

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Michele Iannello**

**From: Tourism & Culture Chair David Lacki**

**Re: May, June, and August 2009 Meeting**

**Date: October 2, 2009**

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Co-Chairs

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Michele Iannello

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

Ad Hoc

Michael Casale  
Matthew Enstice  
Melinda Rath Sanderson  
Lawrence Witul

Executive Director

Tod A. Kniazuk

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Tourism & Culture Subcommittee met May 14, 2009 at the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau (BNCVB), June 9, 2009 at the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC), and August 18, 2009 at the NTCC. Present for the May meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Curtis, Iannello, and Lawson. Present for the June meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Curtis, Dyster (proxy), Iannello, Percy, and Rath, as well as Marguerite Greco from Empire State Development and Cheryl Zanghi from the BNCVB. Present for the August meeting were subcommittee members Lacki, Casale, Curtis, and Percy, as well as Greco and Eddie Friel from Niagara University.

**Air Travel Survey Project:**

The main topic for all three meetings was the development of a proposal for a two-year air travel survey project. The Regional Coalition would serve as the coordinator of the project through the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee, and the Niagara University Hospitality Training and Research Center would conduct the survey.

The project would collect data from both arriving and departing passengers that would be of use to the economic development, transportation, and tourism communities. As such, the funding model would call for small contributions from key agencies in the aforementioned sectors such as:

Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Buffalo Niagara Enterprise  
Buffalo Niagara Partnership  
Erie County Industrial Development Agency

Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council  
Niagara County Center for Economic Development  
Niagara Frontier Transportation Agency  
Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation

The details of the project, as well as an opportunity for questions and feedback, will be given at the Coalition's October general meeting. Following that presentation, **the Niagara Erie Regional Coalition recommends that the Coalition approve the proposed air travel survey project and begin work on assembling the funding.**

"Green and Mean (It)":

Cheryl Zanghi of the BNCVB provided details to the subcommittee on their initiative to "green" the hospitality industry – an effort that started in August, 2007. The effort involves 30 organizations from both the convention and hospitality sectors on a steering committee. Everything from composting to solar energy to recycling are offered as options. Not only is this good work, but it is also appealing to a growing segment of the tourism and convention market.

So far six hotels are fully participating, with 30 more beginning the process. The BNCVB is working to "live our policy" as well. Subcommittee Chair David Lacki noted that the state is way behind on this, as they are just now looking for two hotels to use as a pilot through the I Love New York program.

Subcommittee members Debbie Curtis and John Percy both credited the program for coming a long way very quickly, and Percy noted that he will be meeting with Zanghi about bringing the program to Niagara County. He added that Niagara Falls Mayor (and subcommittee member) Paul Dyster is also interested in green issues.

Subcommittee member Michele Iannello informed the group that she sponsored a resolution in the Erie County Legislature calling on the county's Department of Environment and Planning to create an Office of Sustainability, and calling on the Erie County Fiscal Stability Authority to fund a position to run that office through a county efficiency grant. Subcommittee member Ed Rath agreed to call DEP to find out the status of that request.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included changes at the BNCVB, the cultural data project, and using social networking and new technology to make it easier for cultural organizations to submit events to the tourism promotion agencies.