

WNY REDC
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, November 9, 2015
2:00PM – 5:00PM (Public Meeting)
UB Educational Opportunity Center
555 Ellicott Street, Buffalo NY 14203

Present: Satish K. Tripathi, Jeff Belt, Mike Hettler (On behalf of Senator Ranzenhofer), Michael LoCurto (On behalf of Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz), Ben Bidell (On behalf of Chairman William Ross), Jennifer Parker, Michael Metzger, Rebecca Gandour (On behalf of Mayor Byron Brown), Pamela R. Henderson, Paul Brown, Rosa Gonzalez, Brenda McDuffie, Vince Horrigan, Melinda Vizcarra, Christopher Schoepflin, Michael Ball

Opening Remarks

- Meeting called to order at 2:11 p.m. by co-chair Tripathi.
- Co-chair Tripathi thanked the members of the Council who attended the Strategic Implementation Assessment Team (SIAT) in Albany on October 22nd.
- Co-chair Tripathi added that the Council is working on implementing the Strategic Plan.
- Co-chair Jeff Belt introduced NYS Mentoring Program Upstate Director Melinda Sanderson to give a presentation on the mentoring program.

New York Mentoring Program

- Ms. Sanderson stated that the mentoring program started 20 years ago under then Governor Mario Cuomo.
- The goal is to provide support and opportunity for children.
- The program will provide one-on-one mentoring on a weekly basis at the school.
- The target of the program is elementary school children. Specifically 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.
- The goal is to give children positive role models and access to opportunity.
- There are 10 regional Coordinators in the program.
- There are 12 members on the mentoring board with The Honorable Matilda Raffa Cuomo as the chair.
- The REDC's role is to help identify partners for the program.
- In 1994, there were 3700 mentoring partners and 229 schools involved in the program.
- Mentors will go through background checks.
- Council Member Metzger asked why the program targets such a young group.
 - Ms. Sanderson stated that getting to young people early on allows for an opportunity to have an impact on their lives.
- Co-chair Belt asked where mentors should come from.
 - Ms. Sanderson said that the mentors will vary by region but mainly from businesses, corporations but most importantly someone committed.

- Co-chair Tripathi asked for the target number of mentors and mentees.
 - Ms. Sanderson responded by stating that she would like to scale over time.
- Council Member Parker asked if there is collaboration with Say Yes to Education.
 - Ms. Sanderson said she met with Say Yes and will continue to have conversations on ways to collaborate.
- Council Member Parker suggested reaching out to the corporate community and Greeks on college campuses.
- A question was raised about the mentoring hour.
 - Ms. Sanderson said that it will not be during classes.

Northland Workforce Training Center Update

- Ms. Sharon Jones, President/CEO of OH Community Partners, stated that the focus of the Northland Workforce Training Center is manufacturing and the energy sector.
- There are three key areas of focus: collaboration among residents, access to wraparound services and best in class training.
- The Center will give students access to tools and internship and job placement opportunities.
- Ms. Jones stated that she is working with SUNY partners such as Buffalo State College, Alfred State College and Erie Community College.
- There is an exploration of sharing the space with Buffalo Manufacturing Works in the future.
- Custom training will be available at the Center.
- There will be upskilling and target population training.
- Students will be drug tested for the purpose of referring them to counseling.
- Wraparound services will be provided to students.
- Financial literacy opportunity will be provided.
- Council Member Metzger asked about the cooperate membership.
 - Ms. Jones stated that cooperate members will have access to students.

2015 SIAT Presentation and Video Recap

- Co-chair Belt showed the SIAT video presented in Albany.
- Co-chair Belt showed slides of the SIAT PowerPoint presentation(See Attached)
- He thanked Governor Cuomo for making Western New York a priority and investing in the region.
- He concluded with stating that the development is resulting in the increase of more young people moving and staying in the area.
- Council Member Parker asked about inclusion of minority and women in the renaissance taking place in the region.
- Co-chair Belt stated that inclusion is a crucial part of the renaissance.
- Co-chair Tripathi added that the Council will continue to focus on inclusion in 2016.

NFTA Update on Priority Projects and Strategic Initiatives

- Mr. Tom George, NFTA's Director of Public Transit, presented studies going on the core services in the area.
- The NFTA is looking at light rail transit options from Amherst to Buffalo.
- Studies are being done to better serve transit dependable populations.
- They started with 36 options and narrowed down to four options.
- The Amherst-Buffalo option will provide fast, reliable, safe and convenient transit rides.
- The NFTA is looking into options to better connect the rail station to First Niagara Center.

City of Buffalo Update on Priority Projects and Strategic Initiatives

- Mr. Steven Stepniak, Commissioner, Department of Public Works, Parks & Streets, stated that the Department of Public Works is focused on high quality project/service delivery.
- Mr. Mike Finn, City Engineer, expressed gratitude to the REDC for the investment in the City of Buffalo through CFA.
- Mr. Finn expressed that the CFA funds have helped support a lot of important projects in Buffalo.
- Mr. Finn gave an update on the following projects: Cars Sharing Main Street, Pearl Street Two-Way Conversion, Niagara Street Sustainable Corridor, and future plans for Franklin Street improvements.
- Mr. Brendan R. Mehaffy, Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning, gave a brief description of the new Buffalo Green Code.
- He said that over 5,000 people were engaged in the planning process.
- The new code promotes economic development.
- The transportation work done by the NFTA was incorporated in the plan.
- The plan has been submitted to the Buffalo Common Council.
- There will be an open house on Saturday, November 14th 2015 at Erie Community College-City Campus.
- There will be open sessions and presentations of the Green Code in all the Councilmatic Districts.
- The plan may be adopted/implemented within the next six months.
- Co-chair Belt asked Mr. Stepniak about the process for prioritizing sidewalk improvements and traffic calming in the city.
 - Mr. Stepniak noted that funding availability and a willingness to make it happen are important elements.
- Council Member Henderson asked Mr. Mehaffy about including young people in the Green Code development process.
 - Mr. Mehaffy said that earlier on they included the youth and will do so again with the end product to hear their feedback.
- Council Member Metzger asked if the Green code included improvements to the permit process for construction and contractors.

- Mr. Mehaffy said that it will improve the permit process to encourage investment in the city and will serve as a guide for the development community.

Closing Remarks

- Co-chair reaffirmed the Council's commitment to inclusion going into the New Year.

Adjourn

- 4:30 p.m.