

**MEMORANDUM**

**To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Michele Iannello**

**From: Government Affairs Chair Peter McMahon**

**Re: May, 2009 Meeting**

**Date: October 2, 2009**

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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  
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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 Government Affairs Subcommittee met May 14, 2009 at the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA). Present for the meeting were subcommittee members Ellis and Wendel.

**Framework for Regional Growth:**

The subcommittee discussed the ongoing debate over creation of an Erie County Planning Board, in the context of its role in the implementation of the Framework for Regional Growth – a document Erie County Executive Chris Collins has publicly supported.

The point the subcommittee feels is being lost in the discussion is that the creation of an Erie County Planning Board is the first step toward regional planning in the Framework. Once that board is created, it would begin meeting periodically with the Niagara County Planning Board (already in existence) with a goal toward a joint entity that would have a role in regional planning.

As to the assertion that the Erie County staff can and does already perform the tasks of a planning board, the subcommittee points to the Regional Coalition itself as an example of how multiple perspectives and disciplines are invaluable in growing our region. While the subcommittee does not question the talents of those working in Erie County's Department of Environment and Planning, it is felt that the multiple perspectives a planning board could offer would be of use. It was also questioned how much ECDEP has been "built back up" following the cuts a few years back.

**The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Government Affairs Subcommittee recommends that the Coalition 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 – a document he has publicly supported. As such, the Regional Coalition would recommend that he either move forward with the Framework’s recommendations, or that the Framework be revised appropriately.**

Reduction of Municipal Boards:

The “Kevin Gaughan” model of reducing municipal boards by two members was discussed. The subcommittee felt that, while some modest cost savings could be achieved, the loss of diversity of opinion and the increased workload for what are often part-time positions do not merit the slight savings. It was noted that Gaughan seemed to have some “big ideas” that didn’t get achieved, and so now he turned to this simpler idea.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the idea of school consolidation and electronic permitting, which was included in Niagara County’s application for stimulus funding.