

The Niagara Parks Commission

Minutes of the public meeting of The Niagara Parks Commission held on Thursday, August 7, 2025 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 Jim Diodati
Commissioner Tom Insinna
Commissioner Dan La Caprara
Commissioner Wayne Redekop
Commissioner Ted Salci
Commissioner Erwin Wiens

Regrets: Commissioner Spencer DeWolfe

Staff: David Adames, Chief Executive Officer/Secretary to the Commission
Marcelo Gruosso, Chief Operating Officer
Paul Forcier, Police Chief
Steve Barnhart, Senior Landscape Architect
Chris Giles, Director, Communications and Marketing
Laura Pingue, Chief Financial Officer
Janice Spino, Chief Human Resources Officer
Katy Wassenaar, Sr. 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

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 August Public Commission Meeting. Looking back since our last meeting, we had a very strong July in terms of visitation and spending at our sites, after a slower start to the season. We also had a very positive civic holiday weekend, which is often one of our busiest weekends of the year. On Saturday, July 12, we hosted the annual Tesla Fest celebration at Oakes Garden Theatre. This annual event celebrates the legacy of Nikola Tesla, bringing together music and cultural performances, as well as hands-on activities for families. On Friday, we also hosted an evening event at the Niagara Parks Power Station for the festival. It was a pleasure to speak as part of Saturday's opening for the event. On Friday, July 25, I attended and spoke at the Lundy's Lane Historical Society's annual commemoration of the Battle of Lundy's Lane. This year represents the 138th anniversary of the founding of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, an organization dedicated to heritage preservation and educating the public about Niagara Falls' rich history. On Saturday, August 2, I was pleased to welcome Federal Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism, Minister Rechie Valdez to Niagara Parks. Minister Valdez visited the new Dr. Rizal monument in Queen Victoria Park and then attended the Niagara Fiesta Extravaganza event, which I also attended and spoke at. It was a pleasure to welcome Minister Valdez to Niagara and we look forward to working together with her and her team to support tourism growth in Niagara. Over the last few weeks we've also seen quite a bit of activity in Queen Victoria Park as Toronto Power Hotel Inc. prepares the site for the construction of a cofferdam within the Niagara River on the east side of the building. The cofferdam will keep water back from the building to facilitate a safe, dry environment for construction. Pedestrian pathways to the north and south have been closed with detours available to connect with the Niagara River

“Recreation Trail on the opposite side of the street. This evening and tomorrow Niagara Parks will host activations in Queen Victoria Park for the Niagara 5000 Supercar parade and private jet show. Tonight, there will be a special illumination of the Falls in Rolls-Royce purple at 10pm to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the iconic Rolls-Royce phantom. Tomorrow, the Hagerty Supercar parade will begin at Rapidsview, with over 100 luxury cars participating. This will be a rolling parade on the Niagara Parkway into Niagara-on-the-Lake, making stops at wineries, farm markets and other destinations along the way. Also this weekend we will host the annual Siege of Fort Erie Battle Re-enactment, Canada’s largest battle reenactment event. There are a number of battle scenes throughout the weekend, along with military encampments, artillery demonstrations and activities for the whole family. If you haven’t yet experienced the Siege of Fort Erie, I highly recommend you plan a visit this weekend. The Siege of Fort Erie is also an important scene within Niagara Takes Flight, our newest attraction that is set to open later this month on August 29. We’ll now continue with the rest of our public meeting”.

6. Approval of Draft Minutes

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

That The Niagara Parks Commission:

1. Approve the minutes dated July 10, 2025 (COMM-2025-13).

Carried.

7. Presentations

Business Highlights

David Adames provided a presentation respecting Business Highlights.

There was discussion regarding the need to provide a better experience for the volume of visitors arriving at the Niagara Falls train station via GO train service in the summer. The City of Niagara Falls will reach out to Niagara Parks’ staff to join a meeting to collaborate on the Destination Niagara plan.

The Commission congratulated Chief Forcier on recently being awarded the King Charles III Coronation medal.

The Commission received the Business Highlights presentation for information.

8. Other Business

There were no items for other business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday September 18, 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 La Caprara and seconded by Commissioner Insinna:

That The Niagara Parks Commission move into Closed Session.

Carried.

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 Jim Diodati

Commissioner Tom Insinna

Commissioner Dan La Caprara

Commissioner Wayne Redekop

Commissioner Ted Salci

Commissioner Erwin Wiens

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Bob Gale
Chair

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

David Adames
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