

**ERIE CANALWAY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 26, 2006
ONONDAGA CONVENTION CENTER
SYRACUSE, NEW YORK**

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Eric Mower.

Attendance:

Attendance was taken (see attached list), and it was determined that a quorum was not present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

There was no approval of minutes since there was not a quorum present.

Budget Report:

The Commission's appropriation of \$750,000 consists of \$650,000 from Congress plus \$100,000 of HUD money. The Congressional/NPS Assessment in the past has been 1%, which has been increased to approximately 1.75%. The difference is due to Hurricane Katrina. All domestic spending outside of the Department of Defense received the same assessment.

The proposed Baseline Survey is to ascertain our present status so when the Commission expires by law in 2010 and we seek renewal, this information will be used to do a sustainability study proving the Commission's worth and demonstrate results.

Two letters requesting financial assistance were presented.

- The Canal Society is seeking support for their annual state canal conference, which will be held in Waterford/Troy/Cohoes area this September. After some discussion, the Executive Committee was called to order and approved sponsorship in the amount of \$10,000.
- The proposal by Media Artists, Inc. is a project that involves the development of a set of boater-oriented DVD disks that contain both video programs and PDF books to facilitate and encourage travel along selected routes. After a lengthy discussion, it was determined more information was needed. Spike took on this assignment and will ask Media Artists for more detail. This item will be revisited in the future.

FY 2005 Audit Report:

Mark Hettler from TFG CPAs, P.C. presented the FY 2005 Audit report.

- *Summary:* He took a sampling of payroll and travel as well as all the contracts that were awarded out for projects. Some contracts were carried over into the new fiscal year as projects have yet to be completed. The total funding was \$690,000 for FY 2005, which all but \$689 of which was used by the Commission for funding projects and staff. The \$100,000 HUD money was again carried over into FY 2006. Mark then reviewed the matching funds, which is required by the Commission's enabling legislation. No tax

return needs to be filed; however, the statements need to be filed. This is done as soon as they are completed; there are no deadlines.

- *Recommendations:* He made the recommendation that the name on the travel credit card account be changed. He also recommended documenting matching shares prior to year's end.
- *Concerns:*
 - The standard wording of "entertainment" was used in the audit. Eric would like to see that word eliminated legally. Federal credit cards that the staff uses do not authorize entertainment. It is a prohibited expense by federal law so we can eliminate the wording.
 - There was a question on whether there were personnel policies in place. Should accruals that occur over time put the Commission in financial jeopardy when someone leaves. Federal employees have protocols in place but recent staff additions that were made through Parks and Trails New York will need to be addressed. If federal money through Parks and Trails New York is used to hire staff, the question is should we be using the federal standards in terms of benefits and other salary standards. An opinion from the National Park Service legal counsel is needed.
- *Closing:* Mark thanked the staff for their cooperation. They were always open in giving him all the information that was requested. He thanked the Commission for the continued business and looked forward to working with the Commission in the future.

Proposed Fundraising Organization:

A committee was formed at the last meeting that consisted of Joe Callahan, Meg Levine, Kim Seager and Beth Sciumeca. The committee had a telephone conference in January discussing preliminary establishment of a not-for-profit fund raising organization as per the Commission's mandate. The following four topics were discussed:

- *Schedule:* Beth reviewed the proposed schedule for forming this organization. The first step is filing the certificate of incorporation. Preliminary work has already begun on the certificate. The staff will draft the Certificate of Incorporation and send to every Commissioner a copy as soon as possible and Commissioners will return comments to Beth.
- *Purpose:* After reviewing and discussing the proposed purpose statement, it was modified to tentatively read, "The (name of new organization) works in cooperation with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission to raise funds for projects and programs authorized by the Commission that protect, interpret, and enhance the Corridor's nationally significant natural, historic, and cultural resources while fostering economic revitalization and improving the quality of life in Corridor communities."
- *Name for the Organization:* There were several options for names and the Commission needs to make a decision. Name tentatively agreed to was "Erie Canalway Association".
- *Directors of the Organization:* The three proposed individuals to be listed on the certificate of incorporation are Kim Seager, as the incorporator, Joe Callahan and Eric Mower. This is just for the convenience of getting this document filed—this does not represent the actual board of directors that will be named when the bylaws are drafted. The Commission will need to decide how many members are to sit on this organization's board of directors, how many will be Commissioners and non-Commissioners and

eligibility. Commissioners are to submit names of potential board members to Eric and he will share with the Executive Committee of the Commission and with the staff.

Proposed Grant-Making Program:

A telephone conference was held since the last Commission meeting with the committee consisting of Stu Stein, Alan Vincent, Carol Greenough, Pieter Smeenk, Marcia Kees, Russ Andrews and Hannah Blake to discuss the grant-making program. A draft guideline was prepared and presented to the Commission. It was not discussed in detail but there were discussions on the proposed schedule, allocation, eligibility and mandated match. There are other questions that need to be explored with the legal staff.

The Commissioners were tasked to review this draft and to send all notes, edits, comments, and criticisms to Hannah. She will incorporate all responses and share it with Stu. An updated document will be sent to the Commissioners and it will be finalized at the next commission meeting. In the meantime, this year's money will be tentatively earmarked for some projects that have been previously discussed.

Commissioner Comments:

Marcia Kees:

- The Governor's office received the management plan and has sent it to Commissioner Castro at State Parks. Draft comments were written and are under review by the other state agencies.
- Peter Wiles was selected as interim chair for the newly formed organization Canal New York. Marcia is on the interim board. The next meeting is scheduled for February 15 in Syracuse at the Eire Canal Museum and they will elect a board of directors. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

Public Comments:

No one from the public was present.

Staff Report:

Frank Dean:

- Introduced Erie Canalway new staff member Lori Duell, Management Assistant. She previously worked with the Feeder Canal Alliance in Glens Falls.
- The Secretary of Interior received her copy of the management plan on January 20. The Governor and Secretary both have 90 days to review the plan.
- Eric and Frank will be in Washington DC the first week of February to talk with congressional representatives.
- The first issue of the Canal Times has been published. The newspaper focuses on the Erie Canal and the canal system. We wish them great success.
- The task force report for the New York State Canal Corporation and the proposed Erie Canal Greenway has been released. It is a summary of the opportunities in the canal corridor.
- Some artists' renderings were commissioned for the Pier A project. Frank has been talking with the National Park Service and state officials in New York City.

- The World Canal Conference will be held in September in Pennsylvania. We will be making a presentation.
- The website will be upgraded this year. The ultimate domain name was secured—eriecanal.gov, which should make it simpler for people searching on the Internet under Erie Canal. We still have eriecanalway.org.
- Commissioners reviewed the logo that was tweaked. There will be a conference call on January 27 with the company.

Duncan Hay:

- Duncan made a presentation of the wayside exhibits that are being developed. The target date for installing 11 exhibits is July.
- Also in development with Harpers Ferry Center is the National Park Service-style brochure known as the unigrid. One side contains historic information and the other side contains a present-day map with photos and text about things to do in the corridor. The goal is to have this brochure completed in May so it can be out in the literature racks for the summer season.

Election of New Vice Chairman:

The only nomination for Vice Chairman was Alice Roth. Since there is no quorum, she will fill the role on an appointment basis until election can be held.

New Business:

None

Next Meeting:

The staff will send out by email proposed dates.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Prepared by: Mary Cunningham

Date: April 4, 2006

Approved by Secretary Meg Levin

Date: _____

Approved by the Erie Canalway National Heritage Commission

Date: November 16, 2006

ATTENDANCE

January 26, 2006

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Onondaga Convention Center

Syracuse, New York

ECNHC Commission Members

Eric Mower, Chair

Joseph M. Callahan, Treasurer

Russ Andrews

Tom Grasso

Lynn Herzig

Rob Riley

Judith Schmidt-Dean

Stuart Stein

Alan Vincent

Peter Welsby

Proxies held for absent Commission members (as necessary)

None

Liaisons to the Commission

Frank Dean, NPS

Bob Miron, ESDC

Marcia Kees, NYS OPRHP

Carol Cybulski, NSY Dept. of Agriculture and Markets

Sharon Leighton, NYS Canal Corp.

John Feltman, NYS DEC

Staff

Frank Dean

Duncan Hay

Hannah Blake

Beth Sciumeca

Lori Duell