

MEMORANDUM

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Edward Rath III

From: Government Affairs Chair Peter McMahon

Re: October & November, 2010 Meetings

Date: December 3, 2010

Co-Chairs

Hon. Clyde Burmaster
Hon. Edward Rath III

Members

James Allen
Clinton Brown
John Cappellino
Dr. Deborah Curtis
Hon. Paul Dyster
Hon. Wright Ellis
Samuel Ferraro
Dottie Gallagher-Cohen
Hon. David Godfrey
Hon. Kevin Hardwick
Kathy Konst
David Lacki
Hon. Peter McMahon
Hon. Barbara Miller-Williams
Hal Morse
Christina Orsi
John Percy
Hon. Phillip "Russ" Rizzo
Hon. William Ross
Salvatore Sciandra
Peter Wendel
Hon. Maria Whyte

Ad Hoc

Michael Casale
Matthew Enstice
Darren Kempner
Melinda Rath Sanderson
Lawrence Witul

Executive Director

Tod A. Kniazuk

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Government Affairs Subcommittee met October 19, 2010 at the Niagara County Center for Economic Development and November 16, 2010 at Dick & Jenny's. Present for the October meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Casale, Godfrey, Rath and Ross, as well as Anne Huberman of the League of Women Voters of Buffalo Niagara. Present for the November meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Godfrey, Kempner, Rath and Ross, as well as Huberman.

Goals & Strategy:

The subcommittee discussed the overall goals it wants to accomplish, as well as considering who the "customer" of our work would be – the two County Legislatures, the Erie County Executive and Niagara County Manager, the Erie County Local Governments Association and Niagara County Supervisors Association, the Western New York delegation to the New York State Legislature, and local governments.

The subcommittee also considered how best to convey its message and work. It was agreed that good communication is needed, as is buy-in from the County Legislatures. It was also agreed that if we are going to work in a municipality we should first go through the supervisor or mayor.

Redistricting:

As both County Legislatures had downsizing referendums on the ballot and next year will see mandatory redistricting at both the local and state levels, it became apparent that this was a major issue that was not receiving the requisite consideration in the press and by the public. At its best, redistricting guarantees an appropriate voice for the people, but at its worst it can lead to

gerrymandering or an incumbent protection program at the expense of truly reflecting the makeup of those in the community. Therefore, the subcommittee decided that it was important to espouse the principles of fairness and good government in the redistricting process and to go on record with the New York State Senate, Erie County Legislature, and Niagara County Legislature to encourage them to do their work in such a way.

The Niagara Erie Regional Coalition Government Affairs Subcommittee recommends the full group approve the sending of the attached letters to the New York State Senate, Erie County Legislature, and Niagara County Legislature on the topic of redistricting, and that the subcommittee continue to monitor the process in consideration of further comment or action.

Smart Permitting:

The subcommittee was informed that the smart permitting – also known as e-permitting or multi-jurisdictional permitting – effort was back underway with the formation of a steering group and the formulation of an RFQ in advance of seeking funding for the project. Advances in technology will make the project more affordable and even allow for the purchase of software specifically designed for e-permitting; software that was not available at the time of our initial effort. The need for the project remains in the community, and it is a unique project that will benefit everyone from large developers to small municipalities. The next meeting of the e-permitting group will take place Thursday, December 2 at 10 a.m. at the ECIDA.

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed included the lack of common software for tax collectors in Niagara County, the need for municipalities to draft laws for dog licensing now that the state is out of the process (except, of course, for a surcharge they will receive), and the potential for NERC to collect and disseminate best practices and examples of existing successful collaborations. The next meeting was set for January 11, 2011 at Dick & Jenny's on Grand Island.