

ANNUAL MEETING

June 8, 2021 · 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM



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Attending Members:

George Scott, Chair

Lillie Wiley-Upshaw, Vice Chair

George Alexander, Treasurer

Dr. Cynthia Conides

Sharon Holley

Judge James McLeod

Dr. Lillian Williams

Absent Members:

Sheila Brown

Dorothy Hill,

Non-Board in Attendance:

Terry Alford, Executive Director

Audrey Clark, Project Manager

Roxanne Kise, Consultant

Carmen Swans, Sen. Majority Leader Crystal People-Stokes Representative

Chi Owunwanne, University at Buffalo Regional Institute Representative

Meeting called to order by Chairman George Scott at 1:39 PM

The Executive Director's "State of the Commission" Statement 2021

It has been almost a full year and a half since I joined the Commission as Executive Director, so I can't claim to be "new" anymore. But I can accurately report that the past year has not just been interesting and challenging, but very dynamic. What great momentum we have! I have thoroughly enjoyed serving you in my capacity and am blessed to be sharing the proverbial "foxhole" with a dedicated group of staff, consultants and supporting funders as well as very passionate stakeholders and community leaders like yourselves, truly committed to our mission and core values.

In crafting my first *State of the Commission* statement in preparation of our Commission's first Annual Meeting, I reflected on our accomplishments and set backs, as well as on our hopes and disappointments to this point. I thought about the unique and unanticipated challenges presented to all of us by the pandemic and how we still rose above that to adapt and find ways to be successful and relevant anyway. I thought about the unique and unanticipated events that occurred last summer after the injustices suffered by George Floyd and Brianna Taylor, and so by so many others who look like me and their families and how our Heritage Corridor strangely in the end benefitted as a result.

It is because of these things and so many others, and because of you and your commitment, that I am happy to report that the State of our Commission is very good! As an organization, we are in a strong place and getting stronger each year.

Dedicated Board members and staff worked together to improve upon our Governance structure, which in turn as a result improved upon our overall Board structure, as realized with a new Board Handbook soon to be adopted, expanded policies and procedures, and a clear set of priorities and workplans for each of our committees. A few months ago, we welcomed our newest Board member.

Speaking of committees, many of our committees have been quite robust and have realized a number of individuals from the community joining based on their interests or levels of expertise. Whatever the reason why these individuals decide to join a given committee, they all share the same passions possessed by you: their love of history, preservation, or economic opportunity within our beloved Corridor.

Even though we have a small staff at the moment, I am very proud to be able to have such an able group to work with who have been nothing more than supportive in professionally getting things done day-in and day-out. Our Commission is truly blessed to have a Project Manager, also close to a year now, Audrey Clark, who has proven herself invaluable in so many ways to our Commission and especially to our Cultural Anchors. Our Consultant, Roxanne Kise, continues to provide capacity support in so many areas of our organization. The guidance and the level-headed advice she provide to me, and our Commission consistently makes us better.

Our funding partners have been nothing less than outstanding for us. Funders like the Community Foundation of WNY, M&T Bank, the KeyBank Foundation, Oshei, and so many others continue to step up in providing funding for our day-to-day operations, capacity-building and special projects, as well as moral support when we are in need of it. The University at Buffalo Regional Institute, and East Side Avenues, continues to provide staff and our organization with the capacity and technical assistance to ensure our continued success and momentum. We are grateful for that support.

Despite the many challenges I've already mentioned, the Commission continues to firm up old friendships and create new ones. Many organizations around the Buffalo-Niagara Region reaches out to our Commission every day seeking to establish partnerships or collaborations. The numbers of individuals going to our webpage or looking us up on Facebook and other social media platforms continue to increase every month. Organizations or worksites actively seek us out for pertinent speakers, virtual presentations and tours, or presentations about an Anchor or the Heritage Corridor.

Finally, so far the work involved in our present Strategic Action Plan project has yielded great results, not just in terms of the numbers of individuals representing different groups of people within and beyond our Corridor that have participated in our many community engagement sessions conducted by our project consultant Moody Nolan, but in terms of generating excitement within the community, allowing them to imagine the promise of what a vibrant Corridor might look like, and allowing them the platform to share and provide feedback on what that is and how to achieve that goal.

We still have a lot of work to do, ranging from continued Board improvement which will include tough decisions regarding the expansion of our Board to complicated discussions as to what constitutes "an anchor" with voting power as opposed to "an asset"; establishing a better and more cohesive relationship with all the Board of Directors that represent our Anchors; continued discussions with the City of Buffalo regarding development in and around the Corridor or navigating local developers interested in exploiting the great momentum being experienced within the Corridor; and, investigating funding opportunities and Fundraising best practices that could help lead to long-term sustainability of the Commission.

However, like the other unforeseen challenges that presented themselves last year which still is affecting us this year, I am confident that the aforementioned challenges will be resolved with your help and involvement. I look forward to an even more exciting and purposeful remainder of this year and into 2022 when we have our next Annual Meeting.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Alfano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Commission Financial Report

Commission Budget (ending from December 2020)

- Current Assets \$62,480.48
- Fixed Assets \$7,820.86
- Total Assets \$67,194.94
- Total Liabilities \$28,196.99

Motion to accept report by Lillian Williams and seconded James McLeod. Motion approved unanimously.

Election of Officers

1. Suspended until 2022 - Alford explains that the MSAAHCC is still a new board and there are not enough board members yet to be able to vote effectively. By the end of the year the commission hopes to have 13 board members so we can have more candidates next year. Alford asks that if anyone would like to fill the vacant role of secretary, please email Alford so that the conversation can continue.
2. Cynthia Conides asks that any nominations from board members have a conversation with the governance committee. After this conversation, the governance committee asks for a letter of interest and CV. After an interview is conducted the committee will bring it to vote to the full board.
 - a. Sharon Holley asks about board term limits. Conides says bylaws state that we have 3-year term limits with 1 renewable.
 - b. Lillie Willie-Upshaw asks what our maximum number of board members are. Conides answers that 13 is the maximum and the goal. Currently we have 10.

Old Business

1. Commission 2021 Budget - Presented by Roxanne Kise.
 - a. Total expenditure 559,822.53
 - b. Total Salaries: \$120,000
 - i. Benefits: \$2,500
 - c. Total expenses: \$ 532,788.17
 - d. Income: \$ 559,822.53
 - e. Total budget \$ 1,092,610.7
 - f. Net income \$ 27,034.36

Motion to approve commission budget by George Alexander. James McLeod seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Approval of Handbook - Postponed. The handbook was never sent out to board members. Board needs an adequate amount of time to review. Lynn King, Legal Consultant, should also have time to look over the handbook. The approval of the handbook will be moved to July's meeting. Motion to Table by Lillie Willie-Upshaw. Seconded by Sharon Holley. Motion approved unanimously.

Major Milestone

- MSAAHCC did sunset as a “*Commission*” on December 31, 2020 and became solely a 501(c) 3 non-for-profit organization on January 1, 2021.
- Fundraising Consultant Charity Consultants developed and completed a Fundraising Giving Strategy, which was presented to and approved by the MSAAHCC for implementation.
- MSAAHCC continues to leverage capacity building funding to strengthen foundational elements of MSAAHCC with assistance from Roxanne Kise Consulting. Conducted two separate 2-hour *SWOT assessments* and follow-up workshops with MSAAHCC Board; drafted a Board Manual with the Governance Committee and Executive Director; developed priorities/ action plan and committee work plans for 2021; Board will review and approve the MSAAHCC budget for 2021.
- Installed a new Board Member, the Honorable (Retired) Judge James McLeod, to the MSAAHCC.
- MSAAHCC continues to gain interest and attention locally. A press release announcing the launch of the Strategic Action Planning process garnered local press in a variety of news outlets. *Black History Month* news coverage prominently featured the Heritage Corridor. Staff presented to seven organizations seeking more information about the Heritage Corridor and the history of the Commission.
- Board member Dr. Lillian Williams, Associate Professor of Africana and American Studies at the University at Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences led efforts to develop and promote the successful *2021 Spring Speakers Series: Eyes on the Corridor* with the MSAAHCC.
- Consultant Sheri L. Mooney is contracted to provide *Code of Conduct and Harassment Prevention* training to MSAAHCC.
- The ED facilitated a partnership between a local artist (that the MSAAHCC recommended) and the ownership of the new Tim Horton’s restaurant to create a mural for its restaurant lobby. The dedication of the new restaurant and artwork took place on March 26th.
- MSAAHCC, under the direction of the PM and Kise Consulting, has developed and completed a Fundraising Giving Program mailer and online campaign, which will launch in June 2021. Historic neighborhoods around the Heritage Corridor, as well as carefully targeted neighborhoods throughout the City of Buffalo, will receive 5,000 mailers directly.

- MSAAHCC continues to leverage capacity-building funding to strengthen foundational elements of MSAAHCC with assistance from Roxanne Kise Consulting. The MSAAHCC Board approved its Board Manual developed by Kise Consulting and the Governance Committee. The MSAAHCC Board approved the priorities/expectations of MSAAHCC committees. The Executive Director conducted two separate hour-long SWOT assessments of the economic condition of the Heritage Corridor with members of the Economic Revitalization Committee. As a result, the Economic Revitalization has developed a priorities/action plan with a clear set of goals and objectives to follow for the remainder of the year.
- In partnership with Preservation Buffalo Niagara, MSAAHCC efforts proved successful with the Buffalo Common Council in approving the area between Michigan/Broadway to Michigan/Sycamore along the Heritage Corridor as a Local Historic District.
- MSAAHCC continues to garner interest and media attention locally. Due to the press release announcing the launch of the Strategic Action Plan project, several local civic and cultural organizations, including the *Buffalo African American Museum (BAAM)*, the *Harriet Tubman 5K*, *FreeThem Walkers*, the *WNY Urban Artists Collective*, and the *Jesse Clipper VFW Post*, have reached out and met with the Executive Director requesting opportunities to partner or collaborate. Staff has presented to five outside organizations seeking information about the Heritage Corridor. The Project Manager has received several requests from local schools and organizations to coordinate in-person tours at the Heritage Corridor's cultural anchor historic sites leading into Juneteenth Celebration and well into August.
- MSAAHCC and its Strategic Action Planning Project Consultant, Moody Nolan, completed the First Phase of its planning process focusing on project familiarization, scoping, and existing condition analysis, which culminated with a report from Moody Nolan to MSAAHCC. In addition, in May, Moody Nolan completed Phase II of the process which involved hosting several well-attended stakeholder engagement sessions. These sessions included virtual stakeholder meetings, visioning exercises and best practice research. It is anticipated Moody Nolan will present a report as to what was learned from the sessions to MSAAHCC in late July.
- The City of Buffalo announced that WUFO Radio owner *Vision Multi Media Group* was selected as the anchor tenant for 509 Michigan, a city-owned site in the heart of the Heritage Corridor that will be redeveloped, as well as the soon-to-be built 507 Michigan sister structure.
- State Senator Tim Kennedy announced his partnership with MSAAHCC and East Side Garden Walks to renovate and expand the *Freedom Wall* located at the far end of the Heritage Corridor. Sen. Kennedy has identified funding for the project, which will involve community engagement and feedback from nearby residents.

Empire State Development/East Side Avenues

- The Michigan Street Preservation Corporation, Inc. began needed renovations on the Nash House in Fall 2020, which will culminate in Summer of 2021.
- Michigan Street Baptist Church has a refined design for near-term improvements.
- Project architects Foit Albert Associates developed a more cost-efficient and elegant approach to ADA access.
- The Nash Lofts project broke ground and is proceeding in earnest. An investment group led by Steven Carmina is converting the 19th-century block of buildings into 18 new apartments, office space, indoor parking and a restaurant. It is receiving a direct project assistance grant under the East Side program given its proximity to assets on the Heritage Corridor.
- MSBC and CMC are expected to begin construction and renovation work in Q2.
- The MSAAHCC launched their 12-month Strategic Action Planning process. MSAAHCC hired Moody Nolan—the nation’s largest African American-owned design firm—to lead the effort.
- Moody Nolan selected local consultant Mustard Seed (Sandy White) as Community Liaison.
- MSAAHCC and ESA identified funders who provided up to \$50,000 in COVID Relief Funding Support for the Cultural Anchors.
- ESA provided funding support that led to the development of 3D virtual tour productions for each of the Cultural Anchors.

Metrics

Number of Donations	Gross Donated Amount	Fees	Total to Anchors	Net
38	\$ 5,286.05	\$ (164.72)	\$ (250.00)	\$ 5,121.33
Total In-Person Tours	Gross Income	Fees	Total To Anchors	Net
13	\$ 893.34	\$ (31.10)	See combined total	\$ 867.24
Total Virtual Tours	Gross Income	Fees	Total To Anchors	Net
11	\$ 5645.00	\$ (63.73)	See combined total	\$ 5,581.27
Combined Total for Tours	Gross Income	Fees	Total to Anchors	Net
	\$ 6,538.34	\$ (94.83)	\$ 6 ,082.29	\$ 361.22

Notes: The MSAAHCC gets all donations unless designated by the constituent to go to a specific anchor. The MSAAHCC gets a 5% cut from both in-person and virtual tours. The remainder is split evenly among all anchors that send a tour guide.

MailChimp

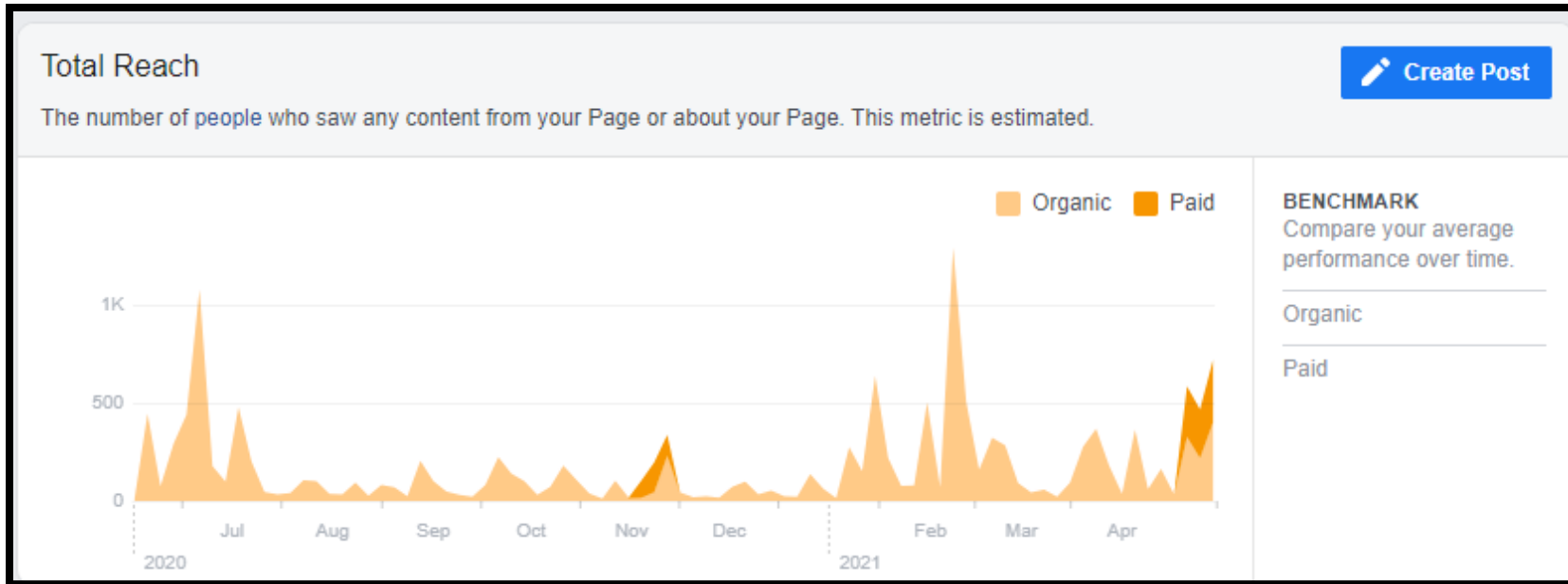
When we imported our mail list from Constant Contact in August 2020, we had 588 constituents. As of June 1, 2021 there are 1,348 constituents in our database.

Average Open Rate 33.4125 (26.27 industry standard)

Average Click Rate 6.03 (2.95 industry standard)

Facebook

247 Followers in June 2020. As of June 1, 2021 there are 649 followers. The graphic below shows our reach throughout the past year.



Instagram

0 Followers in August 2020 (no account was created). As of June 1, 2021 there are 340 followers.

Wix – Website

The Graphic below shows our traffic on the website over the past year.



News Media – Over 50 stories since January 1!

June

[Buffalo Rising Petition](#)

[UB Reporter Tickets for MSAAHCC](#)

[Buffalo Rising and the CMC](#)

May

[The Challenger & FreeTHEM](#)

[Walkers](#)

[Buffalo News & MSBC](#)

[Oregon Live & Underground](#)

[Railroad](#)

[Spectrum News CopperTown Block Club](#)

[Buffalo Rising MSBC Addition](#)

[WBFO & Expansion of CMC](#)

[Buffalo Biz First & CMC](#)

[Buffalo Rising MSAAHCC & Hispanic Heritage](#)

[Spectrum Freedom Wall](#)

[Buffalo News Freedom Wall](#)

April

[WKBW and the CMC](#)

[WIVB and the CMC](#)

[Buffalo News and the CMC](#)

[Buffalo Rising Mumbo Wings](#)

[WIVB Two Major Renos](#)

[Buffalo News WUFO](#)

[WBFO and WUFO](#)

[WGRZ and WUFO](#)

[BizJournal and WUFO](#)

[The Evening Tribune connection to Freedom Wall](#)

[WIVB Tim Hortons](#)

[BN Tim Hortons](#)

[BN 509 RFP](#)

March

[WIVB & Nash Lofts](#)

[Buffalo News & Tim Hortons](#)

[Buffalo News RFP 509](#)

February

[WKBW Black History month](#)

[StepOut Buffalo Nash House](#)

[WIVB Mumbo Wings](#)

[WGRZ MSAAHCC Tourist](#)

[Destination](#)

[Buffalo Rising Black History Month](#)

[365 Days](#)

[Spectrum & CMC](#)

[StepOut Buffalo & CMC](#)

[Spectrum News MSAAHCC](#)

[WGRZ Mumbo Wings](#)

[WIVB Virtual Tours](#)

January

[Buffalo News East Aurora & Corridor](#)

[WGRZ MLK Day](#)

[WKBW MLK Day](#)

[WBFO MLK Day](#)

[Buffalo News Rod Watson](#)

[WGRZ Freedom Wall](#)

[WKBW Remembering Bishop Henderson](#)

[Spectrum Remembering](#)

[BishopHenderson](#)

[Buffalo Rising 2020 recap](#)

[WBFO George K. Arthur](#)

Type	Individuals	Total Hours (Hours x Individuals)
Board Meetings (1.5 Hours)	9	162 hours
Committee Meetings		
Planning 1 per month (1 Hour ea)	4	48 hours
Executive 1 per month (1 Hour ea)	5	60 Hours
Financial 1 per month (1 Hour ea)	3	36 Hours
ER Committee 6 meetings (1 hour ea)	4	24 Hours
Governance Committee		
Fall Clean Up (2 Hours)	60	120 Hours
Christmas (3 Hours)	3	9 hours
Spring Clean Up (2 hours)	15	30 Hours
Total		489 Volunteer Hours

New Projects

1. Terry reports on new buildings in the center of the corridor. The MSAAHCC was concerned that the lots between the nash and the church were going to be sold and the commission released a petition. The Executive Committee and staff met with the Mayor this morning. The mayor stated that he has no thoughts of selling those lots. The mayor has agreed to meet again next month for a continuation of open communication.
2. The commission is looking for other properties to acquire as well. The community outreach has proven that the public would like to see green spaces, restaurants, shops, and activities. They also want to see something that pays homage to the Little Harlem and the YMCA. While we are waiting for the plan to be finished, there is no need to wait to begin conversations about purchasing property.
3. CMC Construction Update - Kaunka was picked to manage the project. They are doing projects on Jefferson and with the Pierce Arrow Building on Elmwood. The anticipated construction start date is August.
4. The Church Construction Update - 3 different sources of funding. They had to work out which types of funding can go to which phases of construction. They will be adding a small annex to the front of the church to accommodate accessibilities and new bathrooms. They hope to have stabilization started by August. The annex is another concern. They recently had an Angel Donor come in who wants to give substantial amounts of money for the annex and gardens, but they want a drastically different design to the annex. They are trying to walk the delicate line between appeasing the Angel Donor and staying true to the vision of the board. They will be bidding out the project in two phases. Stabilization will happen first. The congregation that had been in the church has officially moved out, allowing for more flexibility.
5. Nash House - still working on finishing the projects they started. The pandemic increased the cost of building supplies. The original design for the window repair had to be adjusted due to the increased cost of lumber. The Nash wants to finish the exterior repairs before moving forward with the interior redesign. The Nash is still looking through all of Mr. Arthur's papers to figure it out and locate the papers connected to the project.
6. WUFO - updated by Terry since Sheila is not present. 507/509 will be going to Vision MultiMedia. no updates on time frame. Terry will ask Sheila and report back later.
7. Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Center & Broderick Park partnership - groups want to create a regional heritage hub that will connect all the spaces and benefit tourism for all parties.

8. CFA Application - working with the planning committee to determine what makes the most sense to apply for.
9. FreeTHEM Walker & Juneteenth - partnership with the two groups. The Church and Nash will be open for free tours on Juneteenth. Buy Black Buffalo will have vendor tables. A drum circle and music will be present.
10. Fundraiser - print mailer is at the printer and will be delivered this week. A full online media campaign will accompany it.

Motion to adjourn by George A. Seconded by Lillie Willie-Upshaw. Unanimously approved. Meeting closed at 2:46.