

Notes made at a General Meeting of the Harmony Residents Group Inc. in the evening of Wednesday, July 14, 2010 in the Virgil Arena Mary Snider Room.

23 people attended including 5 members of the Group Board of Directors. This meeting began at 7:08 PM when R.Busbridge introduced Arlene White, Executive Director of the Bi-national Economic and Tourism Alliance who spoke until 7:45 PM, then answered questions for another 15 minutes.

Ms.White distributed 11 pages of information, which are appended to these notes and which contained the mission statement and background information about her organization, their marketing activities, a member application form, lists of its members and Board of Directors, some information about their Peace Gardens project and a map of their regions involved, both in Canada and the U.S.A. and all bordering on the south-eastern shore of Lake Ontario and the western shores of Lake Erie.

This organization was incorporated in 2004 in the U.S.A. and became international in 2007. An object is to raise the image of cultural tourism in the Niagara area, encouraging year round facilities which appeal to our multiracial society and younger people from the late teens to the early 40s. Such people do not relate easily to the military aspects of the Bicentennial to commemorate the end of the War of 1812/14, so her organization has initialled an "Art of Peace Gardens" project which began with a grant of \$9000 from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism but which is intended to be low cost. The object was to begin in 2009 with 4 gardens, then to add to these each year, until 2014, providing space for artists from various disciplines, dance, music, sculpture, theatre etc., to perform and present their culture and talents. Involved communities must commit to the design, creation, planting, maintenance and the local promotion and cultural programming of their Garden, guided by a steering committee. Gardens need not be large but must be easily accessible to the public.

Ms.White mentioned her disappointment with the Project Niagara proposal because it would not enlarge on the area's existing amenities but on imports, which would be to their detriment because of the limited size of the market. She said that the area's existing amenities, if adequately presented, would have international appeal.

Following her talk there were questions, one of which asked the reason for the wineries support of Project Niagara. She answered that it was the availability of government donation of taxpayer money. She said that the region currently attracts 6 to 7 million tourists during the year, compared to 13 to 14 million in 2000, that it is a family market with limited appeal to big spenders and that its high prices decrease the size of its natural market.

R.Busbridge thanked Ms.White, whom the audience applauded vigorously, and presented her with a bottle of local wine. He then read the press release which announced the demise of Project Niagara, noting that while economics were an important factor, so were the activities of the Harmony Group which must now focus on its future, and this will be the subject of the August General Meeting. Gracia Jaynes said that the Group should acknowledge the help at the regional government level, provided by Mayor Bill Hodgson of Lincoln.

R.Busbridge will contact Parks Canada, our Member of Parliament and the local Chamber of Commerce to determine their attitude toward the Group EcoPark concept, recognizing that Parks Canada must be convinced that it would not be a financial liability and he, with F.Madsen, will visit Professor Eagles of Kitchener-Waterloo University to determine his interest and possible support.

There was some discussion of the status of the local sewage plant and C.James stated that the original engineering study demonstrated clearly that the least expensive alternative to expand the capacity and efficiency of this plant was to upgrade the existing site which would have the least socio-economic impact on the community.

This meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM.

Cliff James, Secretary