

# ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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## Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster

Hon. William A. Pauly

## Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting January , 2001

**Present:** Burmaster, Pauly, Coan, Connolly, Eldridge, Erck, Ferraro, Greenan, McMahon, Morse, O'Connor, Peoples (proxy), Simon, Villani, Weinstein, Wendel

**Excused:** Lehman, Meal, Rubin, Rutecki, Schuler

**Absent:** DeBenedetti, Dziedzic, Johnston

Co-Chairs Burmaster and Pauly called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. Thanks were given to our host the Niagara Club, and the sponsor of the meeting – Bob Wilmers and M&T Bank.

Three new members were welcomed to ENRP: Hon. John Connolly (representing Niagara County municipalities), Hon. Bradley Erck (replacing Hon. John Tylec), and Hon. Peter McMahon (representing Erie County municipalities). Welcome was also given to our guests from the Erie and Niagara County Legislatures: Hon. Judith Fisher, Hon. Steven McCarville, Hon. Jim Ward, Hon. William Ross, and Hon. Sam Granieri.

Minutes of the December, 2000 meeting were approved. ENRP staff member Kniazuk thanked the 11 members who responded to the end of year survey, and indicated the first suggestion being implemented was the scheduling of the entire year's worth of general meetings at the January meeting. The meetings will be March 30 (Erie Co.), June 1 (Niagara Co.), July 27 (Erie Co.), September 28 (Niagara Co.), and November 30 (Erie Co.). The Erie County meetings will be held in the Faculty Dining Room of the Spring Student Center at Erie Community College's North Campus (corner of Wehrle and Youngs Roads). The Niagara County location has yet to be determined. Staff member Kniazuk also noted that the ENRP website – [www.erie.gov/legislature/enrp](http://www.erie.gov/legislature/enrp) will be up and running soon.

Co-chairs Pauly and Burmaster asked the membership if they would like to establish a Power Relicensing Task Group – another suggestion made in some of the surveys. After some discussion it was decided that, while no formal group would be established, ENRP would get involved with the Relicensing Consensus Committee and that the topic would remain a standing agenda item.

This month's presentation was on urban sprawl. Katherine Tarbell and Nancy Brock of the League of Women Voters were the guest speakers, as the League is currently in the midst of an educational campaign on the issue. Ms. Tarbell began by saying that while a definition of sprawl is difficult to come by, "You know it when you see it." She then defined urban sprawl as "uncontrolled, low-density suburban development that spreads rapidly on the fringes of existing communities, consuming agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. Housing, shopping, schools, services and employment are often separated, leading to greater dependence on the automobile. WNY-style sprawl means increasing land use despite a declining population."

(cont.)

Furthermore, Ms. Tarbell referred to Erie and Niagara County sprawl as the “sprawl of stagnation” rather than the “sprawl of affluence,” noting that our population has been dropping steadily in the last few decades while we have continued to consume additional land. The results are increased reliance on cars, higher maintenance costs for infrastructure that serves fewer people, uneven distribution of affordable housing, and less “community time.”

Efforts to curb sprawl such as the Portland, Oregon urban growth boundary, Maryland’s “Smart Growth,” and Cleveland’s First Suburbs Consortium were mentioned. While smart growth legislation has been proposed in New York State, our home rule orientation makes comprehensive planning difficult.

Much discussion among the membership and guests followed the presentation, centering on the economic development, educational, and governmental roles in sprawl. ENRP member Wendel noted that ENRP itself has done a good job at addressing regional issues, but has yet to tackle some of the big issues like urban sprawl. Staff member Kniazuk then asked the membership if they would like to make sprawl a standing agenda item for the general meetings. The response was unanimously in favor of that addition.

Co-chair Burmaster suggested the theme of **Let’s Work At Reducing Problem Sprawl – LWARPS - SPRAWL** spelled backwards. (Note – this kind of creativity is obviously what elevated Clyde to his current position of prominence.) He then reiterated his pleasure with the good turnout of both members and guests, and suggested that perhaps we could have such a meeting twice a year.

The next general meeting was scheduled for March 30, 2001 in Erie County. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.