

**ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**  
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH  
UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO  
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Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Members:

James Allen  
Meredith Andreucci  
Hon. Vince Anello  
Drew Cerza  
Hon. Elise Cusack  
Hon. William Davignon  
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti  
Tim Doolittle  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Matthew Enstice  
Samuel Ferraro  
Richard Geiger  
Hon. Timothy Kennedy  
Celeste Lawson  
Maria Lehman  
Hon. Peter McMahan  
Hon. Gerald Meal  
Hal Morse  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Dr. Gary Praetzel  
F. Tim Reese  
David Rosenwasser  
Hon. William Ross  
Laurence Rubin  
Diane Ruzala  
Laura St. Pierre  
Hon. Demone Smith  
Hector Titus  
Timothy Wanamaker  
Charles Webb  
Peter Wendel

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Hon. George Holt, Jr.  
John Sheffer, II  
Lawrence Witul

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting  
June 24, 2005

**Present:** Burmaster, Weinstein, Anello, Doolittle, Enstice, Ferraro, Lawson, Lehman, Morse, Praetzel, Ruzala, St. Pierre, Titus, Wanamaker (proxy), Webb (proxy), Wendel, Casale, Witul

**Excused:** Andreucci, Davignon, McMahan, Meal, Reese, Holt, Sheffer

**Absent:** Allen, Cerza, Cusack, DeBenedetti, Ellis, Geiger, Kennedy, O'Connor, Rosenwasser, Ross, Rubin, Smith

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. ENRP Member Maria Lehman and the URS Corporation were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the April, 2005 meeting were approved, with a change on page three that ENRP Member Lawson's comment on the cultural funding proposal should read it was City of Buffalo Mayor Anthony Masiello and Chief of Staff Eva Hassett who wrote a letter to the Arts Council (not Louis Ciminelli as stated); and on page five to reflect that a vote was taken to send a letter urging the passage of replacement power legislation.

The Co-Chairs welcomed new member William Ross, the chairman of the Niagara County Legislature (who was formerly an ad hoc member of ENRP but is now a full member).

Subcommittee Chair Hector Titus presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report, which was received and filed with approval granted for a letter to be sent to Erie County Executive Joel Giambra requesting the county to take action to implement the electronic permitting website by taking the project live as soon as possible. Lehman commented that staffing could be an issue as there were reductions made in the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning due to the budget crisis.

ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report, which was received and filed. On the topic of fostering intergovernmental collaboration, Lehman stated that there has never been a more crucial time for such efforts. She added that the state money being made available through the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority is targeted for just the kinds of initiatives on which we are working and that ENRP could be a mechanism for achieving some of these efforts. ENRP Member Celeste Lawson added that the positive environment of ENRP is being “underestimated and overlooked.” We should be more aggressive, as our organization puts to bed the mythology that the two counties can’t work together. Jo Nasoff (proxy for ENRP Member Charles Webb) agreed that ENRP is good at bringing problems in and identifying who is working on them, but we should also focus on items on which we can have a direct impact versus things we need to take back to the governments (which have the formal clout).

Kniazuk presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report, which was received and filed. On the topic of the United Arts Fund, Lawson informed the group that the Arts Council of Buffalo and Erie County is inviting some experts to come to the area to speak on the issue, and that she will make sure ENRP receives invitations.

Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse presented the Transportation Subcommittee report, which was received and filed with concept approval granted for the Subcommittee to further examine and develop a joint application for state transportation enhancement funding for the Niagara Falls Wayfinding, Buffalo Cultural Tourism Directional, and Shoreline Corridor Wayfinding signage projects. ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro commented that other signage projects such as the Greenway should also be considered. Co-Chair Weinstein added that the Greenway would also come with funding already attached.

Ferraro gave a presentation on the Niagara Falls Air Base. He began by apologizing on behalf of our scheduled presenter Niagara Falls Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) President Merrell Lane, as he could not attend due to the following Monday’s public hearing at the University at Buffalo Center for the Arts where four of nine commissioners will be in attendance (including BRAC’s chairman). He then gave some statistics on the base: it has a \$50 million annual payroll, \$150 million annual economic impact, and is Niagara County’s

second largest employer – although 40 percent of the workforce comes from Erie County, making a clearly regional issue.

NIMAC has identified three things BRAC missed about the base: low cost power was not pointed out, nor was the extension of the runway or that the NFTA joint use agreement cost was down to zero. According to Ferraro these items will be pointed out at the hearing.

On the topic of building public support for the base, Ferraro brought a sample letter of support for each ENRP member to sign if they chose, and mentioned a public rally of support that very weekend following the Buffalo Bisons game. As the BRAC commissioners will already be in town for the next day's hearing, NIMAC is hoping they will see this show of public support on the news that night.

Ferraro conclude by reiterating the significance of having four of the nine commissioners – including the chairman – in attendance for the hearing. Some of the hearings are only getting staff from BRAC.

Ferraro presented an update on power relicensing, <http://niagara.nypa.gov> Negotiations continue, with a draft application being submitted on schedule in late August.

On the related topic of replacement power, ENRP Ad Hoc Member Michael Casale noted that a meeting was held with the Western New York delegation, and a letter was sent to every New York State Assembly member. The Assembly bill now falls in line with its counterpart in the Senate. The proposed deal maintains the current allocations, and the compromise is that the "loose juice" can be used up to 70 megawatts through 2006, then we get it for six months to try to allocate it.

Ferraro presented an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, [www.regionalframework.com](http://www.regionalframework.com) Those working on the Framework are still shooting for a final work product by the end of the summer. There were some delays, but the project is now back on track.

There was no update on the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS).

Kniazuk presented an update on the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative. Implementation money from the local foundations was put on hold in order for them to pool resources to provide

emergency funding to local cultural organizations that were completely cut out of the final 2006 Erie County budget. They are also providing funding for collaborative initiatives between cultural organizations. In the meantime, the steering committee for the BNCTI is forming, with Leslie Zemsky agreeing to chair the group.

Kniazuk informed the group of the upcoming ENRP strategic planning initiative. A cross section of ENRP members will be asked to participate in three sessions to be held in July and August. The group will assess the current state of ENRP, and plot a strategy and structure for the future of the organization. Their draft report will be circulated to the general body at the end of August, and will be discussed in all four subcommittees in September. Comments and proposed revisions will then be circulated in advance of the October 14 general meeting. The goal is to ratify a final product at that meeting. Kniazuk stressed the importance of all members attending the September subcommittee meetings and the October general meeting, and thanked in advance those who would participate in the summer sessions.

Under old business, members received in their packets copies of letters approved at the previous meeting and subsequently sent on annual funding for cultural agencies being included in the power relicensing settlement agreement, thanks for Sam Ferraro and Kevin Donovan for their exemplary work on the Relicensing Consensus Committee, and urging passage of replacement power legislation.

Under new business, members also received in their packets a copy of a letter of thanks being sent to Darren Kempner for his efforts with ENRP during his term as a graduate assistant at the University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth, especially his instrumental work on the research phase of the small business assistance website project.

The next meeting date was set for Friday, October 14 at 8:30 a.m. at the Niagara Falls Conference Center (thanks to ENRP Member Meredith Andreucci). The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 a.m. for a tour of the old M. Wile building led by ENRP Member Lehman.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
October 7, 2005