

MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Michele Iannello

**From: Economic Development Chair James Allen
Tourism & Culture Chair David Lacki**

Re: December, 2009 Meeting

Date: December 11, 2009

Co-Chairs

Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Michele Iannello

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

Ad Hoc

Michael Casale
Matthew Enstice
Melinda Rath Sanderson
Lawrence Witul

Executive Director

Tod A. Kniazuk

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Economic Development and Tourism & Culture Subcommittees met jointly December 1, 2009 at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency. Present for the meeting were Economic Development Subcommittee members Burmaster, Cappellino, Ferraro, Konst, Morse, Orsi, and Sciandra; and Tourism & Culture Subcommittee members Lacki, Curtis, Lawson, and White.

Air Travel Survey Project:

The main topic of the meeting was the air travel survey project. Now that the scope of the project has been developed, the main item is funding of the survey. To that end, letters were sent to the following agencies requesting support:

Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau
Buffalo Niagara Enterprise
Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Empire State Development
Erie County Industrial Development Agency
Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council
Niagara County Center for Economic Development
Niagara Frontier Transportation Agency
Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation

So far there have been some offers of support, but the nature of dividing the cost equally between whichever partners sign on has been met with a lukewarm reception. Another issue is "selling the project" by touting its end uses more so than what data will be collected.

Three revisions were decided on based on the discussion at the subcommittee. First, we will explore tiered funding for the project. The main user of the data – the NFTA – will first be approached for the highest level of funding (but still less than half the overall total), then the tourism promotion agencies, then the rest of the potential users. Second, we will consider adding to the number of potential partners, with the caveat that adding too many could lead to difficulties in achieving consensus on the content and methodology of the project. Finally, the solicitation document will be revised to stress outcomes. Another option was to do a smaller scale pilot of the survey to show the results; this will be considered, especially if the aforementioned strategies are unsuccessful.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the Binational Tourism Alliance's "Border Remedial Action Study" (to be presented to the full board at the December general meeting), and traffic patterns following the removal of local tolls.