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## **ECHDC Approves Design of Explore & More Children's Museum at Canalside**

*Renderings and construction drawings of the project can be viewed [here](#)*

*Constance Lydon introduced as new ECHDC board member*

The Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) met today and approved the architectural design of Explore & More Children's Museum, marking the final step prior to the museum's construction on the South Aud Block of Canalside. The project will break ground next to the restored canal system in March. The board also welcomed a new board member, Constance L. Lydon, a design professional from Hamburg with extensive experience in landscape design, landscape construction and long-term landscape maintenance plans.

"Today's design approval is the final step for Explore & More Children's Museum at Canalside before construction begins on this much anticipated project," said **ECHDC Chairman Robert Gioia**. "The museum is an important component of our work to redevelop the South Aud Block and build on the amenities and attractions that are drawing millions of people to Canalside."

The Explore & More Children's Museum project involves a \$13.29 million, 43,000 gross square feet core and shell building that will house the museum and provide a number of exhibits that will further advance Canalside's status as the city's premiere downtown destination. Based on the recommendations of ECHDC's Design Review Committee and the City of Buffalo Planning Board, the board found today that the project, designed by Fontanese, Folts, Aurbrecht & Ernst (FFAE), is consistent with the design guidelines established by the corporation as part of the Modified General Project Plan for Canalside. Renderings and construction drawings of the project can be viewed [here](#). The project will strive to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver.

The lower floors of the museum will be activated with a café along the Canal Towpath and a retail space on the ground floor along Lloyd Street, anchoring the corner of Lloyd Street and Marine Drive. The ground floor will also include two entrances for museum

guests, allowing school groups to be separated from daily visitors as necessary. The second floor includes a two-story space along the canals while the third floor provides space for several exhibits and views of the Buffalo River. On the fourth floor, overlooking the canals and the city skyline as backdrop, a rooftop terrace will allow museum guests to enjoy Canalside from a unique vantage point.

With the design now complete and approved, construction will begin in March 2017. LeChase Construction is providing construction management services for the pre-construction and construction of the children's museum core and shell structure.

"We are thrilled to be moving forward with our plans for this one-of-a-kind children's Museum at Canalside," said **Douglas Love, CEO, Explore & More Children's Museum**. "With groundbreaking next month, it will be wonderful for children and families in the City and visiting the City to watch this place being built just for them." In other business, ECHDC introduced its newest board member, Constance Lydon, who is the owner of Lydon Landscape Design Inc. and has served as a landscape consultant on a wide range of projects, including recreational areas, university projects, community housing projects, resort developments, parks, churches and special needs playgrounds. Her firm focuses on landscape sustainability throughout the design and construction process. One of her many community volunteer projects was serving on the Outer Harbor Parkway Landscape Panel.

"It has been exciting to watch history unfold as our waterfront emerges," said **Lydon**. "I am honored to join the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation and work with this exceptional board, and look forward to contributing to its future direction and growth."

The board also authorized a three year, \$45,000 contract with Keville Insurance Agency of Waterford for consulting services with respect to insurance matters effecting ECHDC. Considering the wide range of projects ECHDC is engaged in, and its increased property portfolio, the services provide valuable protection to ECHDC through its insurance needs.

### **About Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation**

The ECHDC is governed by a nine-member board consisting of seven voting directors and two non-voting, ex-officio directors. The seven voting directors are recommended by the New York State Governor and are appointed by the New York State Urban Development Corporation d/b/a Empire State Development as sole shareholder of ECHDC. The two nonvoting, ex-officio director positions are held by the Erie County Executive and the City of Buffalo Mayor.

As a subsidiary of Empire State Development, the state's chief economic development agency, the Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation supports and promotes the creation of infrastructure and public activities at Canalside, the Ohio Street corridor and the Outer Harbor that is attracting critical mass, private investment and enhance the enjoyment of the waterfront for residents and tourists in Western New York. 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. For more information on ECHDC, visit [www.eriecanalharbor.com](http://www.eriecanalharbor.com).

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