



The Niagara Parks Commission

Minutes of the public meeting of The Niagara Parks Commission held on Thursday, March 13, 2025 at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

Attendance

Members: Chair Bob Gale
Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe
Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo
Commissioner Jim Diodati
Commissioner Tom Insinna
Commissioner Dan La Caprara
Commissioner Wayne Redekop
Commissioner Ted Salci
Commissioner Erwin Wiens

Regrets: Vice Chair Graham Coveney
Commissioner April Cotton

Staff: David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission
Marcelo Gruosso, Chief Operating Officer
Steve Barnhart, Senior Landscape Architect
Chris Giles, Director, 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 9:03 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 La Caprara:

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 in attendance.

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

“ Good morning, everyone, and welcome to our March Public Commission Meeting. Spring is on the way, bringing longer days, fresh blooms and renewed energy across Niagara Parks. As we prepare for a busy season ahead, there's much to celebrate. Since our last meeting, we've reached several exciting milestones. On February 24, the Niagara Falls Illumination Board marked its 100th anniversary. For a century, this binational organization has illuminated the falls with a breathtaking multicolored display each night. It's become a cherished tradition enjoyed by millions. We celebrated with Steve Barnhart, Senior Director of Planning, Environment and Culture, who retired after nine years of dedicated service. A retirement tea was held at the Maintenance Centre to honour Steve's many contributions, and we thank him for his lasting impact on Niagara Parks. On March 7, we welcomed representatives from the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade, Serbian Ambassador Dejan Ralević and other dignitaries to launch an exciting new exhibit at the Niagara Parks Power Station—Tesla: A Spark of Genius. This exhibit highlights Tesla's relentless pursuit of innovation, which revolutionized electricity generation, transmission and use—laying the foundation for much of today's technology. Featuring rare artifacts and personal items from the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade, it also explores Tesla's deep connection to the Niagara Power Station and Niagara Falls. If you haven't visited yet, I highly encourage you to check it out. Tesla: A Spark of Genius will be on display through October 2025. On March 9, I was joined by Mayor Diodati and Commissioner La Caprara as we welcomed Consul General Angelica Escalona of the Philippines for the groundbreaking of a new memorial in the park, celebrating Dr. Jose Rizal, a symbol of Filipino advocacy, strength and courage. Mad Science activities have been included with admission to the Butterfly Conservatory on select days throughout February and March, providing kids with a fun and interactive way to

learn about butterflies, insects, and climate change. Mad Science activities are available daily during March Break and will wrap up this Sunday. Meanwhile, exciting progress continues on the new Children's Garden at the Botanical Gardens. Two key efforts are currently underway: securing donors and gathering community feedback through focus groups, which will help shape the final design later this year. This week, staff are actively engaging with children and families visiting the Butterfly Conservatory through colouring activities for kids and a survey for adults. We appreciate the team's efforts in leading these valuable discussions."

6. Approval of Draft Minutes

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the minutes dated February 13, 2025 (COMM-2025-03).

Carried.

7. Presentations

Business Highlights

David Adames provided a presentation respecting Niagara Parks Business Highlights.

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Receive the Business Highlights presentation for information.

Carried.

Chair Gale invited Commissioner Salci to introduce Don Robinson, a Niagara Falls resident, who attended the meeting to display LEGO models of Niagara Falls sites including Niagara Parks Power Station that he assembled. The models were purchased at Niagara Parks retail shops. Commissioners were invited to view the models on display.

8. Other Business

There were no items of other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday April 10, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the School of Horticulture, 2565 Niagara Parkway, Niagara Falls, Ontario, L2E 6T2.

10. Closed Session

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission move into Closed Session.

Carried.

The Commission moved into the Closed Session at 9:28 a.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Members:	Chair Bob Gale Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe Commissioner Natasha DiCienzo Commissioner Jim Diodati Commissioner Tom Insinna Commissioner Dan La Caprara Commissioner Wayne Redekop Commissioner Ted Salci Commissioner Erwin Wiens
Staff:	David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission Marcelo Gruosso, Chief Operating Officer Steve Barnhart, Senior Landscape Architect Chris Giles, Director, 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



Bob Gale
Chair

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

David Adames
Chief Executive Officer/
Secretary to the Commission

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