



Greater Buffalo Development Council
January 17, 2007
Minutes

Attendance: Matt Meier, Carolyn Murray, Jim Eaton, Joe Kinkemoeller, Stephen Hunt, Tim Toepfer, Raechel Hutchins, Virgilia Benker-Beck, Phil Perna, Tony Davis, Barb Bauer, Mary Bolo, Bruce Kohn, J.M. Reed, Cynthia Schwartz, David Jaros, David Karb, Jim Richert, David Griggs, Nancy McNaughton, Colleen Brennan, Rick Mason, Elizabeth Vealey, Julie Fisher, Jane Humphreys, Don Erb, Mary Battey, Patricia Wittmeyer, Donna Gonser, Jeffrey O' Bannon, Lynn Gannon, Daniel Couch and Tina Coppins

Special Guest: Commissioner Rich Tobe

BNP Staff: Laura St.Pierre-Smith, Monique Cunningham

I. Introduction

- Matt welcomed those in attendance and informed the group that the council is working towards collaborations with other organizations to better utilize resources.

II. Commissioner Richard Tobe

- There are investment opportunities coming to the region.
- In 2006 the city listed 78 development projects, 17 of which have been completed.
- Buffalo's total real estate value is assessed at 8.6 billion dollars.
- The City of Buffalo's taxable value is 5.6 billion dollars. \$3.7 of this is due to the value of 1-2 family homes, the other 1.9 is for all other housing and building structures.
- The Class A & B vacancy space in Downtown Buffalo is almost non existent which is the motivation for new office space under construction., such as:
 - Health Now
 - New Era
 - Cornerstone Manor
 - Granite Works, which has been fully renovated and is currently being occupied mostly by those associated with the medical campus. The retail space in the building is currently still available.
 - The Lakeside Commerce Park has welcomed 2 new companies: Koby and Certain Teed. There are two more offers in to close on the site.

- There are 200 acres of land in the process of being purchased near the Union Ship Canal.
- The Cleveland Bio Labs will relocate to Buffalo in another four months. This company is expected to double in size within the first year to 18 months, increasing their workforce to 60 employees.
- [More development projects](#)
- Western New York has the highest construction and development in Upstate New York. Buffalo is the showcase for the area.
- There have been past and current obstacles for development within City Hall. However Mayor Brown has put forth a great effort to overcome them.
- Economic Development starts in the Permit offices which have started to change the way they do business.
- Making changes in the state regarding economic development can be complicated yet efforts are being made to make it a priority.
- There are currently 28 different development agencies that will eventually be scaled down to better serve the community.
- There is a misconception that economic development leads to job growth.
- The three strategic issues identified for 2006 were Shovel Ready land, the commitment from City Hall to lead by example and to encourage companies to relocate to the area.
- The government's goal in economic development is to deal with infrastructure, education, opening trade opportunities and producing technology.
- The State's role is to lower the cost of doing business and preparing land for development.
- The future of our economy depends on the vitality of small businesses.
- Most state programs are keyed towards how many jobs can come from funding. Programs such as the Empire Zone can offer relief for those companies that qualify.
- The city doesn't have programming/resources for the growth of small business. They are often referred to organizations such as Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) and Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation (BERC) but not City Hall.