



Regional Economic Development Council – WNY Meeting Summary

Introductory Information:

Date and Time Meeting Commenced: Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 2:00pm

Location: The Conference and Event Center Niagara Falls, 101 Old Falls Street, Niagara Falls, NY

Council Members Present: Jeff Belt, Dr. Virginia Horvath, Deanna Alterio Brennen, Paul Brown, Katherine Conway-Turner, Dottie Gallagher, Thomas Kucharski, Brenda McDuffie, Mike Metzger, Jennifer Parker, Eric Reich, Stephen Tucker, Paul Dyster, Crystal Abers, George Borrello, Sam Teresi

Council Members Substitutes: Tom Hersey for Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Mike Casale for Keith McNall

State Agency/Local Government/ESD Staff: Amanda Mays, Angela Rossi, Vincent Esposito, Paul Tronolone, Mo Sumbundu, Janet Murray, Rob Sozanski, Jean Williams, Rosemary McCabe; Loul Rizek, Kaitlin Chmura, Chris Bauer (DOS), Cesar Cabrera (DOL), Jim Cuozzo (DOT), Lenny Skrill (HCR), Lou Paonessa (NYPA), Mark Mistretta (PARKS)

Special Guests: Lt. Governor Hochul

Time Adjourned: 3:10pm

Welcome and Remarks:

Call to Order:

Preamble requesting disclosure of any conflicts of interest read.

Conflicts noted: (Please List)

Recusals noted: (Please List)

No conflicts noted.

The record of recusals was noted and acknowledged at the meeting.



Reports/Discussions/Motions:

2:00pm **Opening Remarks - Jeff Belt & Virginia Horvath, Co-Chairs, WNY REDC**

- Co-Chair Jeff Belt introduced and welcomed Amanda Mays as the new Executive Director of the WNY REDC and new Regional Director of WNY Office; and Angela Rossi as the new Deputy Director, WNY REDC and new Deputy Director of WNY Regional Office.

2:05pm **Executive Director's Report – Amanda Mays, Executive Director, WNY REDC**

- Vincent Esposito was introduced in his new role as ESD Vice President in addition to Regional Director of the Finger Lakes Region;
- Amanda introduced using an Executive Director's Report to provide regional updates to the REDC members;
- Executive Director's Report highlighting WNY Accomplishments
 - o Fulmer Valley Farms in Allegany County as part of \$100,000 Excelsior jobs programs tax incentive;
 - o Massachusetts Avenue Project completed construction of its \$2.4M facility in November. A Round 6 Regional Council Priority Project, the facility will serve as a Farmhouse & Community Food Training Facility to increase availability of healthy foods;
 - o ESD announced commitment of \$3.3M to the Albright Knox Art Gallery expansion project which completed the \$10M funding challenge put forth by Jeff Gundlach. Mr. Gundlach's gift now totals \$52.5M;
 - o Rosina Foods completed a \$22.7M expansion that included a new Customer Focus Center. The project will retain 400 jobs and create 50;
 - o In the Village of Wellsville, the \$10.3M adaptive reuse of the historic Burrous Building began construction on a mixed-use building which will include 16 affordable homes for adults ages 55 and older and 5,800 sq. ft. of commercial space;
 - o In November, the Allentown Association celebrated the completion of six projects under a \$300,000 Buffalo Main Streets Initiative grant as part of the Better Buffalo Fund Program. Funding was used for commercial renovation projects within a few blocks of Allen Street;
 - o In December, the Jefferson Avenue Apartments' \$31M project began construction. The project, supported by the Better Buffalo Fund, will include 89 affordable apartments and 16,500 sq. ft. of commercial space.

2:20pm **Presentation Highlighting 2018 WNY Accomplishments & 2019 WNY Lookahead**

2018 Year in Review- Angela Rossi, Deputy Director, WNY REDC

- Award DRI Round 4 Winner;

- Continue incentivizing business growth and investment in WNY. The region had a rocky end of year with a handful of big manufacturing closings;
- Work more closely with ESD colleagues on using research to be more proactive in business development efforts and focus on retention and expansion of existing companies;
- Some project developments that are expected for 2019:
 - o Using Buffalo Billion 2 funding, Erie County ILDC will purchase additional 90 acres of land at former Bethlehem Steel site; also extend Shoreline Trail;
 - o Restoration at Darwin Martin House and Graycliff will be completed;
 - o Techstars (in partnership with 43North) will further develop and scale the WNY entrepreneurial system and launch a new Startup Ecosystem Development program with Buffalo as its inaugural city to drive economic development and job growth. 43North will hold 6th round of the competition in October;
 - o USA Niagara will close on a major purchase of 31 downtown land holdings; anticipates issuing an RFP for a few properties immediately following closing and will also undertake a process to prepare larger parcels of redevelopment.

Downtown Revitalization Initiative Round 3 Awardee Update – Chris Bauer,
Department of State for City of Lockport

- Since the project kick-off in October 2018, the +/-170-acre DRI boundary was established and there have been monthly community engagement as the City works to solidify the vision, goals, and strategies for the initiative. The following project types were identified – Adaptive Reuse, Public Realm, and Streetscape Improvements. The City received 17 new proposals and developed a preliminary list of 25 projects with an estimated value of \$24M;
- During the month of January, they refined the project list and conducted initial prioritization. In February, they will identify the priority projects;
- The City will submit its plan in March that will include a final project list.

2018 WNY CFA Awards Recap & 2019 CFA Lookahead - Angela Rossi, Deputy
Director, WNY REDC

- 245 CFA's submitted in 2018
- WNY was awarded \$66M for 118 projects
- \$10M was awarded for 15 WNY Priority Projects which leveraged \$107.4M in private investment in the region:
 - o 4 Smart Growth Projects totaling \$4,033,395
 - o 1 Entrepreneurship Project totaling \$539,187
 - o 1 Workforce Project totaling \$105,818
 - o 5 Tourism Projects totaling \$2,993,000
 - o 2 Advanced Manufacturing Projects totaling \$1,080,000

- 1 Health Life Science Project totaling \$1,200,000
- 1 Agriculture Project totaling \$498,600
- In 2019, ESD will be hosting “ESD on the Road” listening sessions in all five WNY Counties for the purpose of exposing new businesses to the opportunities that ESD brings to the table, identify gaps in project types, funding for projects and work with applicants to develop better quality applications;
- ESD staff will provide technical assistance with various awardees during the implementation of their projects.

Buffalo Billion Highlights - Amanda Mays, Executive Director, WNY REDC

- In September, the Northland Workforce Training Center opened with just under 200 enrolled students attending classes offered by Alfred State College and ECC;
- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper announced development of the Buffalo Blueway program which will include installation of ADA-accessible docks and signage identifying at least 10 locations along the Buffalo River and Lake Erie;
- 43North held its fifth round of competition and awarded \$4.5M to seven companies who are now relocated in Buffalo;
- The second round of the Smart Growth Community Fund was awarded to four communities: Village of Alfred, Village of Fredonia, Village of Lancaster, and City of Tonawanda;
- The Better Buffalo Fund awarded the third round of loans and grants totaling \$9.7M: \$8.1M for Transit Oriented Development and \$1.65M to five organizations for the Buffalo Main Streets Initiative. Round 4 will be launched later in 2019;
- \$32M was awarded to UB for the creation of an Innovation Hub. The grant includes funding for an investment fund, entrepreneur support programming and capital improvements for incubation space;
- \$10M Workforce Development Challenge was launched. The first round awarded \$4.2M to six not-for-profits for workforce training in the five counties. Round two funding will be open later in 2019;
- Buffalo Manufacturing Works broke ground on its facility expansion project which will be located within the Northland Workforce Training Center complex;
- NFTA began its Light Rail Expansion Study which will refine the locally preferred alternative for the proposed extension, complete federal and state environmental reviews and conduct a preliminary engineering report. Upon completion, the NFTA will begin the process of advertising for architectural and engineering services and requesting additional funding for the completion of the expansion;
- Say Yes Buffalo received \$10M to bridge the gap between the Say Yes Buffalo and New York’s Excelsior Scholarship Program. Funds will be used to assist students with non-tuition needs including textbooks, fees and other expenses;

- In August 2018, the National Comedy Center held its grand opening. Within the first 100 days, 79% of visitors were from outside Chautauqua County, representing 49 states and seven countries.
- UB Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences officially opened in January 2018;
- The WNY Welcome Center opened its doors at the end of summer 2018.

USA Niagara Highlights

- The \$35M, 128-room Hyatt Place Hotel opened on Old Falls Street;
- USAN entered into a development agreement with Brine Wells of Syracuse for the \$42M restoration of the historic Hotel Niagara;
- The Riverway enjoyed its first full year of heavy use of its trails for walking, running, and fishing;
- In November, broke ground on first of three construction contracts for the removal of the Niagara Scenic Parkway North;
- USAN and NYS Parks entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate expanded outdoor recreation programs for all seasons along the upper and lower Niagara River areas;
- The Conference and Event Center Niagara Falls generated over \$3M in gross revenues, attracted over 66,000 attendees at 135 events which generated almost 26,000 room nights for the local community.

ECHDC Highlights

- Construction on Explore and More Children's Museum continued and should be wrapped up in the coming weeks;
- Sinatra and Company Real Estate was selected as the preferred developer for the two remaining parcels on the South Aud Block;
- A Request for Proposal was issued for infrastructure design services for the North Aud Block;
- Design began for the Longshed building, a 4,000 sq.-ft. structure that will be built at the central Wharf;
- Construction began in 2018 on a \$5M mountain bike park and plaza on the Outer Harbor to be used for a wide range of events. WNY Mountain Bike Association will hold practice and training events on the mountain bike courses;
- A capital planning phase for three additional projects was begun for the First Buffalo River Marina, Wilkeson Pointe to Bell Slip and Terminal B;
- Two public open houses were held where ECHDC collected feedback on proposed projects, with a third to be held in the spring at which time preferred plans will be presented.

- The following are initiatives outlined by Governor Cuomo in his State of the State address and put forth for inclusion in the FY2020 budget and could be programs that the REDCs help to implement:
 - \$750M funding proposed for Round 9 CFA;
 - Additional \$100M for Round 4 DRI;
 - Increase access to reliable, affordable child care for all New Yorkers;
 - Deliver climate justice for underserved communities;
 - Support ESPRI communities and integrate ESPRI representation into REDC workforce committee;
 - Launch \$175M Workforce Development Initiative

3:00pm **Lt. Governor Hochul** - thanked the Council for their commitment and hard work on the REDC. Answered questions regarding challenges facing Stephen Tucker and the Northland Workforce Training Center.

3:10pm **Closing Remarks & Adjourn Public Meeting** - *Jeff Belt & Virginia Horvath, Co-Chairs, WNY REDC*