

# FINGER LAKES REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

## AUGUST 16, 2011

**Council Members Present:** Lt. Governor Robert Duffy, Joel Seligman, Danny Wegman, Maggie Brooks, Bob Brown, Dick Colacino, Charlie Cook, Bill Destler, Ted Fafinski, Taylor Fitch, Steve Griffin, Pamela Heald, James Hoffman, Anne Kress, Tom Macinski, Theresa Mazzullo, Augustin Melendez, John Noble, Cynthia Oswald, Sandra Parker, Mark Peterson, Tyrone Reaves, Hilda Rosario Escher, Robert Sands, Kirsten Werner, Christine Whitman. **Representatives for Council Members Present:** Bret Garwood for Thomas Richards, Anne Humphrey for AD Berwanger, Jason Molino for Marianne Clattenburg, Mitch Rowe for Laverne Lafler, Patrick Rountree for James Merrick, Jay Gsell for Mary Pat Hancock. **Members Absent:** David Callard, Bradley MacDonald.

**Team Members Present:** Robert McNary, Joe Hamm, Dave Seeley, Betsy Colon, Ed Downey, Kristen Fragnoli, Mariah Kelley, Austin Shafran, Tammy Marino, Dick Pettite, and Kiska Stevens

**State Agency Members:** Daniel Buyer, Paul D'Amato, Amy DeGaetano, Linda Hardie, Tim Joseph, Lee Loomis, Elaine Miller, Rich Parker, Ron Rausch, Leonard Skrill, J.C. Smith, Julie Sweet, Mark Thomas, Robert Traver, Ralph Van Houten, Patricia Walsh.

**Other Attendees:** Ginny Clark, Josh Farrelman, Pamela Kennard, Mark Machaud, Lamar Murphy, Peter Robinson, Debbie Stendardi, Bill Strassburg, Ali Touhey, David Zorn, Kent Gardner, Amy Happ, Laurie Chiumento, Rick Turner, Greg Albert, Joan McDonald, Ellen Rosen, Scott Steele.

Lt. Governor Duffy welcomed everyone and recognized Joan MacDonald, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation. He indicated that periodically Commissioners will attend the Council meetings. He stated that as of this meeting the Council and its co-chairs will take over and run things.

The Lt. Governor asked that Bob McNary, the ESD Regional Director, be contacted when economic development issues come up during this process which is related to state government. He will be the triage person insuring that the appropriate state agency is involved. He then thanked co-chairs Wegman and Seligman for their hard work and stated that the Finger Lakes Region is off to a great start.

Mr. Wegman welcomed the members and asked for their patience as we undertake this concerted effort. He stated that we don't want to miss any good things and he appreciates everyone's ongoing assistance.

Mr. Seligman welcomed everyone and thanked the Lt. Governor for his leadership and the Governor for initiating this effort. He spoke of the change in the regional economy over the years with the downsizing of such companies as Kodak and Bausch and Lomb, as well as

movement to a more diversified economy. He mentioned that the Council's strategic planning effort will allow all local entities to pursue and endorse a truly regional economic planning effort, representing all nine counties.

He explained that the Strategic Plan for the region will identify areas where we want to concentrate our future investment efforts (i.e. financing, capital, workforce, etc.). It will be the blueprint for economic development at all levels as we move forward. He indicated that we are facing an aggressive timetable to adopt a complicated Plan, and after today we have four more meetings to accomplish this. He went on to say that the top four Regional Plans will receive \$40 MM from ESD. Also, we should not lose sight of the fact that applicants across the State can apply for an \$800 MM pot of funds from nine state agencies.

He then reviewed the presentations and actions that will be undertaken today, including the review and adoption of a Vision Statement, the review and adoption of a Community Engagement Plan and the roll-out of possible workgroups. Next he introduced Kent Gardner, the Executive Director of the Center for Governmental Research, indicating that he would be working with Mark Peterson and Steve Griffin on identification of existing conditions, as well as future opportunities and the establishment of the workgroups to develop strategies. There will be a facilitated session on this today.

He also introduced Sandy Parker and Cindy Oswald as the leaders of a facilitated session on the establishment of a Vision Statement, as well as initiating discussion on the Consolidated Funding Application Endorsement Standards and the Priority Project Action Criteria. He announced that both he and Mr. Wegman will co-chair the last part of the report which will be the development of the Strategic Plan itself, including the Implementation and Performance Measures. He then announced that Joe Hamm will present a draft Public Engagement Strategy for the Council's review and adoption. He indicated that part of this will be six public sessions to take comments on the Regional Economic Development Strategy. The first meetings will be held on August 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Genesee Community College in Batavia, on August 30<sup>th</sup> at the same time at Monroe Community College in Brighton, NY and on August 31<sup>st</sup> at the Ramada Inn in Geneva, NY.

Bob McNary next gave a power point presentation (included in the handouts) of the Process and Framework of the Regional Council Program. He provided a quick overview on the Strategic Planning Process including the intent of the effort, the Plan due date (November 14, 2011), the competition for funds, the capital project funding and Excelsior Jobs Program, the role of the Council moving forward and the Consolidated Funding Application (single application). He also explained the various state agency funding sources for the \$800 MM that local applicants can apply for utilizing the CFA process and the deliverables/timetables of the Strategic Plan elements.

Irene Baker stated the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process is now being finalized. All of the nine agencies involved are engaged in this process and there are 17 types of funds available. The application process for funding is being changed, including the way state

agencies approach the decision making about such funding. Applicants are going to be able to apply through the Governor's website with one single electronic application. Ultimately numerous state agencies will participate in the CFA process. The Regional Councils will adopt CFA standards whereby applications for these funds are scored. This score (and recommendation) will be forwarded to the specific state agency that is coordinating the overall scoring on the project application. The Council scoring will account for up to 20% of the state agency score and is advisory in nature. Going forward, the Governor will be looking at how state agencies do business. It is anticipated that the CFA application will go live by the end of the month and projects can then be received. From this it is anticipated that there will be a number of projects which the Council can review and prioritize, possibly selecting some that will be included with the Strategic Plan to be submitted to the State Strategic Plan Committee.

Next the Council membership divided into two facilitated breakout groups, the Existing Conditions and Economic Opportunities Group (to discuss the existing economic conditions and designation of possible workgroups) and the Economic Development Vision Group (to discuss the establishment of a Vision Statement, the CFA Endorsement Standards and the Priority Project Action Criteria).

The general session then reconvened. Mr. Seligman asked Mark Peterson and Steve Griffin to report what occurred in the Existing Conditions and Economic Opportunities Group. Mark stated that the economic clusters were reviewed, as well as cross-cutting themes (e.g. workforce, finance, etc.). Ten workgroups were discussed, including Agriculture and Food Processing, Tourism, Advanced Manufacturing, Optics/Photonics and Imaging, Higher Education, Advanced Health Care and Life Sciences, Energy Innovation, Business Services/Software and Telcom, Community Development, Transportation and Tourism. He indicated that Members were asked to contact him with the names of the workgroups that they would like to serve on, as well as names of others in the community who should serve. Once these names are received they will be reviewed by the Co-chairs and designated. Hopefully they can then initiate their work efforts in the near future and prior to the next Council meeting. At the same time Kent Gardner will be doing research on data-sets related to the specific clusters.

Sandy Parker next reported on the outcome of the facilitated Economic Development Vision breakout session. She said that jobs was a central theme of the discussion and that we need to focus on the assets of the region, that we are driving an economically sustainable future, the Vision is feasible and it represents the entire region. She then presented the draft Statement. After a brief discussion and suggestion, the following Vision Statement was agreed upon: "The Finger Lakes Region will build a foundation for families, employment and strong economic growth by investing in its sustainable natural resources and beauty, its strong agricultural and manufacturing base and its diverse and dedicated workforce. Stimulated by its higher education partners, the region will be a leader in innovation and entrepreneurship committed to creating substantial economic and job growth". She said that the Committee agreed that we need to keep the region poised for future growth. In a response to a question by Mr. Seligman, she stated that the Statement reflected the unanimous opinion of the group. He also

requested that we type it up on the power point screen so the public can see it when they join us. He asked if the group had time to review the CFA Endorsement Standards and the Priority Project Action Criteria. She said that they were not able to cover those at this time, but would address them in advance of the next Council meeting (September 6, 2011).

Mr. Seligman then asked Joe Hamm to present his committee's Community Engagement Plan (a draft copy was provided to attendees in the hand-outs). Following are some of the highlights of his presentation:

- The Community Engagement Plan component accounts for 10% of the Regional Council Strategy
- The Plan has been developed to be a guide that is flexible
- We are required to have at least two community meetings during the development of the Plan. We will go beyond that with six, three by the end of August and three in October.
- The website, [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov), is the official website and has an abundance of information about the Regional Council effort, as well as local data that will be uploaded over time.
- We will be utilizing e-mail blasts, as well as ask Council members, businesses, etc. to assist us with outreach.
- We will utilize a survey to gain public and stakeholder input.
- We will take steps to insure that the deaf and hearing impaired are accommodated as part of this process.
- We are going to engage the media.

A number of Council members asked questions and made suggestions. Augie Melendez stated that with the upcoming Labor Day weekend, we might not have good attendance at the upcoming public forums in the last week of August. Joe noted that it was felt that we needed to have them early in the development of the Plan and before the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Debbie Stendardi asked if we were going to reach out to the Young Professionals and college students. Joe said that we planned to do that. Mr. Seligman asked how we would handle public communications and media inquiries. Joe asked ESD Press Director Austin Shafran to comment. He said that the ESD Press Office will assist Members and the Council with such efforts and requested that you go to Bob McNary with these requests. He also stated that the only thing we are delaying at this time is communication with Editorial Boards, although we will approach them across the State in the future. Sandy Parker indicated that some of the Council Members and their organizations have regular columns and media opportunities that could be helpful. Maggie Brooks requested a one page document on talking points for the Council. Joe indicated that we would try to get this out in the near term.

Mr. Seligman and Mr. Wegman then opened the meeting to the public and press. Mr. Wegman welcomed the press and public to the Regional Council meeting.

Sandy Parker reviewed the Draft Vision Statement, stating that the public will have an opportunity to provide input on it at the upcoming Community Forums. It was displayed on the power point screen so that the public and media could view it. Mr. Seligman asked for a motion on the Statement, recognizing that there might be changes as we obtain more input in the coming weeks. A motion to approve was made by Bill Destler. It was seconded by Taylor Fitch. He then asked if there was any further discussion and none was provided. He called for a vote and it was unanimously approved.

Next Mr. Seligman asked Joe Hamm to present the proposed Community Engagement Plan. He reviewed some of highlights of the Plan, as previously mentioned, and said that initially there will be three public meetings held from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM on August 29<sup>th</sup> at Genesee Community College in Batavia, on August 30<sup>th</sup> at the same time at Monroe Community College and on August 31<sup>st</sup> at the same time at the Ramada Inn in Geneva, NY. At those sessions there will be an opportunity to hear about the Regional effort. Also small discussion groups will be utilized to insure that we capture public input. He stated we are looking to set up telecommunications services for the deaf and hard of hearing. He also provided the Council website [www.nyworks.ny.gov](http://www.nyworks.ny.gov) so that people could visit it and also register for the Community Forums. Mr. Seligman asked for a motion to approve the Community Engagement Plan as presented. There was a motion to do so by Theresa Mazzullo and a second by Rob Sands. He then asked for further discussion. There being none he called for a vote. It was unanimously approved.

Mr. Seligman then turned the meeting over to Mark Peterson and Steve Griffin. They recapped the discussion in their group on Existing Conditions and Economic Opportunities for the Finger Lakes Region. Mark stated that there was consensus on the ten workgroup categories as follows:

Cross cutting areas (having representation from these sectors on the other primary workgroups) will be:

**Technology and Innovation** and the use of technology whether it be agribusiness, energy or health care, acknowledging that it is something that cuts across all industries.

**Workforce development:** The quality of our work force which is both an asset and potential challenge going forward. We have the best and the brightest and how to meet the needs of the industry sectors that are growing or will be growing at every single level.

**Access to opportunity**, those that are highly skilled and highly educated or those potentially lesser skilled and lesser trained to provide either an opportunity for skills upgrade or still provide jobs that meet the needs with a living wages for families that are able to work in those skilled areas, such as the trades or others.

**Workgroups include:**

Agriculture and food processing  
Tourism  
Advanced Manufacturing  
Optics/Photonics and Imaging  
Higher Education  
Advanced Health Care and Life Sciences  
Energy Innovation  
Business Services, Software and TelCom

**Two other workgroups integral to the Regional Economy:**

Community Development  
Infrastructure and Transportation

Mr. Seligman thanked all the members for participating and recognized that this is a complicated process, one that involves the private and public sectors, creating a regional economic development strategy that will chart the future for the entire Finger Lakes Region. He mentioned the funding opportunities in front of us, but stated that there is a lot of work before us.

The Lt. Governor thanked everyone on behalf of himself and the Governor. He stated that he understands that Council Members are very busy successful people who have put a lot of time in. He thanks all of them, including Joel and Danny for chairing the Council; Bob McNary for his work as the Regional Director; all the state staff and all the people around the room who are putting in a tremendous amount of time. He indicated that as of this meeting the Regional Council process becomes a truly locally-generated effort. However the State is here are here to help in any way that it can. He said that this is the way economic development business is going to be done in the future.