 2-week period in July. Categories were developed based on these comments.

- Fully addressed in the plan: Many of the comments focused on elements and artifacts that were outside the Erie Canalway boundaries, such as the feeder canals and different towns nearby. Feeder canals may warrant another phase in the report because of their importance.
- Addressed in plan but required additional detail: Many people who just read the manifest felt that their project, artifact, or town was not completely mentioned, so therefore raised the comment. Topics mentioned were actions, marketing, and signage that had been discussed at length in the plan. There was mention of individual resources. There were misconceptions about scope and authority of the plan. May consider adding more detail or emphasis and BBB be looking for direction from the commission.
- New issues and recommendations: Many things have happened since the plan has been written; the completion of the Western Erie State Heritage Corridor, speed limits have changed on the canal, Smithsonian Institution has been approached about collaboration, the proposed Erie Canal Greenway may need to be discussed and how that relationship is going to be founded. Other ideas such as a corridor-wide canalway celebration, which there has already been some discussion by the commission. There was a comment on establishing a canal-wide gatekeeper or custodian of the canal, which already exists on the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Corridor. However, after some discussion, the commission may not want to launch this as it is. It is a purview of the Canal Corporation.
- Comments about administrative issues for the commission: Issues were brought up on how the money would be distributed, what is the commission's next steps and how is the plan going to be implemented. The commission will need to continually work to educate the public regarding these issues.
- Issues relating specifically to the Canal Corporation: Comments such as speed limits, how the canal is maintained, hours of operation, and dates of operations are all outside of this commission and rest with the Canal Corporation. A note maybe warranted somewhere just to mention this in the document.
- Comments about format and style of the report itself: There were comments concerning format and style, which BBB had already been reviewing. Will neutralize the gender of different terms and include the map that was in the manifest into the plan.

Draft Plan Status: For the next month and a half we will be working on revisions. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is being prepared by the National Park Service, which basically asks whether or not an environmental impact statement is needed. There was a discussion on the process of reviewing these final changes. A vote was taken asking the Commissioners to give the Executive Committee authority to send the final draft to the Governor and Secretary of Interior without seeing it once more even though a meeting could be scheduled in time for them to review it once more. Most were in favor of giving the Executive Committee

the authority. Stuart Stein expressed trust in the Executive Committee but feels this is the most important point in the 3-year process and should be discussed with the full Commission. Discussion followed on scheduling a meeting. There was concern that the next meeting may lack a quorum to vote on the final draft due to some vacancies on the commission. Most of the changes would amount to technical changes and nothing consequential. A consolidated document will be emailed to each commissioner that will outline deletions, additions, modifications to the content of the plan and each commissioner is asked to respond to that email with any comments they have. Once that is done, the comments will be consolidated into a final draft plan.

A motion was made for the commission to adopt the plan for the purposes of sending the draft to the Governor and the Secretary of Interior for approval in accordance with our legislation subject to any changes in response to public comment adopted by the Executive Committee following notification to all commissioners of such proposed changes. Motion seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Schedule for Completion of Final Plan Documents and Submission for Approval: This should be completed in October. The next step will be to send the plan to the Governor and the Secretary of Interior for their final review and signature, which they are allocated three months for this process. Barring any problems, the plan could be signed in February 2006 and ready for distribution to the public in March.

There were many comments praising the plan. The most negative comment was on the logo, which will need to be revisited. Frank Dean mentioned that money has been set aside from the FY 2005 budget to have the logo reviewed more thoroughly. He briefly discussed the meeting he attended with the State Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Thruway Authority. The Hudson Valley Heritage Area is further ahead on their signage program and they were looking at logos and doing some gateway signage at some of the major intersections on the interstates. What would be approved for Hudson they would approve a similar look for Erie. The National Park Service arrowhead is approved automatically because it is recognized throughout the country and the world as an icon. Any new logos have issues with highway speeds, safety, etc., and will need to be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Executive Committee Report:

The conference call held on August 31 focused on reviewing the public comments with the staff and consultants and advising the consultants on how to handle these comments. There was discussion on financial items such as the possibility of establishing a pilot grant program with available funding and how to refocus the commission's energies into implementation of the plan.

Staff Report:

Frank Dean briefed the commissioners on the following items:

- Erie Canal Greenway: There is a task force the governor formed and a report will be due to the Governor in November. Then the Governor is expected to announce more details in the State of the State Address followed by introducing to the state legislature something into proposed law to authorize the program. We will address the Erie Canal Greenway in the

final version of the management plan. Their goals are similar and appear to share the same boundary.

- In the packet are proposed Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor legislation for review and direction. The most important is the quorum issue. It would give more flexibility that would say the majority of seated or sworn commissioners at a meeting would constitute a quorum. Would like to get something changed this session in Congress.
- The packet also contained information regarding liability for commissioners and staff; grant programs; and polo shirt orders.
- Introduction of staff. Mary Cunningham is the new Program Specialist coming from Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska, with experience in park service budget issues. Linda Trombley worked at the visitor center all summer. Duncan Hay is one of the most knowledgeable on the Erie Canal history and cultural resources. Beth Sciumeca is our new project manager keeping various initiatives moving along.
- New Initiatives:
 - The Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridor plan has been approved and will be setting up their management entity in the upcoming months.
 - The Niagra Greenway Commission will soon be moving into their planning phase and is currently drafting an RFP to hire a consultant. They have brought on a staff person who will be on loan from the Power Authority to assist them.
 - Canal New York, Inc., a marketing organization, is in response to last year's canal conference in Glens Falls and is primarily lead by private sector individuals and businesses. They have drafted bylaws, articles of incorporation, and there is a temporary board. Frank will provide technical advice to them.
- Marcia Kees will be speaking at the upcoming American Planning Association Conference in Buffalo. She will also attend the Governor's Tourism Conference in Alexandria Bay, which is hoping to define to tourism officials heritage areas, greenway, and scenic byway corridors and attend the Department of State Waterfront Conference in Long Island.
- Marcia Kees will be ending her 4-year term with the National Park Service at the end of September and she will return to her position as the Coordinator for the New York State Heritage Area Program. At this point Commissioner Mower thanked Marcia for her dedicated service and presented her with an Erie Canal print by T.F. Tantillo. Also, presented was the National Park Service arrowhead in appreciation for her dedicated service as the first employee of the Erie Canalway.

Commission Officer Elections and Vacancies:

There were no nominations from the floor. The slate of candidates has been proposed by Commissioner Andrews. The four incumbent officers appear as candidates. A motion was made by Alan Vincent to approve the slate of candidates. Motion was seconded by Stuart Stein. The motion was approved unanimously. The four officers are Eric Mower, Chair; Larry Stid, Vice Chair; Megan Levine, Secretary; and Joseph Callahan, Treasurer.

We have received official resignations from Commissioners Mr. Colucci, Mr. Giambra and Mr. Bulman. Discussion and paperwork have been started on these three vacancies. We are actively working on getting a replacement for Mr. Boardman from the New York State Department of Transportation because he has left his position. The Department of Environmental

Conservation nomination of Denise Sheehan is also in progress. The vacancies and approval process is the reason for the proposed change in the legislation on the quorum issue.

Executive Director Frank Dean will be contacting each commissioner to discuss their plans on staying with the commission. Although all of the appointments have expired, the incumbent commissioner may serve until they are either renominated or are replaced by the Secretary of Interior. If interested in continuing with the commission, he will work with the nominating official and submit it to Washington.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be determined at a later date.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Prepared by: Mary Cunningham

Date: November 26, 2005

Approved by Secretary Megan Levine _____

Date: _____

Approved by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Commission

Date: _____

Attendance
September 12, 2005
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor
Commission Meeting, Rochester, New York

ECNHC Commission Members

Eric Mower, Chair
Larry Stid, Vice Chair
Megan Levine, Secretary
Joseph M. Callahan, Treasurer
Thomas Grasso
Lynn Herzig
Robert Reilly
Alice Roth
Judith Schmidt-Dean
Pieter W. Smeenk
Stuart Stein
Alan N. Vincent
Peter J. Welsby

Proxies held for absent Commission members (as necessary)

Proxy held by Megan Levine for Commissioner Nathan L. Rudgers
Proxy held by Eric Mower for Commissioner Russell S. Andrews
Proxy held by Thomas Grasso for Commissioner Charles A. Gargano

Liaisons to the Commission

Bob McIntosh, NPS
Dominic Jacangelo, OPRHP
Tom Blanchard, ESDC
Earl Flint, NYS Dept. of Agriculture and Markets
Ken Lynch, NYSDEC

Staff

Frank Dean
Marcia Kees
Hannah Blake
Duncan Hay
Linda Trombley
Beth Sciumeca
Mary Cunningham

Consultants

Christopher Stienon, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP

Guests

Sue Senecah, NYS Senator George D. Mariarz
Fred Miller, Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor
Florine Luhr, ESDC
Alan Oberst, Subway/Erie Canal Revitalization Committee
John Feltman, NYSDEC
John Dimura, NYS Canal Corporation