



Minutes of Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Meeting  
March 27, 2009

**Co-Chairs**  
Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Michele Iannello

**Present:** Burmaster, Konst, Allen, Cappellino, Curtis, Ferraro, Gower, Iannello, Lacki, Mills, Morse (Trabold), Orsi (Greco), Ross, Sciandra

**Members**  
James Allen  
John Cappellino  
Drew Cerza  
Dr. Deborah Curtis  
Hon. Paul Dyster  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Samuel Ferraro  
Renee Filip  
Robert Gower  
Kathy Konst  
David Lacki  
Celeste Lawson  
Gregory Lewis  
Joe McMahon  
Hon. Peter McMahon  
Hon. Barbara Miller-Williams  
Hon. John Mills  
Hal Morse  
Hon. Jason Murgia  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Christina Orsi  
John Percy  
Hon. Edward Rath III  
Hon. William Ross  
Salvatore Sciandra  
Peter Wendel  
Arlene White  
Hon. Maria Whyte

**Excused:** Ellis, Lawson, Percy, Rath, Wendel, White

**Absent:** Dyster, Lewis, J. McMahon, P. McMahon, Miller-Williams, Murgia, Murray, O'Connor, St. Pierre Smith, Casale, Witul

**Ad Hoc**  
Michael Casale  
Matthew Enstice  
Melinda Rath Sanderson  
Lawrence Witul

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Kathy Konst. Coalition member John Cappellino and the Erie County Industrial Development Agency were thanked for hosting the meeting.

**Executive Director**  
Tod A. Kniazuk

Departing member Dr. Ruth Bereson was thanked for her service.

Minutes of the December 2008 meeting were approved.

Regional Coalition Executive Director Tod A. Kniazuk presented the sustainability report. The report was received and filed. Kniazuk noted that the Volker grant was finally received, and thanked the Erie County Industrial Development Agency again for fronting the funding until the grant arrived. He also reported that the Oishei foundation turned down our grant request, and that research is indicating we are most likely not qualified to become a 501c3 not for profit corporation. As such, it looks like the Coalition will need to continue to be membership-driven and to look to its members for sustainability.

The "final four" choices for the Coalition's new brand were presented to the group based on being the top four vote-getters in the initial round. From those four the majority voted in favor of choice number two, which we will now begin using.

Kniazuk presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Kniazuk noted that Niagara County Manager

Gregory Lewis included the Coalition's smart permit proposal in the Niagara County stimulus fund application.

Discussion followed on economic development (essentially, the roundtable listed for later on the agenda), with Co-Chair Burmaster asserting that the permit process takes too long. While the IDAs are doing a good job, they're forced to operate under a "heavy handicap of bureaucracy." Coalition member Samuel Ferraro added that, even if you have a great program at the local level, some projects have to go to higher levels of government and get hung up there. Coalition member James Allen agreed with Ferraro, but noted it's at the local level that companies decide if there's an interest to develop or not.

On a related topic, Coalition member John Cappellino informed the group that a provision of a proposed IDA reform bill in the New York State Legislature would allow any person who doesn't like a project to gain legal status to stall it whether or not they're a stakeholder in or affected by the project.

Subcommittee Chair David Lacki presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with special attention given to the developing air travel survey proposal.

Under old business, Co-Chair Burmaster encouraged our members to come to the meetings, or to send a proxy in their stead if they cannot be there. Renee Filip at the Buffalo Niagara Partnership was identified as a potential replacement for Laura St. Pierre Smith, as Filip was taking over some of the issues of interest to the Coalition.

Under new business, Coalition member Michele Iannello invited everyone to attend the Erie County Legislature's new Green Actions Community Committee meeting on April 7 for a presentation on green tourism by the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau's Cheryl Zanghi.

The next general meeting will be October 2 at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development Agency (thanks to Samuel Ferraro). The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
September 25, 2009