



Minutes of Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Meeting
October 2, 2009

Co-Chairs
Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Michele Iannello

Present: Burmaster, Iannello, Cappellino (O'Keefe), Curtis, Dyster (Ormsby), Ellis, Ferraro, Gower, Konst, Lacki, Lawson, P. McMahon, Morse (Grabar), Orsi (Greco), Percy, Ross, Sciandra, Wendel

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

Excused: Allen, Cerza, Filip, Mills, White

Absent: Lewis, J. McMahon, Miller-Williams, Murgia, O'Connor, Rath, Whyte, Casale, Witul

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster and Michele Iannello. Coalition member Samuel Ferraro and the Niagara County Center for Economic Development were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Iannello was welcomed as the new Erie County Co-Chair, and former Co-Chair Kathy Konst was congratulated on her new position as Commissioner of the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning – a position which holds a seat on the Coalition. Departing members William Murray and Laura St. Pierre Smith were thanked for her service.

The Buffalo Niagara Partnership remains a part of the Coalition through new member Renee Filip, who was welcomed along with Erie County Legislature Majority Leader Maria Whyte and Interim CEO of the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau Drew Cerza (who previously served on the Coalition in his capacity as "Wing King"). Cerza replaces David Lacki, who remains with the Coalition in his new job as head of the Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce.

Ad Hoc
Michael Casale
Matthew Enstice
Melinda Rath Sanderson
Lawrence Witul

Executive Director
Tod A. Kniazuk

Minutes of the March 2009 meeting were approved.

Regional Coalition Executive Director Tod A. Kniazuk presented the sustainability report. The report was received and filed. Kniazuk reminded those who have not yet paid their 2009 member contributions to please do so.

Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon presented the Government Affairs Subcommittee report. A motion was made for the Coalition to send a letter to Erie County Executive Chris Collins reminding him that the creation of an Erie County Planning Board was the first step in the process to achieve regional planning for Erie and Niagara Counties, and was a key step in the implementation of the Framework for Regional Growth; the letter would conclude that the Coalition recommend to Collins that he either move forward with the Framework's recommendations or that the Framework be revised appropriately.

On the question, Regional Coalition member Samuel Ferraro distributed section 4.1 of the Framework. The first step called for in the document was the acceptance or adoption of the report, which both counties have done. The second step was to reconstitute the working group, which has not been done. The third step was to establish the Erie County Planning Board. Ferraro added that he would not support the motion. Regional Coalition member Wright Ellis asked for the "prognosis" on implementation of the Framework. Ferraro replied that Niagara County is "ready to go." Konst replied that she would check on where things stand in Erie County in her new capacity as DEP commissioner and a member of the Collins administration. An update was promised for the December general meeting. Hearing that, the motion to approve was withdrawn and the subcommittee report was received and filed.

Subcommittee Chair David Lacki presented the Tourism & Culture Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed, with a motion to approve a proposed air travel survey project and begin work on assembling the funding for the survey.

Regional Coalition member Deborah Curtis presented the air travel survey proposal. A document was handed out detailing the survey's scope and methodology, as well as sample questions. Uniformed students from Niagara University would conduct the survey from both arriving and departing travelers. The data collected would be of use for those in the fields of transportation, tourism, and economic development. It would be a joint project between the Regional Coalition and NU. Kniazuk added that this is a good example of what the group is about – finding a needed project that is not any one organization's responsibility, but one that will benefit organizations across sectors. The motion was approved.

Kniazuk presented the Economic Development Subcommittee report. The report was received and filed.

There was no old or new business. The next meeting will take place Friday, December 11. The Co-Chairs thanked the group, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Submitted by Tod A. Kniazuk
December 4, 2009