

## The Niagara Parks Commission

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Minutes of the public meeting of The Niagara Parks Commission held on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

### Attendance

Members: Chair Bob Gale  
Vice-Chair Graham Coveney  
Commissioner April Cotton  
Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe  
Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo  
Commissioner Jim Diodati  
Commissioner Tom Insinna  
Commissioner Dan La Caprara  
Commissioner Ted Salci  
Commissioner Erwin Wiens

Regrets: 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  
Paul Forcier, Chief of Police  
Chris Giles, Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing  
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 DeWolfe:

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**

Chair Gale requested that the recording secretary read aloud the names of board members and staff around the table.

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

"Welcome to our third public Commission meeting here at the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture. This past weekend, Niagara Parks welcomed guests for the Civic Holiday weekend, which has become the busiest weekend of the summer over the past few years. Looking back at the last few weeks since our July meeting, Thursday, July 11, was Niagara Parks' sponsored game day with the Niagara River Lions. Through this partnership, a number of staff attended the game and we had a promotional video that played on the jumbotron during the game. It was great to participate in the ceremonial tip-off – and even better that all it required was posing for photos and shaking hands rather than throwing the actual basketball. I'll leave that to the pros. On July 12 and 13, Niagara Parks hosted Tesla Fest, honouring the legacy of Nikola Tesla. The event began with a legacy conference at the Niagara Parks Power Station followed by a festival in Queen Victoria Park on Saturday, July 13. I was honoured to speak as part of the festivities along with Mayor Diodati and many other local dignitaries and invited guests. On July 25, I attended the Battle of Lundy's Lane memorial ceremony organized by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. Much like our ceremony to honour the Battle of Chippawa on July 6, this was another meaningful local ceremony to recognize those who served in this pivotal battle during the War of 1812. It was an honour to attend and represent the Commission. On July 28, we held our Niagara Parks Women's Invitational Golf Tournament at Legends on the Niagara. This is an annual golf tournament designed to help promote and grow the game to encourage more women to take up the sport. Thank you to our Director of Golf Operations, Curtis Labelle who provided

welcome remarks and to Cathy Sherk, former LPGA player and Canadian Golf Hall of Fame member, who also spoke at the event about the importance of coming together to celebrate women's golf. On August 3, Vice-Chair Graham Coveney attended the Niagara Fiesta Extravaganza event at Firemen's Park in Niagara Falls, a celebration of Filipino culture. The event represents a special connection for Niagara Parks as next year, a new plaque will be installed in the park dedicated to Dr. Jose, national hero of the Philippines who visited the Falls in 1888. Thank you, Vice-Chair Coveney for attending on behalf of the Commission. At our last meeting, we were honoured to be joined by the Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming who spoke about the big vision the province has for Niagara. I'm glad we've had the chance to all meet Minister Cho and I know we will be working closely with him and his staff over the coming weeks and months to move our big projects forward."

"We will be hearing from our presenters in a moment – as a reminder, speakers will present their material from the podium and answer any questions from Commissioners. As part of our meetings protocol, members of the public and media are welcome to attend and observe meetings; however, they are not able to participate in the meeting. While we won't be taking questions during the meeting, we welcome anyone who has a question to submit it through our Guest Service Centre by email to [info@niagaraparks.com](mailto:info@niagaraparks.com). Questions will be passed along to Darla who will ensure a response is provided. In addition to in-person meetings, public sessions are also recorded and made available on our website, along with the presentation files and relevant reports. I'd also like to mention that we will now be sending out meeting highlights summaries following each public session. I invite anyone who is interested to sign-up online to receive the updates by email – there is a digital form on our website."

## **6. Approval of Draft Minutes**

The following motion was moved by Commissioner Insinna and seconded by Vice-Chair Coveney:

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the minutes from the June 13, 2024 and July 11, 2024 Public Commission meetings.

Carried.

## **7. Presentations**

### **7.1 Progress Update on Vineland Research and Innovation Centre**

From Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Ian Potter, President & CEO, Darby McGrath, Vice President, Research and Development and Diana Huson, Director of Marketing and Communications were in attendance. Ian Potter and Darby McGrath

provided a presentation respecting Vineland Research and Innovation Centre's partnership with Niagara Parks, outlining opportunities for collaboration.

7.2 Exploring Nation-Building Heritage and Legacy

Jim Hill, Senior Manager, Heritage and Legacy, provided a presentation titled Exploring Nation-Building at Niagara Parks. Jim encouraged Commissioners to attend the Siege Reenactment being held at Old Fort Erie on August 10 and 11 - Canada's largest battle reenactment, commemorating the historic War of 1812.

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive the presentation respecting Exploring Nation-Building, Heritage and Legacy for information.

Carried.

7.3 Business Highlights

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

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive the Business Highlights presentation for information.

Carried.

Staff will ensure that Commissioners receive Niagara Parks' monthly e-newsletter.

**8. Items from Finance and Audit Committee**

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission approve the recommendations as contained in Report 2024-83 Summary of Recommendations from the Finance and Audit Committee respecting the following matters:

1. Budget Planning Process – Fiscal 2025/2026
  2. Procurement Policy Update
- Carried.

## **9. Information Items**

### **9.1 Summary of Decisions – July 11, 2024 Commission Meeting**

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive Report 2024-78 Summary of Decisions from the July 11, 2024 Commission meeting for information.

Carried.

## **10. Other Business**

There were no items under other business.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday September 12, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

## **12. Closed Session**

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

Members:

- Chair Bob Gale
- Vice Chair Graham Coveney
- Commissioner April Cotton
- Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe
- Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo
- Commissioner Jim Diodati
- Commissioner Tom Insinna
- Commissioner Dan La Caprara
- Commissioner Ted Salci
- Commissioner Erwin Wiens

Staff:

- David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission
- Marcelo Gruosso, Chief Operating Officer
- Steve Barnhart, Senior Director, Planning Environment and Culture
- Paul Forcier, Chief of Police



Chris Giles, Senior Manager, Communications and Marketing  
Laura Pingue, Director of Finance/Controller  
Janice Spino, Chief Human Resources Officer  
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Darla Jones, Executive Assistant to the Chair and CEO/Recording Secretary

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Bob Gale  
Chair

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David Adames  
Chief Executive Officer/  
Secretary to the Commission

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Darla Jones  
Executive Assistant to the Chair and  
CEO/Recording Secretary

August 8, 2024



## **Report to The Niagara Parks Commission**

### **RE: Summary of Recommendations from the Property and Infrastructure Committee Meeting**

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The following are recommendations of the Property and Infrastructure Committee at its meeting held on September 5, 2024.

#### **Smuggler's Cove Boat Club License Agreement Renewal (Report 2024-87)**

1. Approve the renewal of a five-year licence agreement with Smuggler's Cove Boat Club Inc. for access to the subject lands identified in Appendix "A"; and
2. Direct staff to provide notice of renewal in accordance with the terms of the licence agreement.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Darla Jones

Title: Executive Assistant to the Chair  
and Chief Executive Officer

Submitted and

Authorized by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: David Adames

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Date: September 5, 2024

## **Report to the Property and Infrastructure Committee**

### **RE: Smuggler's Cove Boat Club Access Agreement Renewal**

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#### **Recommendation(s)**

That the Property and Infrastructure Committee recommends that The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the renewal of a five-year licence agreement with Smuggler's Cove Boat Club Inc. for access to the subject lands identified in Appendix "A"; and
2. Direct staff to provide notice of renewal in accordance with the terms of the licence agreement.

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this report is seek approval to renew a licence agreement with Smuggler's Cove Boat Club Inc. (SCBC) for a further 5-year term, upon the same terms and conditions as the existing licence agreement.

The Niagara Parks Commission (Niagara Parks) entered into a licence agreement with SCBC on February 14, 2019, to allow SCBC access to the Niagara River across Niagara Parks' lands for the purpose of operating a floating marina. The existing licence agreement is set to expire on December 31, 2024. The licence agreement includes an option by Niagara Parks to extend the term of the agreement for one further period of up to 5 years upon the same terms and conditions, by providing 60 days' notice to SCBC before the expiry of the term.

SCBC (formerly known as "St. Catharines Boat Club") is a Not-for-Profit boat club comprised of Niagara area residents, which has operated in the Niagara River since 1954 and has had an access and use agreement with Niagara Parks since the 1960's. SCBC was granted a perpetual anchorage permit within a section of the Niagara River by Transport Canada in the 1970's.

SCBC is an entirely floating club, located at 16001 Niagara River Parkway, at the intersection of Niagara River Parkway and East-West Line in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (refer to Appendix "A" – Location Map). The subject lands are located north of McFarland Park and include a parking area, walking path, access road, and stairs to the Niagara River. SCBC facilities, docks, and clubhouse are anchored in the Niagara River each season and removed in the fall. Niagara Parks permits SCBC to store its docks through the off-season. The clubhouse is floated upriver each spring from the Queenston Dock. Boats are not launched from the subject lands due to the steep slope condition in this area.





Allowing the continued access to Niagara Parks lands provides many economic benefits to both Niagara Parks and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake as SCBC has reciprocal mooring agreements with other boat clubs. Its members access Niagara Parks' lands to enjoy recreational activities, Niagara Parks facilities, and local businesses such as wineries, fruit stands, the Shaw Festival, and others.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

SCBC is required to pay Niagara Parks an annual licence fee of \$3,226.00 plus applicable taxes. The licence fee includes reimbursement to Niagara Parks for the costs of annual pruning and maintenance of the wood chip pathway and road.

### **Legal and/or Legislative**

The licence agreement contains a provision to renew for up to an additional 5-year term. In accordance with section 3 of the existing licence agreement, Niagara Parks must provide 60 days' notice to SCBC prior to the expiry date. No further documentation is needed to extend the agreement.

### **Policy**

Niagara Parks Realty Policy CPM-01-20 provides for the responsible management of Niagara Parks' realty. In accordance with this policy, Niagara Parks may make arrangements with third parties regarding access to realty.

## **Consultation**

Staff will continue to consult with SCBC members during the term of this agreement in relation to access and maintenance of the subject lands.

## **Alternatives for Consideration**

Alternatively, the Commission could choose:

1. To allow the agreement term to lapse. Staff do not recommend this alternative. The existing licence agreement includes a provision to renew for a further 5-year term. SCBC holds a long-term mooring licence for this section of the Niagara River with no other means to access the shoreline. This could result in a reduction in visitation to Niagara Parks and local businesses from SCBC boaters and club members if there is no direct access to the shoreline.

2. To increase the licence fee annually throughout the term by CPI. Staff do not recommend this alternative. The existing agreement included a recent increase in fees from the previous agreement to support maintenance activities undertaken by Niagara Parks' staff. This fee remains sufficient to cover Niagara Parks' costs in maintaining the pathway and pruning vegetation along the access road during the extension term. Additionally, the renewal option is intended to continue under the same terms and conditions. Changing the licence fee will require an amending agreement.
3. To extend the term of the agreement for less than 5 years. Staff do not recommend this alternative given the nature of the access agreement and the long-term anchorage permit held by SCBC. A five-year extension will provide staff time to review operations and develop a long-term strategy for this area along the Niagara River corridor.

## **Rationale for Recommendation**

SCBC has been granted a long-term anchorage permit through Transport Canada which provides mooring rights in the Niagara River. Providing SCBC with continued access to Niagara Parks' lands through a licence agreement allows Niagara Parks to manage its lands efficiently, undertake maintenance activities and future improvements, while delineating maintenance responsibilities. Permitting continued access strengthens the relationship between the organizations, supporting recurring visitors to this area of the north Parkway, and other local businesses which provides a positive economic benefit to both Niagara Parks and the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

## **Relevance to Strategic Plan**

The licence agreement with SCBC aligns with the goals of Niagara Parks' 2018-2028 Strategic Plan as follows:

### **Enjoying the Experience of Being Here**

- SCBC's relationship with other boat clubs allows visitors to access Niagara Parks' lands in a unique way.

### **Supporting a Dynamic Business Environment**

- Continuing the relationship with SCBC and their members benefits Niagara Parks and other local businesses by drawing new and recurring visitors.

## **Other Pertinent Reports**

N/A



Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Rachel Adamsky

Title: Manager, Realty and Legal Services

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Steve Barnhart

Title: Senior Director, Planning,  
Environment and Culture

Authorized by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: David Adames

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Date: September 5, 2024

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Location Map

## Appendix “A” – Location Map





