

The Niagara Parks Commission

Minutes of the public meeting of The Niagara Parks Commission held on Thursday, June 13, 2024 at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

Attendance

- Members: Chair Bob Gale
Commissioner April Cotton (via Zoom)
Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe
Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo
Commissioner Jim Diodati
Commissioner Tom Insinna
Commissioner La Caprara
Commissioner Ted Salci
Commissioner Erwin Wiens
- Regrets: Vice Chair Graham Coveney
Commissioner Wayne Redekop
- Staff: David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission
Marcelo Gruosso, Chief Operating Officer
Steve Barnhart, Senior Director, Planning Environment and Culture
Laura Pingue, Director of Finance/Controller
Janice Spino, Chief Human Resources Officer
Katy Wassenaar, Manager, Public Affairs
Darla Jones, Executive Assistant to the Chair and CEO/Recording Secretary

1. Call to Order

Chair Gale called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Approval of Agenda

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Salci and seconded by Commissioner Insinna:

That the agenda be approved.

Carried.

4. Land Acknowledgement

Chair Gale provided the following land acknowledgement:

The Niagara Parks Commission wishes to acknowledge and honour the lands along the Niagara River corridor as the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples. In both spirit and partnership, we recognize and thank the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation of the Anishinaabek, the Neutral Nation, and all who provided stewardship of these lands over millennia. Recognition of the contributions of Indigenous peoples is consistent with our commitment to making the promise of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and play here and thank all those who have served and continue to serve as caretakers of this special place.

5. Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed those in attendance and provided the following remarks:

- When I was first appointed Chair of the Niagara Parks Commission, Premier Ford and I discussed the importance of returning to public Commission meetings.
- I'd like to thank those in attendance this morning and we look forward to sharing more about the fantastic work being done right across this organization.
- Regarding the approval of reports and materials from our committees, a staff representative will provide a brief overview of each item.
- We will then vote to approve the summary of recommendations. Should a Commissioner have a question, we can separate any of the items.
- For the presentations, speakers will present their material from the podium and answer any questions from Commissioners.
- As part of the established protocol, members of the public and media are welcome to attend and observe monthly meetings; however, they are not able to participate in the meeting. While we won't be taking questions during the proceedings, we welcome anyone who has a question to submit it through our Guest Service Centre by email to info@niagaraparks.com.
- Questions will be passed along to Darla who will ensure a response is provided by the appropriate party.
- Should members of the public wish to speak at a meeting, you can submit a request to speak through a digital form available on our website.
- All requests must be received at least ten days before the scheduled Commission meeting. All of this information is also available on our website.
- In addition to in-person meetings, public sessions will also be recorded and made available on our website, along with the presentation files and relevant reports.
- With this being the first public session in over four years, we appreciate everyone's patience and understanding should there be any delays or technical difficulties.

- These past few weeks have been an exceptionally busy time as we get into the peak tourism season at Niagara Parks.
- Last week, Premier Ford announced changes to his Cabinet, naming Stan Cho as the new Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, which is our renamed Ministry.
- Our previous tourism Minister, Neil Lumsden, becomes Ontario's Minister of Sport.
- I've had the pleasure of meeting Minister Cho many times over the years and I know he will be a fantastic advocate for Niagara's tourism industry in his new role.
- We are grateful for the incredible dedication of Minister Lumsden and the support he has provided to Niagara Parks over his time as Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and we wish him all the best in his new role.
- Minister Lumsden leaves behind a positive legacy of growth for Ontario's tourism and culture industries, and I know Minister Cho will continue that legacy.
- We look forward to the opportunity to host Minister Cho at his earliest convenience to experience Niagara Parks and learn more about the key projects we have on the go.
- These past few weeks have been an exceptionally busy time as we get into the peak tourism season at Niagara Parks.
- On May 29, I attended Niagara's Top 40 Under 40 Business Achievement Awards on behalf of the Commission.
- On May 31, I greeted Federal Minister of Tourism Soraya Martinez Ferrada at the illumination tower to change the lights on the Falls.
- The following morning, CEO David Adames met with Minister Martinez Ferrada and other local stakeholders for a morning engagement at Diner House 29 in St. Catharines.
- That same day, we hosted a launch ceremony for a new Indigenous audio tour that has been curated and produced by Michele-Elise Burnett called Rekindling All Our Relations.
- This was also the kickoff to June as National Indigenous History Month.
- After the ceremony, there were guided tours of the Glen, which included live music and storytelling.
- The Rekindling All Our Relations tour is now available for download through an app on your smartphone, or, handheld audio devices are also available from the Niagara Glen Nature Centre. I encourage everyone to check out this new self-guided hiking experience – it is first of its kind in Canada.
- Also that weekend, we hosted a group from the Consulate General of Italy, including Italian Consul General Zelioli, Minister Michael Tibollo, former Hamilton Mayor Larry Di Ianni.
- We lit the Falls up in the colours of the Italian flag in honour of the National Day of Italy.
- Once they found out my mother was Italian – and they actually tested me on it – then I was in.
- On June 6, I attended a plaquing ceremony at Niagara Parks Power Station for the designation of the Niagara Power Generating Stations as a Canadian Society for Civil Engineering (CSCE) National Civil Engineering Site.

- On June 8, we hosted the annual Princess Margaret Ride to Conquer Cancer with Niagara Falls serving as the finish line (and starting line for some riders) for their over 200-kilometre trek in support of vital cancer research.
- I had the opportunity to speak at their opening ceremonies on the Saturday morning, along with Commissioner Diodati as Mayor of Niagara Falls.
- That evening, I attended and spoke at the dinner for the Niagara Shrine Club - we hosted their annual ceremonial parade at Niagara Parks earlier that day.
- I'd like to thank and recognize those Commissioners who have attended events in the past and encourage others to take part in future events.
- This is an organization to be proud of and I am thrilled that we have the opportunity to showcase more of Niagara Parks through the public commission meetings moving forward.
- Thank you to everyone in attendance this morning and we will now continue with the presentations.

6. Presentations

6.1 Business Highlights Presentation

David Adames, CEO, provided a presentation respecting Niagara Parks' Business Highlights.

Staff will provide an overview of Niagara Parks wedding offerings and packages at the July Commission meeting.

Whirlpool pub - Staff will provide a financial analysis at the end of the season.

6.2 Indigenous Programming Overview

Jim Hill, Senior Manager, Heritage and Legacy, provided a presentation respecting Niagara Parks' Indigenous Programming Overview.

7. Items from Governance, Ethics and Human Resources Committee Meeting

7.1 Travel, Meal and Hospitality Policy Update

Laura Pingue provided an overview of the Travel, Meal and Hospitality Policy Update.

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Diodati and seconded by Commissioner La Caprara:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the updated Travel, Meal and Hospitality Policy CPM-02-01.

Carried.

7.2 Corporate Purchasing and Travel Cards Policy

Laura Pingue provided an overview of the Corporate Purchasing and Travel Cards Policy.

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Diodati and seconded by Commissioner La Caprara:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the Corporate Purchasing and Travel Cards Policy.

Carried.

7.3 Red Light and Automated Speed Enforcement Procedure

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Insinna and seconded by Commissioner DeWolfe:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the formation of a procedure to require the operator of any Niagara Parks vehicle who receives a red light or automated speed enforcement camera ticket to pay for the ticket. Under the red light or automated speed enforcement camera initiative the registered owner (Niagara Parks) is provided with the ticket and is responsible for the fine.

Carried.

7.4 Service Animals

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Salci and seconded by Commissioner Wiens:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve updates to the Accessibility Policy regarding Service Animals entering indoor sites at Niagara Parks to ensure clarity for employees when faced with requests from guests to enter indoor public areas with their animal/pet.

Carried.

7.5 Proposed Bill 190 – Working for Workers Five Act, 2024

Janice Spino provided a brief overview of Report 2024-46 respecting Proposed Bill 190 – Working for Workers Five Act, 2024.

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Wiens and seconded by Commissioner Insinna:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive Report 2024-46 respecting Proposed Bill 190 – Working for Workers Five Act, 2024 for information.

Carried.

7.6 Niagara Parks Police Service Quarterly Report

The following motion was moved by Commissioner DiCienzo and seconded by Commissioner DeWolfe:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive Report 2024-47 respecting Police Services Quarterly Report January to March 2024 for information.

Carried.

8. Items from Finance and Audit Committee

8.1 Special Olympics Ontario – 2024 Niagara Golf Program

David Adames provided an overview of Report 2024-54 respecting Special Olympics Ontario – 2024 Niagara Golf Program.

The following motion was moved by Commissioner La Caprara and seconded by Commissioner Insinna:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Waive fees for up to 28 Special Olympics athletes to practice and play at Legends on the Niagara's Chippawa golf course and practice facility once per week for 10 to 12 weeks from June to August 2024; and,

2. Waive fees for the Team Canada Special Olympics advanced athletes to play on the Championship courses at Legends on the Niagara three to five times during the 2024 golf season.

Carried.

9. Information Items

9.1 Summary of Decisions – May 16, 2024 Commission Meeting

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Wiens and seconded by Commissioner Diodati:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive Report 2024-44 Summary of Decisions from the May 16, 2024 Commission meeting for information.

Carried.

10. Other Business

The notice of the June 13, 2024 Public Commission meeting was posted on Niagara Parks' social media accounts, website, included in stakeholder and CEO newsletters as well as a media release. Staff will look to increase awareness of public Commission meetings moving forward to encourage attendance. Material from the public Commission meeting agenda and the video recording of the meeting will be posted on Niagara Parks' website by end of day on June 13, 2024.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday July 11, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

12. Closed Session

12.1 Resolution to Move to Closed Session

The following motion was moved by Commissioner DeWolfe and seconded by Commissioner Diodati:

That The Niagara Parks Commission move into the Closed Session.

Carried.



The Commission moved into the Closed Session with the following persons in attendance:

- Members:
- Chair Bob Gale
 - Commissioner April Cotton (via Zoom)
 - Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe
 - Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo
 - Commissioner Jim Diodati
 - Commissioner Tom Insinna
 - Commissioner La Caprara
 - Commissioner Ted Salci
 - Commissioner Erwin Wiens
- Staff:
- David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission
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Bob Gale
Chair

David Adames
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June 13, 2024