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Conservancy, Kevin Gaughan agree on cooperative framework

Buffalo, NY - The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy Inc. ("Conservancy") and Nicklaus Olmsted Buffalo Inc. ("Company") today announced a signed memorandum of understanding on how they will cooperate and engage within their respective nonprofit missions.

Representative parties are Kevin Gaughan, chairman and CEO, and Peter Hunt, board member, for the Company; and Dennis Horrigan, board chair, and Stephanie Crockatt, executive director, for the Conservancy. The MOU is dated March 29, 2019.

One major goal of the memorandum is to clarify the differences between the two organizations for fundraising while managing and eliminating donor confusion. A second goal is to cooperate on messaging and public communication, noting that neither entity speaks on behalf of the City of Buffalo, the Olmsted Parks landowner.

The non-binding, four-page memorandum is designed to formalize the behavioral aspects of the two parties' relationship and comes after months of work toward collaboration on prospective projects of mutual interest.

"The purpose of this MOU is to develop a framework of cooperation between the Company and the Conservancy, form common ground areas of interest pertaining to potentially new and/or modified park amenities in the Buffalo Olmsted Park System, and provide clarity around the communication, documentation, studies and process required for Conservancy and City consideration," it states.

The memorandum outlines that: "Formal approval by the City of Buffalo would be required for any actual park projects constructed on city-owned land. The Conservancy's Board of Trustees would also need to officially approve any proposed projects within the Olmsted landscape." No golf project in the Olmsted landscape is yet approved.

"This document has been in the works for a while, obviously, and is needed to clarify the multiple distinctions between our organizations, considering both have the Olmsted name," Horrigan said. "We feel this begins to bring clarity, affirmation and accountability to the forefront."

“With this memorandum comes great opportunity, to create new public amenities for Buffalo, and to help lift its underserved youth,” said Gaughan. “The MOU is an essential step toward the success of our plan, and I’m pleased to collaborate with the Conservancy to help make that plan a reality.”

Specifically, the agreement outlines Conservancy and Company priorities:

“In entering into this MOU, the Company acknowledges the Conservancy as the 40-year, mission-based steward of the Olmsted park system, and will follow its process of assessing newly proposed or modified park amenities, including, but not limited to, providing required documentation and studies ... with formal review by the Conservancy’s Long Range Planning Committee and Design Review Committee, in alignment with the Conservancy’s published and updated Master Plan.”

“Much has been written and discussed about the prospect of golf in and near the Olmsted landscapes,” said Crockatt. “And while no one disputes the grander vision for these ideas, with this MOU public and private expectations can be better managed, and we can begin to review detailed data, analytics and business plans in considering if and how the city and its Olmsted parks could benefit.”

Other benefits of the MOU include:

- “Conservancy benefits include clarifying roles, including the assurance for factual and supportive communications involving the Conservancy and its Olmsted Parks brand. Other benefits include activating long-term restorative plans in furthering its mission focus in accordance with its master plan, while supporting and sustaining National Register of Historic Places status for the Olmsted park system.”
- “Company benefits include clarified roles and responsibilities, understanding of processes required by the Conservancy, as well as authenticity of communication about the Conservancy in connection with Company’s accomplishing its mission of providing public recreation spaces and education, employment and vocational training to underserved youth in the City of Buffalo.”
- “Mutual benefit for the parties is the opportunity to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the parties, and to collect and share proprietary data on park features and trending improvements. And, if successful, the benefit of future restorative public amenities in each of South Park and Delaware Park which may combine and further sustain the missions of both nonprofits and their respective affiliations.”

The memo also outlines the company’s responsibilities in its relationship with the City of Buffalo and the conservancy:

“The primary responsibilities of the Company are to fully finance and contract with professionals who will perform and provide the requisite documentation, studies, public input, business plans, and future designs that will be presented to the Conservancy and the City of Buffalo for their consideration. As to responsible communications, the Company will

collaborate on developing solicitation plans, and clearly state on its marketing/advertising/fundraising materials that any funds solicited or collected by the Company for its initiatives do not directly benefit the Conservancy and are not considered a gift to the Conservancy. Furthermore, the Company will devote its best efforts to prevent donor confusion between Company and Conservancy independent fundraising efforts.”

Among the parameters is agreement on communications:

“The Company and Conservancy agree on developing a detailed post-signature communications plan that will be strictly adhered to as to content and message ... There will be no independent outreach or audience given to the media by either party as a result of this MOU. Furthermore, as to other advertising (i.e. videos, commercials, etc.), the Conservancy will approve all scripts or messages in alleviating further donor confusion.”

“As stated in the MOU, we all agree that the Company is pursuing development of a public-recreation amenity and public-educational facility on private land adjacent to a historic Olmsted park in South Buffalo,” Hunt said. “Our immediate goal is local funding to supplement further securing of funding from outside Buffalo for these amenities, and for planning documents requested by the city and Conservancy.”

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About the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is the first nonprofit organization in the nation to manage and operate an entire urban park system consisting of over 850 acres of beautifully designed historic parks, parkways and circles. Established in 1978 the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy is an independent not-for-profit, membership-based, community organization whose mission is to promote, preserve, restore, enhance, and maintain the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks and parkways in the Greater Buffalo area for current and future generations. Designed as the first urban park system in America by the famous landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted over 150 years ago, more than 2.5 million visits occur annually in the park system for recreation, relaxation and rejuvenation. Basic maintenance of the parks has been greatly improved since the Conservancy’s 2004 groundbreaking public-private agreement with the City of Buffalo and Erie County. Since that time, the Conservancy, now partnering with the City of Buffalo, has retained full responsibility for the management, operations and care of these National and State Registered Historic Places. In 2014 the American Planning Association recognized Delaware Park as one its Great Places in America and The Guardian named the Olmsted park system as one of the best park systems in the world. In 2018 the Conservancy broke a Guinness World Record in historic Bidwell Parkway. For more visit www.bfloparks.org.

The Buffalo Olmsted Park System includes:

Six parks: Cazenovia Park in South Buffalo, Delaware Park in Delaware/Parkside District, Front Park at the Peace Bridge, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park at Fillmore Avenue, Riverside Park at Niagara and Tonawanda Street, and South Park at McKinley Parkway; Seven parkways: Bidwell, Chapin, Lincoln, McKinley, Porter, Red Jacket, and Richmond; Eight landscaped traffic circles: Agassiz, Colonial, Ferry, Gates, McClellan, McKinley, Soldiers, and Symphony

About Nicklaus Olmsted Buffalo

Nicklaus Olmsted Buffalo is a non-profit organization formed to oversee Kevin Gaughan’s proposal to assist the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy in its work on behalf of Buffalo citizens. Gaughan’s plan is to combine the beauty of a Jack Nicklaus design with the wonder of a Frederick Law Olmsted park,

creating public recreation and pastoral settings, and an education facility, like no other in America. Pursuit of the plan would include a) iconic champion Jack Nicklaus re-designing a modest upgrade of the Delaware Park golf course, utilizing less space and permitting restoration of a portion of Olmsted's original meadow; Nicklaus' Delaware design would include pathways for non-golf use, and landscape features for winter sports and recreation; b) Nicklaus designs a second, signature golf course in South Buffalo, on a parcel adjacent to South Park, possibly permitting removal of the South Park golf course and full rehabilitation of Olmsted's world-renowned Arboretum; and c) construction of an Education Center next to South Park to provide inner-city youth with vocational training in land/water conservation; botany; agronomy; course maintenance; and business management.

<https://www.nicklausolmstedbuffalo.org/>