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**FINAL MINUTES OF M849/10-2025
NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION
HYBRID
(Georgetown office and Microsoft Teams)
October 16, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT

J. Chevalier (virtual), M. Francis (virtual, to 3:00 pm), L. Golden (virtual), L. Kiernan, G. Little, D. McKinlay, D. Measures, D. Nielsen (to 3:00 pm), R. Palmer, L. Price, R. Vacca (Chair), J. Vida, A. Witteveen (virtual).

REGRETS

G. Krantz.

STAFF PRESENT

S. Carey, J. Isaac, M. Cairns, S. Robinson, J. Sperling, K. Nainala, B. Fatima (virtual), J. Kowalski, A. Bochenek, J. Olah.

ALSO, PRESENT

W. Wood, Natural Heritage Land Use Planning Advisor (A), Natural Heritage Section, Ministry of Natural Resources.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER 9:30 a.m.

Chair Rocco (Rocky) Vacca presided.

INTRODUCTIONS / ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting. He advised that he and the Director met with the Deputy Minister last week to discuss the 2025 Coordinated Plan Review. The Deputy is looking forward to receiving the Commission's plan review recommendations.

The Chair thanked staff for their ongoing efforts and hard work in upholding the plan and reiterated his commitment to ensuring staff are treated respectfully.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair read the Land Acknowledgment.

DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

The Director advised that the NEC now has a more hands on role regarding the Commission appointment process and continues to work closely with the Ministry on filling the three vacant public-at-large appointments. He also advised that he attended a book launch on October 8th for 'Protecting the Ontario Niagara Escarpment' by Donald Avery, which is a history of the Niagara Escarpment. He encouraged everyone to purchase a copy of the book and thanked all those who continue to promote the Niagara Escarpment.

The Director also thanked the Chair for his continued support of staff.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

No business arising.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

M849R1/10-2025

Moved By: Measures

Seconded By: Vida

"That the Commission approve the September 18, 2025, Commission Minutes M848-09-2025, as written."

Motion Carried

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST – Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts were declared.

MOTION FOR DELEGATES

M849R2/10-2025

Moved By: Nielsen

Seconded By: Price

“That the persons representing the matters listed on the agenda be invited to address the Commission.”

Motion Carried

CLOSED SESSION

M849R3/10-2025

Moved By: Little

Seconded By: Witteveen

“That the Commission enter into closed session.”

Motion Carried

M849R4/10-2025

Moved By: Kiernan

Seconded By: Vida

“That the Commission reopen the meeting to the public.”

Motion Carried

C1

Niagara Escarpment Commission 2026 Meeting Schedule

Staff presented the proposed meeting dates for 2026; it was advised that the January meeting is scheduled for January 22, 2026. The Commission requested the March meeting be moved to March 26th to avoid coinciding with the March 2026 school break.

M849R5/10-2025

Moved By: Price

Seconded By: Little

“That the 2026 Commission meeting schedule be approved as amended.”

Motion Carried

SPEAKERS

The Director, Shawn Carey, and Annemarie Bochenek, Executive Services Administrator, reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2026 and answered questions.

C2

Niagara Escarpment Commission 2026-2029 Draft Business Plan

BACKGROUND

The Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) is a non-board governed agency of the Ontario Government, that is administered under the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Like other provincial agencies and boards, it functions under the Agencies and Appointments Directive, which sets out reporting relationships, business processes, and accountability requirements. The Directive requires that a business plan be prepared annually for a minimum three-year period and submitted by the Chair of the NEC to the Minister of Natural Resources (MNR). Provincial agencies are accountable to the government through the responsible minister. They must use public resources efficiently and effectively to carry out their mandates, as established by their respective constituting instruments.

The three years encompassed by this business plan continue the focus on opportunities to modernize, digitize and streamline program delivery to enhance the client experience and reduce efforts of staff. NEC will also work closely with MNR, with a focus on legislative and regulatory enhancements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That the Commission endorse the draft 2026-2029 NEC Business Plan; and,
- 2) That the Commission direct NEC staff to initiate the Ministry's approval process by submitting the 2026-2029 Business Plan to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

SPEAKERS

Meloday Cairns, Manager, Program Services, and Batool Fatima, Senior Marketing and Communications Advisor, provided a summary of the Business Plan and answered questions.

M849R6/09-2025

Moved by: McKinlay

Seconded by: Price

“That the Commission endorse the 2026-2029 NEC Business Plan and direct staff to initiate MNR’s approval process.”

Motion Carried

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Information only Items

G1 Director Approvals and Dashboards for month of September 2025

G2 Appeals and Hearings update as of September 30, 2025

G3 Plan Amendments Status update as of September 30, 2025

G4 Director’s Report as of September 30, 2025

M849R7/09-2025

Moved By: Vida

Seconded By: Kiernan

“That the Commission accept Consent Agenda items G2, G3 and G4.”

Motion Carried

M849R8/09-2025

Moved By: McKinlay

Seconded By: Palmer

“That the Commission accept Consent Agenda item G1.”

Motion Carried

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner McKinlay requested that G1 be pulled for discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

ADJOURNMENT

M849R9/09-2025

Moved By: McKinlay

Seconded By: Price

“That this meeting be adjourned.”

Motion Carried

Time of Adjournment: 3:30 p.m.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

Rocco (Rocky) Vacca
Chair