

**HOST COMMUNITIES
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – 12:00 p.m.
Samuel M. Ferraro Center - Boardroom
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Sanborn NY**

Representatives Present:

Sylvia Virtuoso, Supervisor
Angelo Massaro, Esq.
Paul Casseri, Superintendent
Lou Paonessa
Thomas Burgasser, Esq.
Scott Hapeman, Esq.
Steve Broderick, Supervisor, VICE CHAIRPERSON
Robert M. Restaino, Mayor, CHAIRPERSON

Town of Niagara
Niagara Falls City School District
Lewiston Porter School District
New York Power Authority
Niagara County
Niagara Wheatfield School District
Town of Lewiston
City of Niagara Falls

Alternates/Guests:

Cat Stoehr
Brian Archie
Greg Stevens
Jim Sharp

GoBike/North End Safety Corridor
GoBike/North End Safety Corridor
Director, NRG
Chairman, NRG

Staff Present:

Mary Melloni, Secretary
Mark Gabriele, NPC Counsel

1.0 Call to Order

Chairperson Restaino called the Host Communities Standing Committee meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2.0 Roll Call

Ms. Melloni called the roll.

3.0 Pledge of Allegiance

4.0 Introductions

Cat Stoehr and Brian Archie from GOBike/North End Safety Corridor, and Greg Stevens and Jim Sharp from the Niagara River Greenway Commission were in attendance.

5.0 Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2026 Meeting

Mr. Broderick made a motion, seconded by Ms. Virtuoso, to approve the meeting minutes of March 18, 2026. Motion carried.

6.0 City of Niagara Falls

6.1 **GObike (North End Safety Corridor Project) – Cat Stoehr, Development Manager, GObike**

*(Consultation by NRGCC on 1/14/2026; Approved for funding in the amount of \$50,000 by Niagara Falls City Council on 3/18/2026) **This item is being amended to exclude Garden Avenue from consideration in the proposed study.***

Cat Stoehr stated that this project will bring a temporary pedestrian and bike safety corridor to the Highland neighborhood of Niagara Falls. They are looking to bring low-cost temporary materials to create safer on-road connections to those walking and rolling through the neighborhood and local greenspace, particularly between D’Amelio Park and the Niagara River Greenway. The 2019 Niagara Falls Master Plan indicated that over a quarter of Niagara Falls residents were looking to feel safer on roads and increased connections to local greenspace and it also cites road that have low traffic volume as ideal for temporary traffic coning measures to increase sense of safety and reduce conflict between speeding cars and pedestrians and cyclists that may be navigating the roads. Due to ongoing city projects on Garden Avenue, they have excluded that area from consideration and going forward GoBike’s planning team will work with the City to assess any ongoing considerations or constraints in the project area. They will be collecting updated data on traffic volume and patterns to bring to the City and community. The design will then have a robust community engagement process facilitated by local community partners. They have also secured funding from the Health Foundation of WNY to bring bike safety education to the area.

Mr. Archie added that the Mayor, working with DPW has already began the process of slowing down some of the traffic in the area including speed barriers in several areas such as Center Avenue.

Mayor Restaino stated that in conversations the City had with GoBike, he feels that these types of groups need to start creating a budget for education of people on the proper use of bicycles. There are bicyclists young and old who do not understand the rules of the road, proper use of bike lanes, and proper equipment to wear. The more bicyclists on the road, the more important it is to teach people, starting as young as we can, a proper way to operate. When E-bikes and scooters are added into the mix the roadways become even more complicated. It is understood that motorists have to be smarter also, so there is a request that the City is making for the State Department of Motor Vehicles to provide education in that regard. There will be some commercials in this regard. They are also going to be asking these groups to ask for State legislation that helps make roads safer for everyone.

Mr. Burgasser made a motion, seconded by Mr. Broderick, to approve the funding in the amount of \$50,000 for the GoBike/North End Safety Corridor project as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

<i>Town of Lewiston</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Town of Niagara</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Lewiston Porter</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>City of Niagara Falls</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara-Wheatfield</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara County</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>New York Power Authority</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara Falls Schools</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The resolution was thereupon approved.

7. Town of Lewiston

7.1 Lewiston Pickleball Courts – Steve Broderick, Supervisor

(Consultation by NRG on 5/13/2026; Approved for funding by the Lewiston Town Board on 2/25/2026; requesting funding in the amount of \$750,000).

Mr. Broderick stated that this project addresses the fastest growing sport in the U.S., i.e. pickleball. He explained that there are two pickleball courts in Kiwanis Park and they wanted a location that would be perfect for more courts, but would not disrupt the neighborhoods. They went to the Lewiston Plateau which is in the Artpark State Park and is owned by the Village of Lewiston with a plan to build four pickleball courts, a pavilion and solar lighting. This will not affect any neighborhoods, well past the 400 feet that is recommended to keep pickleball away from houses. They will include a bicycle rack there also. They were also contacted by Lewiston 2 Firehall that they have great use out of their basketball court but not the tennis courts. They discussed renovating the tennis court into pickleball which was almost as expensive as making new pickleball courts, so it was decided to design two new courts at the firehall. Therefore, they will build four pickleball courts and a pavilion at the Lewiston Plateau in the Village and two courts at the firehall. The amount requested is the maximum it would cost and they may be able to offset some of the costs with 6.5 megawatts from the NYPA that they sell on the open market and any in-kind services that the town can provide. Any unused funds will be returned to their Greenway account. They will receive free services from a local engineer who is the individual who requested the additional pickleball courts. There will be no lights at the firehall courts.

Ms. Virtuoso made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hapeman, to approve funding in the amount of \$750,000 for the Lewiston Pickleball Courts project.

A roll call vote was taken.

<i>Town of Lewiston</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Town of Niagara</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Lewiston Porter</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>City of Niagara Falls</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara-Wheatfield</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara County</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>New York Power Authority</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Niagara Falls Schools</i>	<i>Yes</i>

The resolution was thereupon approved.

Ms. Virtuoso made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hapeman, to add the following item to the agenda for discussion:

Correspondence from NRG – Application Process – T. Burgasser

Mr. Burgasser received an email from Lisa Vitello that included the last Greenway Application process from 2018, along with a request to update the procedure. (see attachment). Mr. Burgasser stated that he has had conversations with Ms. Vitello on this request. He stated she explained that this references the Host Communities (excluding school districts). He stated that he explained to Ms. Vitello that it is preferred a project goes to the sponsor first, but it is not mandated. Mr. Burgasser felt that this correspondence needed to come before the Committee to determine if individual Host Communities have a mandate that a project needs to go to them before it goes to the NRG. Mr. Broderick explained that there have been some projects that have gone to the NRG without a sponsorship letter (i.e. resolution) from Niagara County. After some discussion, it was determined that applicants should go to the sponsoring HC.

Correspondence from NRG – Application Process – T. Burgasser [Continued]

Mr. Paonessa explained that one of the things the Commission evaluates is does a project meet the master plans or the goals of a municipality. They do not want someone bringing a project to the Commission and the Commission says it's a great project, yet it does not fall into what the municipality may want for their individual community. Mr. Paonessa stated that in the past he has had to call to make sure the project is something the County wants. The NRG is trying to make sure when an applicant comes to them they have done their due diligence with the County.

Mr. Paonessa explained that this is a question from Lisa Vitello for Niagara County: How does Niagara County want their process spelled out in the NRG's application. Mr. Burgasser stated he will work with Lisa Vitello to make sure applicants from Niagara County follow the procedure.

8.0 Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 16, 2026

9.0 Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn by Ms. Virtuoso, seconded by Mr. Casseri. Meeting adjourned at 12:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary P Melloni

Mary P. Melloni
Recording Secretary