

# ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

275 OAK ST. SUITE 150  
BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14203  
PHONE: 716-856-6525 x121 FAX: 856-6754  
E-MAIL: [tkniazuk@ecidany.com](mailto:tkniazuk@ecidany.com)  
[www.erie.gov/enrp](http://www.erie.gov/enrp)

## Co-Chairs:

Hon. Clyde Burmaster  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

Minutes of Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Meeting  
January 27, 2006

## Members:

James Allen  
Hon. Vince Anello  
Tim Doolittle  
Hon. Wright Ellis  
Matthew Enstice  
Samuel Ferraro  
Richard Geiger  
Hon. Timothy Kennedy  
Celeste Lawson  
Maria Lehman  
Gregory Lewis  
Hon. Peter McMahon  
Hal Morse  
Jo Nasoff-Finton  
Hon. Sean O'Connor  
Dr. Gary Praetzel  
Melinda Rath Sanderson  
F. Tim Reese  
David Rosenwasser  
Hon. William Ross  
Diane Ruzala  
Laura St. Pierre  
Christopher Schoepflin  
Hon. Demone Smith  
Hector Titus  
Timothy Wanamaker  
Peter Wendel

**Present:** Burmaster, Weinstein, Ellis, Ferraro, Lewis, McMahon, Morse, Nasoff-Finton, Rath Sanderson, Ross, Titus, Wendel

**Excused:** Doolittle, Lawson, Rosenwasser, Ruzala, Wanamaker

**Absent:** Allen, Anello, Enstice, Geiger, Kennedy, Lehman, O'Connor, Praetzel, Reese, St. Pierre, Schoepflin, Smith, Casale, Witul

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Barry Weinstein, MD. ENRP Member Samuel Ferraro and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (NCCED) were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the January, 2006 special meeting on strategic planning were approved.

## Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Lawrence Witul

New member Niagara County Manager Gregory Lewis was welcomed.

## Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

ENRP Member Wright Ellis motioned to adopt the revised strategic plan; ENRP Member Hector Titus seconded the motion. On the question, ENRP Administrator Tod A. Kniazuk detailed the revisions in the document regarding the annual budget now at half-time staffing, housing at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA), hosting at the ECIDA and NCCED, and the formation of a sustainability committee. ENRP Member Peter Wendel commented that our mission statement shows that we are a unique group in this region. Co-Chair Weinstein noted ENRP Member James Allen's suggestion at an earlier meeting that we create a newsletter, saying that as ENRP becomes more public people are "flabbergasted" at our accomplishments. ENRP Member Jo Nasoff-Finton amended the strategic plan to read that funding would be accepted by "ECIDA or its affiliates" and the plan was unanimously approved as amended.

On the topic of ENRP membership, Co-Chair Burmaster told the group that he and Niagara County Legislature Chair (and ENRP member) William Ross have reached out to Erie County Legislature Chair Lynn Marinelli to set up a meeting where they will tell her of Niagara County's continued interest in ENRP and in keeping Weinstein in place as the Erie County co-chair.

ENRP Member Melinda Rath Sanderson asked if there were any goals for membership. Kniazuk replied that members should be interested and should attend regularly. Ferraro added that as ENRP is an ad hoc subcommittee of the two County Legislatures, we need to see that representation at our meetings. Co-Chair Burmaster replied that it is difficult for Niagara County's legislators as they are part-time and many have day jobs. Co-Chair Weinstein suggested that the importance of attendance by Erie County legislators be raised at the meeting with Marinelli. ENRP Member Wright Ellis asked what spot Gregory Lewis was filling, and it was explained that it is the counterpart to the Erie County administration position. Nasoff suggested approaching City of Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown, and looking at the group's overall diversity.

Kniazuk presented the 2006 subcommittee assignments, and announced ENRP Member Peter Wendel as the new Transportation Subcommittee chair. Per the strategic plan, agendas will now be used for all subcommittees. The agenda for a subcommittee will be sent to that subcommittee's members, and all four agendas will be posted on our website [www.erie.gov/enrp](http://www.erie.gov/enrp) in advance of the meetings.

The 2006 general meeting dates were approved – March 31 (EC), June 2 (NC), September 29 (EC), and December 8 (NC), all beginning at 8:30 a.m. Erie County meetings will take place at the ECIDA, and Niagara County meetings will take place at the NCCED. All subcommittees will also alternate meeting locations.

A new feature at the general meetings will be updates from our member organizations. These updates will give members a chance to share information about their organization with the group that may not otherwise have been brought up (the information does not have to be ENRP-related). Please contact the ENRP administrator at [tkniazuk@ecidany.com](mailto:tkniazuk@ecidany.com) to schedule your update.

Ferraro presented an update on power relicensing, <http://niagara.nypa.gov> To date, Niagara University is the only stakeholder who has not settled. On the power side, a mechanism to disperse the 25 megawatts being obtained in the settlement is being devised. While some of the allotment to Niagara County will be used for county buildings, most will be used by the NCCED as an economic development tool. Ross added that the power is important, and that its value will increase over the life of the settlement. Co-Chair Burmaster agreed, saying the ultimate goal is to provide low cost power to attract businesses. All the other aspects of the deal are good, but they may have long term costs that will eventually have to be picked up locally, whereas the real economic driver of the deal is the low cost power.

Ferraro presented an update on the Framework for Regional Growth, [www.regionalframework.com](http://www.regionalframework.com) The last chapter, action plans and next steps are being finalized, including presentations to the two Legislatures and public meetings so that comments can be used to revise the final document. Once the final document is released, the action steps will need to be implemented. Ferraro noted that Niagara County will be accepting the report, but not adopting the document. Nasoff commented that the Erie County Legislature will need to be educated on the Framework as there are so many new legislators who may not be familiar with the effort.

The Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) update was tabled.

Under old business, Kniazuk updated the group on fundraising. The membership fee letters have gone out. To date, ENRP Member Hector Titus has secured \$500 donations from the Council on Utility Contractors and the Laborers International Union of North America. Ellis announced that the Niagara County Supervisors Association has agreed to a \$500 membership fee. ENRP Member Hal Morse explained that while the Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC) cannot provide a membership fee, he is examining the possibility of GBNRTC contracting with ENRP for project work. ENRP Member Peter McMahon added that he gave the letter to the Erie County Association of Local Governments at their January meeting. Sanderson asked if we had made a presentation to state legislators, to which Weinstein replied that there has been person to person contact, and Kniazuk replied that we did present the request for the small business assistance website to the delegation.

Under new business, Wendel passed out copies of the Niagara USA Chamber "2006 Agenda for Change." Their agenda call for action on the Niagara Falls International Airport, healthcare reform, tourism, Delphi, government reform, agriculture, and low cost hydropower. The full text of the agenda can be found at [http://www.niagarachamber.org/legislative\\_niagara\\_county.html](http://www.niagarachamber.org/legislative_niagara_county.html) Wendel noted that many of their items are ones that ENRP has focused on.

Also under new business, the group briefly discussed the passport plan for border crossing. The issue was referred to the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee.

The next general meeting date was set for Friday, March 31 at 8:30 a.m. at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (thanks to ENRP Member Jo Nasoff-Finton). The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk  
March 23, 2006