

The Niagara Parks Commission

Minutes of the public meeting of The Niagara Parks Commission held on Thursday, November 14, 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

Regrets: Commissioner Wayne Redekop
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
Katy Wassenaar, Manager, Public Affairs
Missy Sauer, Director, Retail and Attractions
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 DeWolfe 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

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

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

"Welcome to our November public Commission meeting. In two days, we will launch this year's Winter Festival of Lights, which is the official kickoff to the holiday season – we'll hear more about what's new for the festival shortly. Looking back, on October 19, we hosted the graduation ceremony for the School of Horticulture, which is always a nice opportunity to celebrate with the new graduates and their families. Thank you to Commissioner Ted Salci for attending. That same day, Commissioner Erwin Wiens represented the Commission at a tree planting event at our Paradise Grove property in Niagara-on-the-Lake. We provided the location for a number of new trees to be planted through a donation from a local 16-year-old student through the Rotary Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Our staff employee golf tournament was held on October 22 at Legends – thank you Commissioner La Caprara and Chair of the Golf Committee for attending. Also on October 22, we hosted a reception for the United Way at the Niagara Parks Power Station. It was a pleasure to attend and speak at the event, which was attended by a number of other community partners and donors. Our Community Tree Planting Day was held on October 26 at a planting location near Old Fort Erie. It was another successful event that brought out volunteers of all ages who helped plant over 250 trees. Thank you to Commissioner Dan La Caprara and Commission Redekop for attending. The trees planted during the event were funded by the Toonies for Trees program through the Niagara Parks Foundation and we were pleased to have Foundation Chair Debbie Whitehouse and Director of Fundraising, Steven Pinnock in attendance."

“On October 27, I greeted a delegation from the Czech Republic led by the Czech Minister of Finance. They toured the Niagara Parks Power Station and enjoyed a lunch at Table Rock House Restaurant. On November 1, we hosted a group of students and faculty from Brock University – their first Engineering cohort – for a special tour of the Niagara Parks Power Station. Thank you to Chief Operating Officer Marcelo Gruosso for greeting the group. On November 2, we hosted the annual Valour and Victory: Honouring Indigenous Veterans Ceremony at the Landscape of Nations Memorial. This was an exceptional event, with a number of speakers including a moving address by Indigenous Veteran Wendy Jocko who was being recognized for her years of service alongside Indigenous Veteran Rick Mt. Pleasant. We were joined by many members of the Indigenous community as well as colleagues from Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada who unveiled a new plaque officially honouring John Norton as a national historic person. Thank you to Commissioner La Caprara and Commissioner Wiens for attending. This past Saturday, I attended and spoke at the grand opening for a new accessible play structure at MacBain Park, organized by the City of Niagara Falls. Proceeds from the Wonder Pass sales during the annual sleep cheap charities reap fundraising program went toward acquiring the new structure. On Tuesday, I attended our fall town hall sessions at Legends where employees attended to learn more about results from the past season, current and upcoming projects, ask questions etc. We also recognized 16 individuals who have reached their 25-year milestone working for Niagara Parks this year. This Saturday, we will host the kick-off celebration in Queen Victoria Park for the Winter Festival of Lights. I encourage everyone to attend for a night of free family-friendly programming featuring performances by Circus Orange and a special fireworks display.”

6. Approval of Draft Minutes

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the minutes dated October 10, 2024 (COMM-2024-14).

Carried.

7. Presentations

Business Highlights

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

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive the Business Highlights presentation for information.

Carried.

8. Item from Property and Infrastructure Committee

Marcelo Gruosso provided a presentation respecting Capital Projects Update.

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive the Capital Projects Presentation for information.

Carried.

9. Other Business

There were no items of other business.

10. Date of Next Meeting

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

11. Closed Session

The Commission moved into the Closed Session at 9:32 a.m. 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

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

Bob Gale
Chair

David Adames
Chief Executive Officer/
Secretary to the Commission

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

November 14, 2024



Report to The Niagara Parks Commission

RE: Summary of Recommendations from the Finance and Audit Committee

The following are recommendations of the Finance and Audit Committee at its meeting held on December 5, 2024.

“The Bridge” Food Recovery Program (Report 2024-125)

1. Approve Niagara Parks’ Culinary Services to partner with “The Bridge” Food Recovery Program, on a trial basis, to donate to those in need the left-over food from the restaurants that would otherwise go to waste.

Nikola Tesla Exhibit

1. Receive the presentation respecting Nikola Tesla Exhibit for information.

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: December 5, 2024

Report to the Finance and Audit Committee

RE: “The Bridge” Food Recovery Program

Recommendation(s)

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommends that The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve Niagara Parks’ Culinary Services to partner with “The Bridge” Food Recovery Program, on a trial basis, to donate to those in need the left-over food from the restaurants that would otherwise go to waste.

Overview

The purpose of this report is to inform the Finance and Audit Committee of a proposal from “The Bridge” Food Recovery Program, to partner with NPC by donating food to people in need across Niagara.

“The Bridge” is located on Queen Street in Niagara Falls and they are an entrepreneurial storefront mission committed to serving the unhoused and food insecure populations of Niagara Falls. Currently, they run a daily breakfast program with Third Space Café, and they have been a presence on Queen Street since 2014. Last year they served over 20,000 breakfasts to people who are unhoused, underhoused, or just in need.

Recently, they began a partnership with a non-profit based in Montreal, Quebec called La Tablée Des Chefs. Founded by a former executive from Marriott Hotels who was dismayed with incredible food waste, La Tablée has expanded their operations across Canada and has served over 17 million portions of recovered food to those dealing with food insecurity. Alongside their guidance, they are launching a food recovery initiative here in Niagara Falls. Currently, their main partner is the Niagara Falls Convention Centre, who have provided them with thousands of portions of prepared foods.

Food recovery is different from a food bank which deals primarily with retail goods and produce. Food recovery specifically focuses on left-over prepared foods from hotels, banquet halls, restaurants, convention centers, and long-term care homes. All this food would have otherwise been thrown out. They state that they are the only organization in the entire Niagara region to focus on this aspect of food collection and plan to oversee all food collection and coordination in association with other partners in our city such as Project Share, The Soup Kitchen, YWCA etc.

The program operates essentially on a on call basis. “The Bridge” would supply NPC with containers and labels and NPC would contact them when they have food to be picked up. The food must be identified with labels and the “cold chain” must be maintained during transport. Refrigerated items must remain refrigerated, and frozen products must remain frozen.

Food that cannot be used is:

- Food from containers that were opened or damaged during transport
- Food left a room temperature for more than 2 hours
- Food that has been recalled
- Any altered food

Implications

Financial:

Currently there is no cost to NPC to be a part of this program. NPC would not donate food that can be reused in the kitchens and extra food would not be prepared to donate to the program. A positive financial impact for NPC would be less food waste in the garbage, which means less pick ups from Modern Landfill.

Legal:

Donated Food Act, Ontario Public Health:

The director, agent, employee or volunteer of a corporation that donates food or who distributes donated food to another person, is not personally liable for any damages resulting from injuries or death caused by the consumption of the food unless:

- 1- The food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption and
- 2- In donating or distributing the food, the director, agent, employee or volunteer,
 - a) Did not act in good faith
 - b) Acted beyond the scope of his or her role as director, agent, employee or volunteer, and
 - c) Intended to injure, or to cause the death of the recipient of the food or acted with reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Staffing:

Some training would be required for kitchen staff to ensure the safe handling of food flagged for donation.

Consultation

Joining this program should not negatively affect any other department within NPC. This report is meant to engage the Finance and Audit Committee to ensure that there are no concerns at the Commission level.



Alternatives for Consideration

There are two alternatives for consideration:

- a) Not sign up for the program and let wasted food remain as waste
- b) Engage another charitable organization to see if they are interested in food donations from NPC

Rationale for Recommendation

Partnering with “The Bridge” would give NPC Culinary Services an opportunity to give back to the community by helping to support those in need across Niagara. This initiative would be undertaken on a trial basis in order to test its viability for Niagara Parks.

Relevance to Strategic Plan

Preserving and Showcasing our Rich Heritage, Culture and Lifestyle:

Generating less food waste would help to support NPC’s Cultural and Stewardship role by focusing on sustainable practices within the restaurants.

Supporting a Dynamic Business Environment:

This partnership would provide a way for NPC Culinary Services to support the local community by providing meals to those in need.

Prepared by: _____

Name: Omer Yazaroglu

Title: Director, Culinary Services

Submitted by: _____

Name: Omer Yazaroglu

Title: Director, Culinary Services

Authorized by: _____

Name: David Adames

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Date: December 5, 2024