

Poloncarz, Officials Cut Ribbon on New Black Rock Canal Park

Date:

5/11/13

Newest County Park Features “Green” Technology, Green Spaces, Bark Park

ERIE COUNTY, NY— Today, Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz was joined by Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Planning Maria Whyte, Commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Troy Schinzel, Erie County Legislator Lynn Marinelli, elected officials, members of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, members of the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee, and community members as he cut the ribbon on the new Black Rock Canal Park. The newest county park features a number of environmentally-friendly “green” components that enhance the park’s utility and beauty.

“Today’s ribbon cutting is the culmination of a tremendous amount of hard work and vision by several groups, whose collaborative efforts brought about this beautiful new park,” **said Poloncarz**. “I want to thank the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee, Commissioners Whyte and Schinzel and their staffs, our many partners in government, and the funders who believed in this project and worked together to create this gift to the community. Because of them, this jewel on the Niagara will be enjoyed by many generations to come.”

Formerly known as the Ontario Street Boat launch and Cornelius Creek Park, the new Black Rock Canal Park had been noted by the Park Steering Committee as an area needing improvements due to vandalism and an unsafe atmosphere after dark. The committee, a community group composed of concerned residents, worked in conjunction with Erie County to raise the funds needed to complete a feasibility study and master plan for the park improvements. The study and master plan, which detailed the new, environmentally-friendly features, were completed in 2010.

Commissioner Maria Whyte said, “The developments in this park are so exciting and are the perfect example of the amazing things that can happen when the community, multiple levels of government, and diverse funding sources work together to achieve a shared vision.”

Parks Commissioner Troy Schinzel said, “The Parks Department is very excited about the completion of Phase I at Black Rock Canal Park, including our very first Bark Park, and we think the public will be excited as well. Without the involvement, volunteer efforts, and continued support of the Black Rock Canal Park Steering

Committee and the Northwest Buffalo Community Center this may not have been possible. I would like to thank those individuals, as well as our partners in the Department of Environment and Planning, whose hard work and incredible energy were instrumental in bringing all the aspects of Phase I together.”

Legislator Lynn M. Marinelli (D-Buffalo, Tonawanda) said, “The development of Black Rock Canal Park represents what can be accomplished by the Black Rock and Riverside community involvement and county leadership collaboration. The Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee is to be commended for its diligence in accomplishing a winning plan for the park that enhances shoreline parks throughout our community.”

City of Buffalo North District Common Council Member Joseph Golombek, Jr. said, “I am pleased to have been a part of this grass roots effort, right from the beginning, to improve the quality of our waterfront. The Black Rock Canal Park committee has done a great job in continuing the developments in the north district. I am proud to be a part of this movement and congratulate the committee on their hard work.”

“It is very rewarding to know that a group of determined people can make a tangible difference to a neighborhood that means a great deal to us,” **said Margaret Szczepaniec of the Black Rock Canal Park Steering Committee.** “This is just the beginning of a wonderful destination that will be enjoyed now and in future generations. I am certain that when this is complete, all the volunteers involved will look around with pride and say ‘we helped build a park, that was the difference we made’”.

Rob Belue, Executive Director of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, said, “The Niagara River Greenway Commission is excited for this day to arrive and thank the Black Rock Canal Park Steering committee and the County of Erie for all their hard work and determination to make this beautiful park a reality. Black Rock Canal Park is an excellent example of creating the Niagara River Greenway utilizing the vision and many principles that are incorporated into the Plan.”

“The New York Department of State is happy to be a part of yet another milestone in Buffalo’s renaissance, the revitalization of Black Rock Canal Park in Buffalo,” **said New York Secretary of State Cesar A. Perales.** “Local residents and visitors alike will benefit from the public access and recreational improvements. This project is a testament to the value of effective partnerships between State and local entities to benefit the community. We look forward to continuing to do our part to improve Buffalo’s waterfront, as well as other urban communities throughout New York State.”

Site Features at Black Rock Canal Park include:

- **Roadway turnaround-** the turnaround area is composed of permeable stone pavers and granite curbing and contains a decorative compass rose within the turnaround center island. This turnaround acts as a transition point from the extended roadway to the riverwalk trail and is a focal point in the park. New trees and other plantings also enhance the turnaround.
- **Dog Park-** the new dog park is at the southern end of the park, on the other side of Cornelius Creek, and contains a fenced area for dog owners to exercise their canine companions. The dog park is split into two separate areas to allow large dog breeds access to as different area than smaller breeds. Future plans for the Dog Park include the installation of a K-9 Monument that will feature a plaque dedicated to the past and current K-9 dogs that have served in the Erie County Sheriff's Department and in general law enforcement.
- **Avian Theme and New Green Space-** the bicycle/pedestrian path in the Park now features avian sculptures along its length as a tribute to the migratory birds that frequent the site; additionally, 50% of the old roadway has been removed and converted into lawn and landscaped areas for passive recreational use by the public.

“Green” features at Black Rock Canal Park include:

- **Increased Lawn Areas-** larger grassy areas allow for rainwater to be kept on site, reducing high water levels in nearby bodies of water. Increased lawn areas also reduce the amount of sediment and pollution washing from the site in heavy rains.
- **Bioswales-** increase the benefits of normal swales by further reducing runoff. The wet-soil tolerant plants in these bioswales add plant diversity to the site.
- **Porous Pavement and Pavers-** parking areas and the turnaround have porous surfaces to allow rainwater to be collected and treated on site. These porous features reduce typical sediment and pollution runoff into nearby bodies of water.
- **Decorative Stone Filter Strip-** this narrow trench along the extended roadway contains decorative stone that will collect stormwater runoff and filter out sediment and pollutants before they are infiltrated into the ground, and will help to reduce runoff into the Niagara River.
- **LED light fixtures-** these 100-watt and 70-watt fixtures reduce energy consumption while providing a brighter and safer park environment for visitors.
- **Solar Compacting Trash cans-** these solar-powered, self-compacting trash cans will lessen the required emptying by maintenance crews and create more dense trash which will help reduce required landfill space.
- **Additional landscaping-** Trees, shrubs, and additional lawn areas have all been added to the park to help reduce the “heat island” effects from nearby pavement and also to help filter stormwater runoff.

Funding for the feasibility study, master plan, and Phase I of construction amounted to approximately \$1,000,000, and was provided by the NYS Department of State – Environmental Protection Fund, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Canal Corporation, Niagara River Greenway Commission, Erie County, and the City of Buffalo.

For more information:

on the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/environment/>

on the Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/parks/>