

Minutes
Niagara River Greenway
State Park Standing Committee 18th Meeting
September 22, 2017 – 10:00 AM
DeVeaux Woods State Park
Conference Room 115

Attendees

Mark Thomas, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Lou Paonessa, New York Power Authority

Introduction and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Mark Thomas called the meeting to order at 10:05 am. Lou Paonessa moved to have the minutes from the February 10, 2017, meeting approved; Mark Thomas seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Item

None.

Funding Request

The following projects were deemed consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan as determined by the Niagara River Greenway Commission:

Artpark State Park - Improved Fishing Access

\$ 100,000

Install stairway access to north shore area of Artpark, currently accessible only by descending a steep embankment which is approximately 75 feet in height. Stairway accessibility dependent upon weather conditions. Year-round parking at Artpark State Park. Early summer 2018 completion date.

Fort Niagara State Park - Boat Launch & Fishing Access Improvements

\$ 527,040

This project will remove the used concrete debris placed decades ago to prevent erosion and will replace it with an attractive tiered rock wall designed to promote natural vegetation growth. It will also increase transient docking by over 500 feet, with floating docks and ADA accessibility as well as designated fishing docks. Additionally, the launch ramps will be extended to prevent boat damage during low water periods. This project protects the historic grounds from further erosion and is a vast improvement for the public. The Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Environmental Conservation have approved the hardened shoreline approach replacing the existing hardened shoreline with an improved wall type.

Various Parks – Niagara Shoreline Trail Information Kiosks (7 total)

\$ 75,000

Locations include Buffalo Harbor, Beaver Island, Niagara Reservation (2), Whirlpool, Artpark and Fort Niagara. Niagara River Greenway Executive Director Jeanne Leccese and Commission Chairman Greg Stevens to review content. Empire State Trail follow-up discussion to take place. Fall 2017 completion date.

Niagara Falls State Park - Niagara Falls State Park Revitalization Initiative:

Cave of the Winds Experience Building

\$6,921,831

The goal of this project is to renovate it from a shared use space (i.e. Parks Police and outdated Cave of the Wind Experience) to a state-of-the-art experience in which patrons participate in three interactive areas before accessing the elevators that transport them to the base of the Falls. To meet this objective, the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) has rehabilitated/expanded (vertically) the Pavilion Building and the immediate site surrounding it. The former includes implementing a plan that enables patrons to interact with exhibits, be entertained in a theater and learn about the oldest State Park in the country – all while obtaining their ponchos and sandals. The latter includes new and improved site amenities and a new ticketing building that along with the introduction of timed ticketing will greatly improve the overall Cave of the Winds Experience and create a year-round exhibit. Activities to be scheduled beginning October 4, 2017.

Stedman's Bluff Restoration \$1,823,704

This project included installing new safety railings, replacing asphalt pavement with stone pavers and creating a raised landscape to separate the overlook from the Cave plaza area to create a contemplative space for patrons to view the Falls. Additionally, a new pedestal was created for the Tesla monument to be relocated to this area to provide ADA access so all could approach it for photo opportunities. The Tesla monument to include an interpretive panel consistent with the Cave of the Winds Experience. The adjacent stairway to Luna Island was also reconstructed and improved within this project.

Terrapin Point Phase 2 Restoration and Improvements \$1,576,688

The goal of this project was to renovate the space directly to the east of Terrapin Point (newly rehabilitated). This work includes the creation of a new Trolley Stop (with queueing space), the final pavers/pavement at the previously constructed bus drop-off and the expansion of accessible (ADA) pedestrian walkways. Other improvements include new site furnishings (lighting, railings, bike racks, etc.), the installation of a new storm drainage system and other utilities.

Niagara Falls State Park Support for Bi-National Niagara Falls Illumination Project \$ 628,000
(On July 28, 2016, \$628,000 project approved for when funds became available)

Niagara Falls State Park Park-Wide Signage and Wayfinding Program (Phase 2) \$ 500,000

In an effort to improve the patron experience by ensuring they can easily navigate through Niagara Falls State Park, we are improving the quality and consistency of all signage while simultaneously reducing the quantity. The types of signs include Identification, Orientation, Pedestrian, Vehicular, and Gateway (internally illuminated). Other improvements that will occur under this contract include the installation of new pavement, fossil rock/boulders, landscape plantings (native) and stone walls. Spring 2018 completion date.

Niagara Falls State Park Reconfigure Old Falls Street and O'Laughlin Drive Entrances to Prospect Park and Niagara Falls State Park Visitor Center \$3,925,000

The goal of this project is to improve the patron experience by ensuring that those who walk or arrive by bus or personal vehicle are properly welcomed at the front door to Niagara Falls State Park. Included in the project is a redesign of the tour bus drop off and vehicle access to parking lot 1, to improve the safety of the millions of pedestrians who enter the park through this busy interchange annually. The project will also expand recreational green space while not increasing paved surfaces. The Great Lakes Gardens to be removed. The project pushes people leaving the park into the City. A Request for Proposal (RFP) to study transportation hub is forthcoming.

Niagara River Gorge Trails – Trails Improvement Projects \$ 875,000

Whirlpool and Devil's Hole State Parks – Rehabilitate Gorge Access Trail Stone Stairways (Phase 3) \$1,000,000

As Phase 2 nears completion, Phase 3 will allow for extending the improvements made at Devil's Hole and Whirlpool stairs.
(On July 28, 2016, \$600,000 of project approved for when funds became available)

TOTAL.....\$17,952,263

- Requesting NYS Parks Greenway funding be approved for these projects.
- Mark Thomas motioned to approve NYS Parks Greenway funding for these projects.
Seconded by Lou Paonessa. The vote was unanimous.
Mark Thomas – approve Lou Paonessa – approve

Next Meeting

The next meeting is to be determined at a later date.

Adjournment

Mark Thomas motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lou Paonessa. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.