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ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. JOSEPH C. LORIGO
10TH DISTRICT LEGISLATOR
MINORITY LEADER

November 5, 2018

Patrick Burke
Erie County Legislator Economic Development Committee, Chair
92 Franklin Street – 4th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Re: Convention Center

Dear Legislator Burke,

I appreciate your willingness to host informational meetings as the Legislature will soon be making a decision regarding future of the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center. It is the duty of the Legislature to hear all sides of this complex issue enabling the body to make an educated decision. Recently, the attached proposal by Mark Croce, owner of Statler City, was published in The Buffalo News. As a potential partner in the redevelopment of the convention center, it would be valuable to hear Mr. Croce's proposal.

I am requesting that you use your authority as Chair of the Committee to invite Mr. Croce to address the Legislature. I appreciate your attention to this serious matter and look forward to future discussion.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Joseph C. Lorigo in blue ink.

Joseph C. Lorigo
Erie County Legislature Minority Leader

Handwritten signature of Thomas A. Loughran in black ink.

Thomas A. Loughran
Erie County Legislator

Cc: Mark Croce



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 100
CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02129

July 1, 2013

Dear Mr. [Name]:

On July 1, 2013, I received your letter regarding the [Subject]. I am sorry that I cannot provide you with a more definitive answer at this time, but I will continue to work on this matter and will contact you again as soon as I have more information.

Sincerely,
[Signature]

[Name]
[Title]

I am sorry that I cannot provide you with a more definitive answer at this time, but I will continue to work on this matter and will contact you again as soon as I have more information. I understand your concern and will do my best to resolve this matter as quickly as possible. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further assistance.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact my office at [Phone Number] or [Email Address].

[Signature]

[Name]
[Title]

[Signature]

[Name]
[Title]



THE BUFFALO NEWS



Developer Mark Croce has a plan to expand the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center by building new space over Franklin Street, connecting the existing center to Statler City.

Editorial: An intriguing idea for Buffalo's convention center

By News Editorial Board (<https://buffalonews.com/author/newseditorialboard/>) | Published November 1, 2018

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The proposal by developer Mark Croce comes like a slap to the forehead: Why didn't someone think of this before? His proposal for a convention center accomplishes so many worthy community goals that it deserves serious investigation.

(<https://buffalonews.com/>)



His idea is to link the existing convention center to Statler City, which Croce owns, by constructing new space over Franklin Street. According to Croce's preliminary concept, that would provide an additional and badly needed 130,000 square feet of modern convention space. It would also:

- Avoid the cost of identifying and acquiring space to build an entirely new convention center
- Keep the existing convention center in productive use and avoid the need to find new uses or to demolish it
- Help further protect and restore the Statler, completed in 1923 as a convention hotel
- Create or maintain pedestrian access to mass transit and the Hyatt Regency Hotel, both on Main Street
- Keep the convention center downtown, near amenities visitors would use, including restaurants, clubs, theaters and other hotels

Not unhelpfully, the location also keeps the convention center a modest distance from the Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino. It's a legitimate attraction, certainly, but it pays no taxes and

would likely draw many conventiongoers away from other amenities if a new center were built practically next door, as one idea has it.

(<https://buffalonews.com/>)



Croce's approach, which remains rough, would also create a 10-level parking ramp that could accommodate about 500 cars. Other features include a green roof to reduce stormwater runoff, a solar panel array, an elevated greenway and a new plaza for use by the general public.

To be sure, Croce's plan includes an element of self-interest in that it would benefit the Statler. Happily, Croce's self-interest meshes with that of the public, which has its own interest in preserving that beautiful and historic property which only a few years ago seemed to be nearing its demise. That requires finding new uses for the hotel, built with 450 guest rooms. An attached convention center would go a long way toward filling that need.

Croce and his partners anticipate objections, which accompany any large project, especially any that are proposed in Buffalo. Some criticism will no doubt be constructive and the developer says he is interested in hearing other ideas to help what, at this point, is little more than an intriguing and creative idea.

There will be questions about costs, driven in part by the size of conventions Buffalo can reasonably expect to attract.

Croce had no cost estimate to accompany his presentation at The News on Wednesday, which will be a key concern. He expressed confidence that it would be less costly than finding and acquiring new space, building an entirely new

convention center and dealing with the husk of the existing building. Presumably, the new space could be made smaller if that seemed more in line with anticipated demand. But that's an area that needs to be tested.

(<https://buffalonews.com/>)



Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz put the question succinctly a few weeks ago: Does the county want to remain in the convention business or not? The answer must be yes, as the city develops attractions that are appealing to tourists, a group to which conventioners belong. That's a market that this Great Lakes city, home to a treasure trove of great American architecture, cannot afford to pass up. To attract it, a new convention center is indispensable.

We don't know that this approach can work. Many details would need to be examined. But the proposal counts as a valuable contribution to an important public conversation. Anyone interested in preserving Buffalo's history, in creating the density that makes urban spaces work and in maximizing what already exists around Niagara Square, should plan to examine this idea closely.

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