

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Economic Development Chair Hector Titus

Re: February, 2006 Meeting

Date: March 31, 2006

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Economic Development Subcommittee met February 24, 2006 at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency. Present for the meeting were subcommittee members Titus, Nasoff, St. Pierre, Weinstein, and Witul, as well as Buffalo Niagara Partnership Small Business Development Manager Tracey Houston.

Small Business Assistance Website:

New York State Assemblyman Robin Schimminger contacted ENRP Administrator Tod Kniazuk and requested that we include all Assembly Democrats in the effort to secure funding in the 2006-2007 state budget for the website. To that end, Assemblyman Mark J.F. Schroeder (a former ENRP member) has agreed to champion the issue, and letters of request have been sent to Legislators Schimminger, Schroeder, Tokasz, Hoyt, Delmonte, and Peoples (also a former ENRP member).

Subcommittee member St. Pierre suggested that the agencies that participated in our steering committee for the project should be asked to send letters of support. Kniazuk sent an e-mail to the steering committee with that request, and several have responded with letters of support. Subcommittee member Nasoff suggested that we could also explore ways to lessen the cost of the project, including the possibility that the Erie County Industrial Development Agency could host and/or maintain the site.

Small Business 311:

Per a recommendation from the subcommittee, ENRP member Timothy Wanamaker will make a presentation on the small business 311 concept at the March 31, 2006 general meeting.

Niagara Falls International Airport (NFIA):

As ENRP has been a supporter of the NFIA in the past, it was asked whether the group should issue another letter of support in light of some recent comments regarding the need to develop the airport. Subcommittee chair Titus noted that the cost of the terminal has risen from \$24 million to \$30 million.

St. Pierre clarified that the Buffalo Niagara Partnership position on the NFIA is that it should be developed as a compliment to the Buffalo Niagara International Airport, not in competition to the BNIA. Subcommittee member Weinstein replied that the BNP's comments came across as suggesting that money not be put into the NFIA. Subcommittee member Witul added that most of the activity at the NFIA is non-passenger, and that the charter component is related to the casino.

Weinstein also suggested that when the Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) is complete, ENRP should highlight how the NFIA fits into the clusters and reaffirm our support of its redevelopment.

Electronic Permitting:

Weinstein updated the group that Erie County has been able to implement e-permitting for over a year, but that the county's Division of Information and Support Services (DISS) is reluctant to do so due to costs and staffing issues. The county gave the okay for the University at Buffalo Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth – who were contracted to develop the pilot – to market the system to municipalities, which would have to pay to be included.

Kniazuk noted that the pilot was paid for, so why then would there be any cost to take the system on-line? As for other municipalities, the Institute estimated it would cost between \$3,000 and \$5,000 to add them if the Institute were managing the site. St. Pierre reaffirmed that the Institute could host the site at a lower cost than the county, but that the county wanted to host the site. She added that the effort fits into the BNP's Buffalo Niagara NOW initiative. Kniazuk and St. Pierre agreed to follow the issue up by speaking with representatives of the Institute and Erie County.

Framework for Regional Growth:

St. Pierre updated the group that in mid-February the Framework steering committee submitted final comments back to HOK (the consultant). The committee will meet again in March, and will develop a schedule to take the Framework to the two Legislatures and to the public. St. Pierre will provide ENRP with that schedule when it becomes available.

Nasoff noted that the issue will be getting the buy-in from the municipalities, especially on land use issues. Weinstein agreed, and noted that the last draft he saw had evolved into a land use plan.

The subcommittee suggested that a link to the plan be sent out to the ENRP in advance of the March 31 general meeting, and that Erie County Department of Environment and Planning Commissioner Drew Eszak be invited to the meeting, as well as HOK if they are in town at the time.

Procurement Programs:

The subcommittee began discussion on minority business procurement and certification. Some companies are having difficulty accessing minority firms for procurement, and there are several different processes for certification as a MBE. Buffalo and Erie County have agreed to a common process, but there are still several others. New York State Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples has been working on this issue. There may be some opportunity for ENRP to play a role on this topic.

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership Economic Development Subcommittee recommends that a presentation on uniform certification for minority business procurement be given at the June 2, 2006 general meeting.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the New York State Power for Jobs legislation, and the Federal Reserve Bank and the possibility of a partnership between them, ENRP, and the Small Business Association.