

**Niagara Falls Tourism Target Zone Fund Committee
Committee Meeting Minutes**

Date: September 25, 2017
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Meeting Place: Niagara County Industrial Development Agency
6311 Inducon Corporate Drive, Suite One
Sanborn, New York 14132
Board Room

1.0 Meeting Called to Order

The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Tourism Target Zone Fund Committee was called to order by Mr. Brady at **3:35 p.m.**

2.0 Roll Call

Senator Robert G. Ortt, 62nd District, NYS - Present
Assemblyman Angelo Morinello, 145th District, NYS - Excused
Paul Brown, President, Niagara County Buffalo Building & Construction Trades Council - Present
Stephen Brady, NCIDA Chairman - Present
Mark Onesi, NCIDA Member - Present
William Ross, NCIDA Member - Present
Samuel Ferraro, NCIDA Executive Director - Present

Staff Present:

Susan C. Langdon, Director of Projects & Finance
Mark J. Gabriele, Agency Counsel
Roxanne Morgan, Recording Secretary

1.0 Meeting Called to Order

2.0 Roll Call – R. Morgan

3.0 Introduction of Guests

4.0 Committee Roster

A roster with the Committee Members' names and contact information was included in the agenda packet for information purposes only.

5.0 Policies & Procedures

The Committee Members received a handout that describes the background of the fund, the responsibilities of the Committee, and defining the eligibility criteria for projects. A copy of the handout is attached to, and made a part of, these minutes.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests

5.1.1 324 Niagara St. Landlord – Savarino Companies

Mr. Courtney Cox, Development Project Manager gave a brief summarization of the grant request and plans that the company hopes to accomplish. The project involves the renovation of two (2) vacant buildings to house Community Beer Works and ten (10) market rate apartments. The location is 320 and 324 Niagara Street in Niagara Falls. The project is set to begin January of 2018 with an approximate completion date of July 2018. The construction project will create 27 jobs and the business will employ 11 full-time employees. Total project costs will be approximately \$3,421,506 and they are requesting a grant of \$155,000 to be used for construction.

Mr. Ross made a motion to approve the grant request of \$155,000; Senator Ortt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5.1.2 NFNy Hotel Management (DiCienzo Waterpark)

Mr. Michael DiCienzo, Vice President gave a brief summarization of the grant request and stated that the project will be the construction of a waterpark at 300 Third St. in Niagara Falls that will be open all year long and will attract tourists to the area. The project is a 12 – 16 month build out construction will commence in the Fall of 2018. This project will create 40 full-time jobs. Total project costs amount to \$10,278,000 and the company is requesting a grant in the amount of \$3,000,000.00 to be reimbursed toward the construction.

After some discussion the committee agreed to approve the request at a reduced amount of \$1,000,000.00.

Senator Ortt made a motion to approve the amended grant request of \$1,000,000; Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5.1.3 Palmeri's and Son (DQ Grill & Chill)

Mr. Michael Palmeri, Jr. gave a brief summarization of the grant request and stated that the principals want to renovate the DQ Grill and Chill at 232 Niagara St. The project is expected to be finished in January 2018.

Total project costs amount to \$1,695,000 and the principals are requesting a reimbursable grant for \$80,000 to be used toward the unforeseen expense of removing gas tanks and soil excavation.

Mr. Ferraro made a motion to approve the grant request of \$80,000; Senator Ortt seconded the motion. The motion failed.

5.0 New Business Continued

5.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests Continued

5.1.4 Niagara County Dept. of Economic Development

Ms. Amy Fisk, Senior Planner, Economic Development, gave a brief summarization of the grant request and stated that the Department of Economic Development will like to do a Feasibility Study on numerous areas in Niagara Falls for a multi-use facility. The draft study will be done by the end of October 2017. The grant request is for \$37,667 and total project costs are expected to be \$113,000.00.

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the grant request \$37,667; Mr. Ross seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mr. Ferraro abstained

5.1.5 Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Ms. Sara Capen, Executive Director gave a brief summarization of the grant request and stated the company would like to purchase ten (10) digital touchscreens and also acquire technology support to connect downtown hotels with Discover Niagara Shuttle. Total project costs amount to 42,572,500 and the company is requesting \$127,500 to defray the costs of the touchscreens.

Mr. Gabriele stated that the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area would only be entitled to \$25,500.00. After discussion the committee agreed to table the request until Ms. Langdon speaks with Ms. Capen.

Mr. Brady made a motion to table the amended grant request of \$25,500; Senator Ortt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5.1.6 World Weather Center

Mr. Don Paul, Weatherman on Channel 7, gave a brief summarization of the grant request. The company plans to construct a comprehensive weather center tourist attraction in downtown Niagara Falls. The Weather Center would be the first of its kind not only in the United States, but also Europe. Total project costs will be \$199,000 and they are requesting \$150,000 grant to be used toward a Phase II Study.

Mr. Onesi made a motion to approve the grant request of \$150,000; Senator Ortt seconded the motion. The motion failed.

5.0 New Business Continued

5.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests Continued

5.1.7 Aquarium of Niagara

Mr. Gary Siddall, Executive Director gave a brief summarization of the grant request. Total project costs are expected to be \$355,615 and the amount being requested is \$284,492 to be used toward equipment, more specifically a jellyfish exhibit and hands-on opportunity exhibits. Construction is estimated to start after March 2018 and will take approximately 6 – 7 months. The Aquarium is located at 701 Whirlpool Street.

Mr. Gabriele stated that the Aquarium of Niagara would only be entitled to \$88,147. After discussion the committee agreed to table the request until Ms. Langdon speaks with Mr. Siddall.

Senator Ortt made a motion to table the amended grant request of \$88,147; Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5.1.8 Merani Hotel Group

Mr. Michael Marsch, Vice President of Operations, stated that the project will be on a vacant lot Rainbow Boulevard and 1st Avenue. The principals wish to construct an ice rink with food and beverage stations. A hot air balloon attraction will be held in the summer months. Mr. Marsch stated that they are still waiting for the announcement from the City of Niagara Falls on the RFP to see if they have the site, which will be announced on October 9. Total project costs are expected to be \$1,062,090 and the amount being requested is \$50,000.

Mr. Brady made a motion to approve the grant request of \$50,000; Mr. Onesi seconded the motion. The motion passed. Mr. Brown abstained. Approval was made on the condition of Merani Hotel Group having site control.


6.0 Any Other Matters the Board Wishes to Discuss


7.0 Adjournment

Senator Ortt made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Ferraro seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Reviewed by:


Roxanne Morgan
Recording Secretary


Samuel M. Ferraro
Executive Director