

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

25 DELAWARE AVENUE, SEVENTH FLOOR

BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202

PHONE: 716-858-8859 FAX: 716-858-8895

E-MAIL: kniazukt@erie.gov

Co-Chairs:

Hon. Bradley Erck
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting October 4, 2002

Members:

James Allen
Robert Blanchard
Daniel Boody
Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Elise Cusack
Hon. David Dale
Hon. William Davignon
Brian Eldridge
Hon. Wright Ellis
Samuel Ferraro
Hon. Samuel Granieri
Maria Lehman
Hon. Peter McMahon
Hon. Gerald Meal
Lawrence Meckler
Hal Morse
Laurence Rubin
Hon. Mark Schroeder
Kevin Schuler
John Simon
Hector Titus
Peter Wendel

Present: Erck, Weinstein, Boody, Cusack, Dale, Davignon, Ellis, Ferraro, Lehman (proxy), Meal, Morse, Simon, Titus, Wendel, Casale, Rich

Excused: Blanchard, Eldridge, Keyes, McMahon, Rubin, DeBenedetti, Sheffer

Absent: Allen, Burmaster, Granieri, Meckler, Schroeder, Schuler, Geiger, Rydelek

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Bradley Erck and Barry Weinstein, MD. Minutes of the June, 2002 meeting were approved.

Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti
Richard Geiger
Luke Rich
Stan Rydelek
John Sheffer, II

Subcommittee Chair John Simon presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Per recommendation at our last general meeting, the Economic Development Working Group (EDWG) has been formed to study the concept of a one-stop shop for economic development in the two counties. The EDWG will have a set of recommendations for the ENRP at our December 6 general meeting. Subcommittee members were also reminded to think of project ideas for future meetings.

Subcommittee Member Wright Ellis presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed. Ellis mentioned that the brochure recently sent to municipalities on regional initiatives has been well received, and suggested an annual update be produced.

ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with approval granted to pursue the Buffalo-Niagara Tourist Express project for a 2004 re-launch.

Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse presented the Transportation Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with approval granted to urge the two Legislatures to pass a resolution on trackage rights for a tourist rail project. It was mentioned that this line in Niagara County could set the stage for a Buffalo-Niagara Falls line down the road. Concept approval was given for the Subcommittee to pursue a workers to jobs public transportation project.

ENRP Member John Simon gave an update on the Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA). The Niagara Airport Development Corporation (NADC) is the official agency making the NCIDA's proposal, which went to the NFTA in late September. The four elements of the proposal are TVI, the NADC, Norstar Development, and the WNY AFL-CIO Economic Development Group. The three areas of opportunity are charters, air cargo, and aircraft maintenance.

The airport is currently losing money yearly, as it hasn't been focused on. Norstar will invest \$3 million initially, and it is felt that the airport can be turned around in three to five years. The NADC will continue to meet with the NFTA, with a goal of having the airport turned over to the NADC in the first quarter of 2003. FAA approval is also needed. There has not been any action by the Niagara County Legislature yet, but it should be coming soon. A resolution in support of the project would then be appropriate and welcomed from the Erie County Legislature as well. ENRP Member Daniel Boody added that this is working parallel with the Building Trades Center opening in Buffalo, and that they are part of the alliance on this effort.

Niagara County Director of Risk Management Wayne Salen gave a proposal on his concept for "MUNIIX" – Municipal Inter-Insurance Exchange. MUNIIX would create a special purpose municipal corporation designed to allow taxpayer-funded entities to co-mingle and cooperatively buy and service allowable commercial insurance coverage in order to create efficiencies of service and administration as well as economies of scale, leading to a lower cost of risk. It would serve as a risk-purchasing group for all participating subscribers. These types of entities have been in existence throughout the Midwest, Southwest, and Western United States for years. MUNIIX would allow the counties to write their own customized plan. Essentially, the counties and other partnering municipalities would create their own insurance company. The concept was referred to the ENRP Government Affairs Committee for further study, and Mr. Salen was invited to attend a future meeting of the Erie County Legislature's Regionalism Committee to present the concept.

ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro gave an update on the Framework for Regional Growth. The summer was spent “short-listing” proposals. The committee will make a final selection, then refer it to Erie and Niagara Counties for approval. They are looking to have a contract done by January 1, 2003.

Ferraro also gave an update on power relicensing. NYPA solicited proposals for third party facilitation, and six have come in. Meetings will commence in December to review the scooping documents. The Relicensing Consensus Committee (RCC) will have issues identified in time for these meetings. There are currently seven stakeholder groups out there, but someone else can intervene at any time.

Co-Chairs Erck and Weinstein gave an update on casino gaming. While there is nothing happening in Erie County, Niagara County has met with Seneca representatives. Some of the issues include Niagara County losing money on the deal since they are losing taxable property and not receiving any of the profits. A letter was sent to Governor Pataki asking him to hold the county harmless, but no response has been made to the request. Erck mentioned that he received assurances that there would not be a retail tobacco store on-site.

There was no old business. Under new business Co-Chair Weinstein told the group that John Greenan is no longer “Honorable,” as he left his elected legislator position to become the Erie County Commissioner of Personnel. As such, he is no longer formally with ENRP, but he has volunteered to continue the tourism sign project for the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee. Co-Chair Erck recognized Weinstein’s recent election as majority leader of the Erie County Legislature.

The next meeting will take place December 6, 2002 in Erie County. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk
November 29, 2002