

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation

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ECHDC MOVES FORWARD WITH BUFFALO PLACE PROPOSAL

State agency approves inner harbor operations and maintenance contract; authorizes demolition design agreement for Aud and Donovan buildings; and funds outer harbor fishing pier.

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) Board of Directors today approved a \$299,676 one-year contract with Buffalo Place, Inc., for operation, maintenance and special event coordination at the Erie Canal Harbor project site. In addition, the Corporation authorized a \$214,008 consulting contract with C&S Engineers, covering expert engineering design services in preparation for the eventual demolition of the Memorial Auditorium (Aud) and Donovan State Office Building (Donovan), as well as a \$49,131 agreement with the Herbert F. Darling Company, for the construction of a temporary public access fishing platform on Buffalo's outer harbor.

The scope of services provided by Buffalo Place, Inc., under the approved \$299,676 contract includes daily maintenance and landscaping of the site grounds, operation of the Commercial Slip pumping system, and other site furnishings. Buffalo Place, Inc., will also provide year-round site security and management, organize the July 4th grand opening event, coordinate staging of the "Buffalo Place Rocks the Harbor" two-day concert series on August 15th & 16th, assist with the selection and oversight of a third-party transient dock operations vendor, as well as administer various daily programming activities implemented under the advisement of ECHDC and the City of Buffalo.

"Maintaining a waterfront destination is equally as important as creating one," said Congressman Brian Higgins. "Buffalo Place has the expertise to come in immediately, maintain the site's beautiful historic landscape and plan exciting events that highlight all the inner harbor has to offer this community and visitors alike."

"I am very pleased the ECHDC has selected Buffalo Place, Inc. for the critically important operation, maintenance and special event coordination activities at the Erie Canal Harbor project site," said Mayor Byron Brown. "Buffalo Place has a proven track record of capably handling diverse special events such as Thursday at the Square, the Downtown Farmer's Market, operation of Rotary Rink and providing key support at large scale events like the annual Gus Macker basketball tournament, so I am very confident they will bring the same skill and attention to detail at the Inner Harbor."

"Development of the Erie Canal Harbor site in downtown Buffalo is proof positive that waterfront development is becoming a reality in our community," said Erie County Executive Chris Collins. "I applaud the Corporation's decision to select Buffalo Place to help operate and maintain the historic site, and Erie County has been and remains committed to providing funds to prepare the site for future development."

The Buffalo Place, Inc., contract commences retroactive to May 26, 2008, and runs through May 25, 2009. Specific budget allocations outlined in the amended proposal include: \$49,251 for site operations and maintenance; \$38,460 for security services; \$71,250 for special events; \$41,096 for miscellaneous events and promotions; \$25,000 for transient dock operations (possible reimbursed through dock usage revenue); and a \$25,000 contingency clause.

"After an extensive review of the proposal, we've settled on a slightly amended version that best satisfies the harbor's needs," said Jordan Levy, chairman, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation. "We definitely think this operation and maintenance plan is a good one, as it provides

ECHDC with a little flexibility in terms of programming and the overall type of events, festivals and concerts that are held at the harbor. Basically, it's an all-around win for the people of Western New York, the City of Buffalo, the State and Buffalo Place."

"As an organization dedicated to making Downtown Buffalo clean, safe, and fun, Buffalo Place is extremely pleased with the role it has been asked to play by ECHDC on the Erie Canal Harbor site," said Keith Belanger, chairman, Buffalo Place, Inc. "With the undeniable "Wow" factor of the recently completed waterfront improvements, we are confident that the Erie Canal Harbor will be an important ingredient in advancing Buffalo's redevelopment agenda, while simultaneously celebrating its storied past. We look forward to playing a role in that mission."

Meanwhile, ECHDC approved a consulting contract with C&S Engineers, for expert engineering design services in connection with the upcoming demolition of the Aud and Donovan buildings. Demolition is expected to commence following the completion of asbestos removal work at both sites later this year. Funding for the engineering design services contract will be covered by the combination of a New York State REDP grant, and either a Country of Erie grant, or NYPA relicensing agreement funds.

"This contract provides further proof that we are indeed steadily moving towards the eventual demolition of the Aud and Donovan sites," remarked Chairman Levy. "Both areas will be utilized for future Canal Side development and we remain on track for demolition activities to commence later this year."

ECHDC also authorized an agreement with the Herbert F. Darling Company for installation of temporary public access fishing platform at the seven acre outer harbor property recently acquired from Cargill, Inc. Construction of this 9 ft. wide by 30 ft. steel platform is expected to take approximately six weeks once initiated and could be available for public use by late-summer 2008. The project will be funded through miscellaneous revenue obtained by the Corporation, including monies received from spring/winter special event parking at the Donovan building site.

"While we wait for our development plan to take shape, the fishing dock brings another recreational use on line," said David Colligan, board member and outer harbor committee chairman, Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation. "It fits nicely into the wide-range of recreational options available now or in the near future in the outer harbor area."

Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation is a subsidiary agency of Empire State Development Corporation. Its vision is to revitalize Western New York's waterfront and restore economic growth to Buffalo based on the region's legacy of pride, urban significance and natural beauty. ESD is the New York's chief economic development agency and also oversees the marketing of "I Love NY," the state's iconic tourism brand. For more information, visit www.nylovesbiz.com.

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