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COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 22, 2015

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

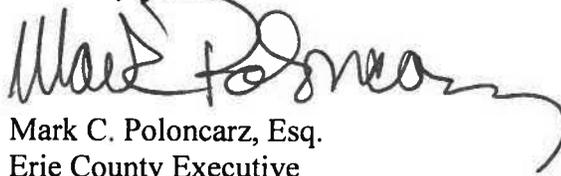
**Re: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Environmental Protection Fund Program – Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat
Park Grant**

Dear Honorable Members:

Enclosed please find a memorandum and proposed resolution from the Department of Environment and Planning to authorize the County Executive to execute an agreement to accept \$75,000.00 in financial assistance for the purchase of .54 acres of frontage property and to establish a budget for park restorations at the Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park located at 1670 Seneca Street, Buffalo, New York.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Deputy Commissioner, Thomas R. Hersey, Jr. at the Department of Environment and Planning. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.
Erie County Executive

MCP/cw
Enclosure

cc: Maria R. Whyte, Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature
From: Department of Environment and Planning
Re: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Environmental Protection Fund Grant – Seneca Bluffs Natural
Habitat Park Improvements
Date: May 22, 2015

SUMMARY

The Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) is seeking authorization for the County Executive or the Deputy County Executive to execute the necessary agreements to accept \$75,000.00 in grant funding and establish a program budget for park improvements at the Erie County Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park. The grant funding is available from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) as a match for Erie County's purchase of .54 acres of frontage at 1670 Seneca Street, Buffalo, New York. The purchase of this parcel by Erie County was recorded on October 15, 2014. This funding will allow Erie County to enhance the habitat ecosystem and improve public accessibility, stormwater features and upgrade the appearance of this urban habitat park located in a disadvantaged South Buffalo neighborhood.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be no additional impact on County resources. There will be no new positions created as a result of this grant funding.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The anticipated benefits associated with the proposed resolution are as follows:

Implementation of habitat restoration projects is a topic highlighted in the County Executive's *Initiatives for a Smart Economy*, Sections 4.57 and 4.58 to "contribute to the expansion of natural habitat and public access along the Buffalo River Corridor", and to "maintain and enhance the existing County Natural Parks along the Buffalo River". This natural habitat park improvement project includes design and construction of green infrastructure and stormwater features, along with habitat maintenance at the newly-acquired .54 acre frontage at Erie County's Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park, situated along the banks of the Buffalo River.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park is situated at 1670 Seneca Street, Buffalo, New York. Erie County purchased the front .54 acre parcel on October 15, 2014. The acquisition of this frontage is significant, as it adjoins 11 acres of natural habitat park already owned by Erie County. Additionally, the vacant front parcel was allowed to become a blighted eyesore by its previous owners. The park is located in a disadvantaged urban neighborhood in South Buffalo, and the planned improvements will add value to the community, as well as provide contracts for habitat design and construction.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

The DEP will forfeit \$75,000 of NYSOPRHP funding and be unable to address the priorities of the Erie County Executive's *Initiatives for a Smart Economy*, to expand natural habitat and public access along the Buffalo River, improve our County Natural Habitat Park for the residents of this underserved urban neighborhood, and realize a healthy ecosystem contributing to human health and prosperity, economic and social vitality, and sustainable biodiversity.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The necessary contracts with NYSOPRHP will be executed, and a budget will be established. Erie County Department of Environment & Planning and Erie County Department of Parks and Recreation will manage the design and construction contracts for the improvements to the Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park.

A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

RE: New York State Office of Parks and
Recreation and Historic Preservation
Grant: Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat
Park Improvements

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning (DEP) has played a crucial role in water quality issues throughout the region for decades and continues to administer many initiatives that protect and preserve our natural water and habitat resources; and

WHEREAS, DEP is committed to coordinate, oversee, and support work towards the fulfillment of Sections 4.57 and 4.58 of the *Initiatives for a Smart Economy* to “contribute to the expansion of natural habitat and public access along the Buffalo River Corridor”, and to “maintain and enhance the existing County Natural Parks along the Buffalo River”; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Office of Parks and Historic Preservation (NYSOPHP), Environmental Protection Fund provides grant assistance to municipalities to purchase parkland, to improve water quality and preserve natural habitat; and

WHEREAS, Erie County will adjoin the purchased .54 acre parcel to the existing approximate 11 acres of Erie County Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park, and it will remain public parkland in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, DEP provides technical assistance regarding the management of the Erie County Natural Habitat Parks; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Office of Parks and Historic Preservation (NYSOPHP), awarded Erie County an Environmental Protection Fund Grant of \$75,000.00; and

WHEREAS, the addition of this habitat restoration initiative necessitates the execution of a grant contract with the NYSOPHP, and the adoption of a grant budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or the Deputy County Executive is hereby authorized and directed to accept funds from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation in accordance with the provisions of Title 9 of the Environmental protection Act of 1993, in an amount not to exceed \$75,000.00 and enter into an agreement with the State for such financial assistance to Erie County for the purpose of conservation and preservation of public parkland at Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park that was acquired by Erie County on October 15, 2014; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the grant budget and project period for the NYSOPHP grant is hereby created in the Department of Environment and Planning, Business Area 162, Fund 281, as follows:

“Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park”, SAP Grant Account #162SBNHP1517

REVENUE:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
409000	State Aid Revenue	(\$75,000.00)
TOTAL REVENUE		(\$75,000.00)

APPROPRIATIONS:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
516020	Professional Services Contracts	\$73,500.00
506200	Maintenance & Repair	<u>\$ 1,500.00</u>
TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS:		\$75,000.00

RESOLVED, that the County Executive or the Deputy County Executive is hereby authorized to execute the necessary agreements to contract with engineering and construction firms in order to complete the proposed park improvements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of the Division of Budget and Management is hereby authorized to implement any budget adjustments as required to comply with State and local funding requirements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to the County Executive; the Director of the Division of Budget and Management; the County Attorney; the County Comptroller; Maria R. Whyte, Deputy County Executive and Commissioner of Environment and Planning; Thomas R. Hersey, Jr., Deputy Commissioner of Environment and Planning; and Bonnie Lawrence, Coordinator – Pollution Prevention Program.