

**Niagara Falls Tourism Target Zone Fund Committee
Committee Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2018
10 a.m.**

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1.0 Meeting Called to Order

The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Tourism Target Zone Fund Committee was called to order by Chairman Brady at 10 a.m.

2.0 Roll Call

Senator Robert G. Ortt, 62 nd District, NYS	Present
Assemblyman Angelo Morinello, 145 th District, NYS	Present
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 (Left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.)	Present

Staff Present:

Andrea Klyczek, NCIDA Assistant Director
Michael S. Dudley, NCIDA Finance Manager
Caroline Caruso, NCIDA Accounting Associate
Mark J. Gabriele, Agency Counsel
Barbara A. Gill, Recording Secretary

Guests Present:

Pat Whalen, TreC
Rosco Naigut, TreC
Matt Green, The Niagara Club
Norel Patel, The Niagara Club
Eamon Weber, Delegate for Assemblyman Morinello

3.0 Introduction of Guests

4.0 Approval of Meeting Minutes

4.1 July 19, 2018

Chairman Brady asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

Mr. Ross made a motion to approve the meeting minutes; Mr. Onesi seconded the motion. The motion passed.

5.0 Unfinished Business – M. Gabriele

5.1 324 Niagara St. Landlord, LLC

In a letter to the Agency dated May 30, 2018, the company has requested a six (6) month extension to their project completion date and grant termination dates. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the construction has been delayed and they have been working diligently to resolve the issues.

Courtney Cox, Development Associate of Savarino Companies is requesting the completion date be extended to March 31, 2019.

5.1.1 Request for Extension of Grant Acceptance Agreement

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the request for extension of the Grant Acceptance Agreement; Senator Ort seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The question of the Committee to recommend the approval of the grant extension request to the NCIDA Board Members was duly put to a vote on roll call, which resulted as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Senator Ort	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Assemblyman Morinello	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Onesi	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Brown	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Ross	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Chairman Brady	[X]	[]	[]	[]

The grant request was thereupon duly approved.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests

6.1.1 Niagara University (TReC)

Ms. Klyczek stated that Niagara University is seeking a grant towards the buildout of the Tourism Research Entrepreneurship Center (TReC), the Niagara Global Tourism Institute’s upcoming business incubator/co-working space. The project will have a focus on tourism technology and will serve as the nerve center for the tourism network.

6.0 New Business

6.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests

6.1.1 Niagara University (TreC)

TReC will be utilized as a key amenity to attract conferences to Niagara Falls. The center will forge partnerships with local hotels to offer the center as a complimentary business amenity to visitors, while the conference and event center can package their services along with conference bids.

The funding request to the Niagara Falls Tourism Target Zone program will be utilized to acquire equipment including audio/visual equipment, network connectivity hardware, workstations, and start up materials. Total projects costs amount to \$883,000.00 and the company is requesting a reimbursable grant in the amount of \$176,000.00.

Mr. Whalen gave a PowerPoint presentation that reflected the need for a center to accommodate the “business tourists” who come to Niagara Falls.

After further discussion, Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the grant request; Chairman Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The question of the Committee to recommend the approval of the grant request to the NCIDA Board Members was duly put to a vote on roll call, which resulted as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Senator Ortt	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Assemblyman Morinello	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Onesi	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Brown	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Ross	[]	[]	[]	[X]
Chairman Brady	[X]	[]	[]	[]

The grant request was thereupon duly approved.

6.1.2 Babu and Pragna Patel (The Niagara Club)

Ms. Klyczek stated that the Niagara Club restoration project seeks to create a dining area, rooftop bar and lounge, 3,500 square foot banquet space with seating capacity for 250 people and a virtual entertainment lounge.

6.0 New Business Continued

6.1 Reimbursable Grant Requests Continued

6.1.2 The Niagara Club Continued

The project includes the restoration of the original Niagara Club bar, connected to the outdoor patio that will allow for patrons to enjoy an outdoor experience along the Red Coach Inn Alleyway. There will be an additional forty (40) seat oval bar overlooking the Niagara Rapids and an eighty (80) seat dining room. This space will include an elevated lounge platform with exposed stone façade and a modern elegant interior design, and the lower level will allow for entertainment, including an escape room and a virtual reality entertainment lounge.

The Niagara Club redevelopment is designed in a manner that allows access for a variety of parties and will appeal to all ages. The newly renovated space will provide guests with additional activities and offer entertainment year round.

Total project costs are approximately \$3,035,200 and the company is requesting a reimbursable grant of \$300,000. Twenty-nine (29) jobs will be created.

The Committee discussed the fact that the grant request was higher than the percentage rate which is 5% of the total costs and the reimbursable grant amount will be \$151,760.

Mr. Brown questioned the previous project of Mr. Patel and the company’s use of local and union labor. Mr. Patel took exception to that statement. Chairman Brady redirected the discussion to the matter at hand.

After further discussion, Senator Ortt made a motion to approve the grant request; Assemblyman Morinello seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The question of the Committee to recommend the approval of the grant request to the NCIDA Board Members was duly put to a vote on roll call, which resulted as follows:

	<u>Yea</u>	<u>Nay</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Senator Ortt	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Assemblyman Morinello	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Onesi	[X]	[]	[]	[]
Mr. Brown	[]	[X]	[]	[]
Mr. Ross	[]	[]	[]	[X]
Chairman Brady	[X]	[]	[]	[]

The grant request was thereupon duly approved.

6.0 Any Other Matters the Board Wishes to Discuss

There were five (5) items for discussion:

- The Committee discussed that perhaps the percentage of the grant amounts should be raised from five percent (5%) of project costs to ten percent (10%) with an effective date set in the future so as not to have any company feel they missed out on this opportunity.
- Assembly Morinello suggested that perhaps there could be a “Downtown Business Association Only” pool of money which could assist in beautifying the city of Niagara Falls as far as better street lighting, visual improvements, potted plants to allow for more attractiveness, etc. These would be “one time allocations” and each request would have a designated amount set aside for each project that was applied for.
- The Committee Members also discussed the possibility of issuing a press release or other advertising to ensure that the public knows of the availability of the grant funds.
- Senator Ort stated that he has secured funds again this year in the amount of \$1.6 million for the Fund.
- The Committee discussed the possibility of increasing the allowable grant request for private companies. The Committee also suggested companies can come back for additional funding if the percentage rate were to be raised.

7.0 Adjournment

Mr. Onesi made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Brown seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Reviewed by:

Barbara A. Gill
Recording Secretary

Stephen F. Brady
Committee Chairman