

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC AUDITORIUM, PORTAGE, IN

October 4, 2012

MINUTES

Members/Guests Present:

Geof Benson, Mike Molnar, Michelle Caldwell, Ashley Snyder, Carl Lisek, Amber Winter, Casey Sullivan, Deb Backhus, Richard Morrisroe, Jennifer Gadzala, Susan MiHalo, Charlotte Read, Kris Krouse, Angela Larsen, Lee Botts, Nick Minich, Sherryl Doerr, Chandra Viswanathan, Maggie Byrne, Daniel Goldfarb, Nancy Williamson, Chris Mulvaney, Will Allen, Gina Darnell, Nick Dernik, Laurel Ross, Jeff Mengler

NIRPC Staff:

Kathy Luther, Jody Melton, Amanda Pollard, Joe Exl, Bill Brown, Eman Ibrahim, John Swanson, Hubert Morgan, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order at 9:06 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of September 6, 2012 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Charlotte Read and second by Chandra Viswanathan the September 6, 2012 EMPC minutes were approved. Chairman Benson abstained due to his absence at the September meeting.

NIRPC Business:

◆ NIRPC Public Participation Plan – *Hubert Morgan, Stanhope Consulting*

The Public Participation Plan from 2007 is being updated to align with the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan and will use the public participation levels used for the 2040 Plan as its standard for the future. Some sections have been revised and the updated Plan will now have an introduction that includes information about the 2040 CRP and Environmental Justice; goals & objectives; techniques that are organized based on whether they inform, involve, consult or collaborate with the public; and evaluation of the public participation process. New additions included in the update are changes to the TIP process; design of the public participation process and new charts on how to engage the public. The transportation planning process and strategies need to be transparent and not only engage the region but also have them recognize they can be part of the process. Federal regulations stipulate how the public should be engaged, but NIRPC would like to raise the bar higher than what is regulated. Hubert described how meetings are designed in a way to understand stakeholder needs and to engage the public. The desire is to have the public involved in the process from the beginning and not just at meetings. New techniques that will be used are Facebook, Twitter, webinars, Friends of NIRPC, youth outreach and inclusion. NIRPC currently has several Facebook pages. A matrix has been created to determine when individual projects come up if the public engagement will be to inform, consult, involve or collaborate and depending on the goal and promise to the public what techniques can be used. The timeline for the Plan was reviewed and consists of presentations to the Transportation Policy committee and the NIRPC Full Commission; a 45 day public comment period tentatively beginning October 12; a Consent Decree Hearing and hopefully a Plan adoption by the NIRPC Board at their meeting on December 13. It was questioned if this update was part of a response to a lawsuit and Kathy Luther remarked the lawsuit was very specifically related to NIRPC's role in transit in the region and the American Disabilities Act and disabled community. Chairman Benson briefly explained since FTA and Federal Highway monies go through NIRPC to fund projects, NIRPC is scrutinized to make sure everything is done correctly. In an audit conducted many years ago which it was decided NIRPC's public process wasn't adequate and a better job could be done reaching out to the public. A copy of the paperwork about the lawsuit was requested. Further discussion was held and Hubert noted NIRPC staff will use this new plan as a manual to determine how to approach each project to engage the public at the highest level. Concern regarding where meetings are held was addressed and Hubert explained the process is about engaging public regardless of where the meeting is held, and who stakeholders are will determine where a meeting needs to be held.

Meetings are being held with the communities and many meetings going forward will be held outside of NIRPC. Hubert encouraged reading and giving feedback on the document. Chairman Benson recommended using YouTube for broadcasting information for further public involvement.

Presentations:

◆ **Green Fleet/Diesel Oxidation Catalyst Program** – *Carl Lisek, South Shore Clean Cities*

A grant application was filed for between the National Park Service and the Department of Energy for \$1m, but not awarded. An application will be submitted for around \$250k in the next round and Carl welcomed help with the submittal from anyone interested. Carl noted Department of Energy numbers reflect petroleum displacement of over 11 million for northern Indiana which is the biggest increase in the country. That is 87,123 tons of displaced greenhouse gas emissions. To keep that going South Shore Clean Cities is working with NIRPC on a Diesel Oxidation Catalyst Program. A diesel oxidation catalyst replaces the exhaust system on diesel only vehicles to get rid of the pollution. A funding opportunity meeting will be held for governmental entities interested in installing diesel oxidation catalysts on their equipment. The goal is to spend \$170k by the end of the fiscal year and the majority of school buses in northwest Indiana have had the system installed. This is 100% reimbursable grant and funds the system and installation. The installation takes about a half hour and the vendors come to the location. Local vendors are being used and installations are being tracked. The second phase of the project will involve developing green fleet models. In September an electric vehicle workshop was held at Ivy Tech and local fire departments were trained. A group of trainings will be held with communities and local schools to help develop green fleets in northwest Indiana.

◆ **Green Infrastructure Vision 2.1 Indiana** – *Will Allen, Director of Strategic Conservation-The Conservation Fund*

The Green Infrastructure Vision 2.1 is an update to the original Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) 2.0 developed in 2004 and was funded by an Illinois Department of Transportation Grant. GIV 2.0 included the seven counties of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) service area and GIV 2.1 refines and updates the previous work and expands to include the remainder of the Chicago wilderness area in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana. The GIV provides a map based way to look at future opportunities in conservation, restoration and recreation. Green infrastructure helps determine where conservation activities should take place, development is suitable, and roads and utilities can be developed. In addition, if there are unavoidable impacts from transportation it provides a strategic look at where mitigation projects should be. Green infrastructure can be implemented at multiple scales. The landscape level looks at large, intact, un-fragmented systems. A regional scale looks at natural systems, recreation, ecosystem services, clean air and water. Site scale looks at property and parcel level, getting into stormwater management and strategies, and urban forestry. This project focuses mainly on the regional scale of green infrastructure. Goals and objectives of GIV 2.1 are to create a visionary, regional-scale map that reflects existing green infrastructure; opportunities for expansion, restoration & connection; and refinement of 2004 GIV through consistent & scientifically defensible methodology. A great deal of the input data being used was the result of NIRPC's environmental assets exercise. A science based approach which involves the development of core areas based on landscape types, buffering them to protect resources and connecting them through corridors is being used to refine the network. After feedback was obtained in Illinois on data selection and what should and shouldn't be included, a variety of data was collected and resulted in around 21 GIS data sets. Some of those sets were presented. Models will be set up so updates can be input to change layers and the models rerun. When questioned if the pre-settlement data is something Chicago Wilderness already has or will develop, Will stated it has already been developed and while there are two different data sets for Indiana, neither cover the entire eco region watershed boundary. The new data that is being developed is part of the GIV 2.1 project and is for the data sets. In the materials it will list the data set that is to be used unless input from other sources determines a better one. Examples of network characterization and data set applications for planning questions were given. The final report for the seven county area in Illinois was finished in June 2012 and is available on the CMAP website and the report and data are available for download. The broader area report and data will be available for download as well when completed. Next steps are to host a workshop at NIRPC; get feedback; review draft products; and an official unveiling at Chicago Wilderness Congress on November 15.

Announcements:

A Day of Leisure and Learning on the Little Calumet River

Organization: Little Calumet East Branch Watershed Group (coordinated by Save the Dunes)

When: Saturday, October 13, 2012 / 1:00 pm.

Where: Brummitt Elementary School parking lot
2500 Indian Boundary Rd., Chesterton, IN 46304

Contact Info: Jennifer Birchfield water@savedunes.org (219) 879-3564

Dune and Swale Poster Unveiling

Organization: DNR - LMCP

When: Tuesday, October 16, 2012 / 1:00 p.m.

Where: Gibson Woods Nature Preserve
6201 Parrish Avenue, Hammond, IN 46323

Contact Info: Mike Molnar mmolnar@dnr.in.gov

LMCP Coastal Advisory Board Meeting

Organization: DNR - LMCP

When: Wednesday, October 24, 2012 / 6:30 p.m.

Where: Hobart Community Center
111 E. Old Ridge Road, Hobart, IN 46324

Information: www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich

Save the Dunes 60th Anniversary Gala

Organization: Save the Dunes

When: Saturday, October 27, 2012 / 6:00 p.m.

Where: Sand Creek Country Club
1001 Sand Creek Dr., Chesterton, IN 46304

Contact Info: Nicole Barker nicole@savedunes.org (219)879-3937

The next EMPC meeting will be November 1, 2012 and will include a presentation from the Pines Group about the 520 yard, specifically targeting radiation.

Meeting adjourned at 10:12.