

# ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

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## Co-Chairs:

Hon. Bradley Erck  
Hon. Barry Weinstein, MD

## Memorandum

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**To: ENRP Co-Chairs Bradley Erck & Barry Weinstein, MD**  
**From: Government Affairs Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon**  
**Re: October & December 2002 meetings**  
**Date: December 6, 2002**

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The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Government Affairs Subcommittee met October 29 and December 2, 2002 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott. Present for the October meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, Meal, Rubin (proxy), Weinstein, and Sheffer, as well as Niagara County Director of Risk Management Wayne Salen. Present for the December meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, and Weinstein.

## Electronic Permitting

Subcommittee Member Sheffer gave an update on electronic permitting. As previously reported, after two years of discussing the pilot under the leadership of Erie County's DEP, the project is now being turned over to the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. Due to a delay on the part of Erie County, the pilot's target date has now been moved back to April, 2003. Funding has not yet been approved, as Erie County was waiting to see if they could get state funds for the project, which they did not receive. Nevertheless, the county has verbally committed to the project, and the Institute has been moving forward on a good faith basis.

The pilot will provide electronic permitting for the Town of Lockport, Wales, the Village of Hamburg, Amherst, and the City of Tonawanda. Ciminelli and Ellicott Development have agreed to test the site, and the City of Buffalo is also participating, although they will not be part of the pilot as they could overwhelm it.

In addition to the pilot, the Institute will train municipalities throughout next spring and summer in the system's use. The pilot's cost is \$136,400, to be borne by Erie County. Municipalities would be responsible for the costs of their future participation.

Subcommittee Chair McMahon suggested that the ENRP's job could be to help get a buy-in from the municipalities for the system, and that perhaps a presentation to municipal officials and building inspectors would be appropriate. He also added that a "kick out" function should be added whereby municipalities are reminded of open projects.

## Ad Hoc:

Michael Casale  
Hon. Albert DeBenedetti  
Richard Geiger  
Luke Rich  
Stan Rydelek  
John Sheffer, II

## Administrator:

Tod A. Kniazuk

## MUNIIX

Following referral to the Government Affairs Subcommittee by the full ENRP, Niagara County Director of Risk Management Wayne Salen gave a proposal on his concept for “MUNIIX” – Municipal Inter-Insurance Exchange. MUNIIX would create a special purpose municipal corporation designed to allow taxpayer-funded entities to co-mingle and cooperatively buy and service allowable commercial insurance coverage in order to create efficiencies of service and administration as well as economies of scale, leading to a lower cost of risk. It would serve as a risk-purchasing group for all participating subscribers. These types of entities have been in existence throughout the Midwest, Southwest, and Western United States for years. MUNIIX would allow the counties to write their own customized plan. Essentially, the counties and other partnering municipalities would create their own insurance company. Salen is moving Niagara County forward to license a self-funded program, and is working up a timetable for Erie and Niagara Counties for a joint program.

## Other Topics

Other topics discussed included the New York State Task Force on Local Government Reform, the Governor’s Office for Regulatory Reform, health insurance, and homeland security as it relates to our region.