

NIRPC Commission Meeting
Construction Advancement Foundation
2050 Southport Road, Portage, IN
December 17, 2015
Minutes

Chairperson Blair Milo called the meeting of the full Commission to order at 9:15 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive Board members present included Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Dave Decker, Don Ensign, Michael Griffin, Blair Milo, Rich Murphy, Ed Soliday, Greg Stinson and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Bob Carnahan, Tom Clouser, Jon Costas, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Bill Emerson, Jr., Karen Freeman-Wilson, Richard Hardaway, Cary Kirkham, Tom McDermott, Roger Miller, Diane Noll, Lori Reno, Tom Schmitt, Joe Simonetto, Brian Snedecor, Joe Stahura, George Topoll and Dave Uran.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Justin Mount, Kathy Kniola, Michael Webber, Colin Highlands, Joe Crnkovich, David Wright, Jim Nowacki, Drew Hart, Wendy Vacket, Lauren Varga, Christopher Murphy, Deb Backhus, Mike Vandergast and Keith Benman.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Kathy Luther, Angie Hayes, Jody Melton, Connie Boos, Eman Ibrahim, Allen Hammond, Gary Evers, Mitch Barloga, Belinda Petroskey, Kelly Wenger, James Winters, Sarah Geinosky, Scott Weber, Gabrielle Biciunas, Stephen Sostaric, Meredith Stilwell, Carolyn Brown and Mary Thorne.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 17, 2015 meeting of the Executive Board were approved on a motion by Michael Griffin and a second by Geof Benson.

Presentation: Scott Weber and James Winters, NIRPC staff, presented on highway congestion in Northwest Indiana and the 2015 Urban Mobility Scorecard, which was compiled by Texas A&M University. The Chicago Metropolitan Region, which includes the NIRPC region, ranked eighth worst in the nation in annual delays per auto commuter. Based on national traffic data compiled, congestion delays in the three-county region have increased 45 percent on area roadways the past two years. That congestion now costs Northwest Indiana's economy \$500 million per year. Solutions include, but are not limited to, adding capacity in critical corridors, providing travel choices, and changing usage patterns. The full presentation can be found on the NIRPC website at: <http://www.nirpc.org/transportation/transportation-policy-committee/tpc-presentations/nwi-congestion-urban-mobility-scorecard-presentation.aspx>.

Report of the Chair – Blair Milo:

- The new committees will be populated in the New Year as there will be several new Commissioners.
- The Nominating Committee (appointed by Chairperson Blair Milo), consisting of Blair Milo, Jim Ton, Brian Snedecor and Ty Warner, will meet on December 30 and will recommend the new slate of officers and Executive Board at the January meeting.

Report of the Executive Director:

- Ty Warner reported that five applications were filed for the Regional Cities Initiative grant across the state. NICTD submitted an application for double tracking the South Shore line. Joe Crnkovich (NICTD) commented that the double tracking project would save at least 10 minutes of travel time from Michigan City to Gary. Ty Warner showed a brief video of the NIRPC region's project, adding that the project would also reduce delay in that a train could be moved to the second track to bypass a problem with another train. The winning applications were very recently announced: the State received more money than anticipated from the proceeds of the tax amnesty program, and instead of awarding \$84 million to two regions, awarded \$126 million to three regions. The winning applications were for Fort Wayne, Evansville and South Bend. South Bend's application included improvements to the South Shore Railroad, so is still a win for northwest Indiana. Joe Crnkovich explained that they want to improve commuter rail access to the airport by rebuilding and rerouting the rail. Ty Warner added that part of the Regional Cities Initiative application process was a requirement to form a regional development authority modeled after the NWIRDA and this program's RDA has been replicated throughout the state. Another strong united message was the importance of the Chicago economy and that Northwest Indiana is a gateway to that market. The importance of double tracking the South Shore line was not lost on the state, and the panel has indicated it will continue to look for funding toward the project. Rep. Ed Soliday commended the region on an excellent presentation and submittal.
- Ty Warner also reported that a new five-year federal transportation legislation was finally passed. While having a stable and predictable source of funding for the next five is greatly appreciated, as was the amount of bipartisan work to pass this bill, a long-term solution to funding the Highway Trust Fund will still need to be found. Mitch Barloga then presented a summary of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which was passed after five short term extensions of the former act. It provides \$305 billion in funding over five years. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimated that the State actually needs \$2.2 trillion for roadways only. While the amount of funding has increased, it is discretionary. The funding will cover roads, bridges, public transportation, highway, motor vehicle, truck and bus safety, hazardous materials, railroads and other provisions. Because of the legalization of marijuana in some states, it requires a feasibility study for an impairment standard for drivers under the influence of marijuana. One other highlight of the new Act are that non-profits are now eligible for funding under the successor to the transportation alternatives program. Warner said more would be conveyed as the 1300 page bill continues to be digested.

At this time, State Rep. Ed Soliday announced a State road-funding proposal that includes a wheel tax and using a local option income tax to help repair and upgrade local streets. The bill would empower local communities, as well as start to raise the \$1 billion needed to fix state highways and bridges. The bill would adjust the gasoline tax for inflation and make sure all sales tax collected on gasoline go for roads and bridges by raising the tax on a pack of cigarettes by \$1, freeing up gasoline sales tax that is currently directed to Medicaid and other state needs. It would empower cities of more than 20,000 people to impose a wheel tax and open up the possibility of a local option income tax for counties to enact for streets and roads. Local communities are in need of \$570 million to repair their deteriorating streets.

- Ty Warner presented staff service awards as follows: Kelly Wenger and Meredith Stilwell for 5 years of service; Carolyn Brown for 10 years of service; Connie Boos for 25 years of service and Belinda Petroskey for 40 years of service. Each was congratulated and thanked for their service.
- Ty Warner presented service recognition awards to the following Commissioners: Tom Clouser, Don Ensign, Richard Murphy and Stan Dobosz, who each spoke a few words. Each was congratulated and thanked for their service. Tom Clouser introduced Ogden Dunes Town Council members Kathy Kniola and Michael Webber.
- Ty Warner presented perfect meeting attendance awards to Don Ensign, George Topoll, Jim Ton, Joe Simonetto and Geof Benson for 2015. Each was thanked for their commitment to NIRPC.

Finance & Personnel Committee:

- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the committee met on December 10, not immediately prior to the Commission meeting, in order to spend more time on the items being presented today for adoption. He presented in detail Resolution 15-31, the 2016 Appropriations Budgets for the Commission's Governmental Funds and Salary Guidelines. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-31.
- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported on four procurements for action for NIRPC transit subgrantees. Procurement #15-23 for ticket vending machines and on-board fare collection boxes for Valparaiso's ChicaGo Dash; Procurement #16-05 for bus garage and transit offices retrofit for Valparaiso's ChicaGo Dash; Procurement #16-02 for bus washing equipment for Valparaiso's ChicaGo Dash; and Procurement #15-21 for sixteen replacement vehicles for various operators. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to approve the four procurements as presented.
- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported on Resolution 15-30 authorizing and adopting the Title VI program of the USDOT under provisions of FTA Circular 4702.1B. On a motion by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-30.

- Jim Ton reported that for the third consecutive year, NIRPC receive the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) Award from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

Environmental Management Policy Committee:

Geof Benson reported that the minutes of the November 5 were in the packet. At that meeting, Chicago Wilderness Executive Director Suzanne Malec-McKenna presented on the Priority Species Initiative. A Greenways + Blueways 2020 update was given by Mitch Barloga.

Transportation:

- Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on December 8 and heard a presentation on US Bicycle Routes 35 and 36, recently designated by INDOT, which pass through Northwest Indiana. The specifics will be presented at the January Commission meeting. A presentation was also given on initial survey results for the ongoing Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan. Mitch Barloga provided an update of the plan's progress. The survey was completed and data is being compiled. A draft plan will be out in early spring of 2016.
- Eman Ibrahim described Resolution 15-25, Amendment 4 to the FY 2016 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) to amend a transit-oriented development study on the West Lake Corridor for Hammond, Munster and Dyer into the UPWP. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Michael Griffin, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-25.
- Stephen Sostaric reported that the public comment period to amend the Functional Classification System into the updated 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan produced one comment providing suggestions for accuracy of the base map.
- Stan Dobosz reported that the second action recommended by the TPC is on Resolution 15-26, Amendment 1 to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion*. Mitch Barloga described the amendment adding the updated Functional Classification System to the 2040 CRP Update. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Jon Costas, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-26.
- Stan Dobosz reported that the third action is on Resolution 15-27, Amendment 7 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP. Gary Evers described the amendment adding 15 INDOT projects. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Brian Snedecor, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-27.
- Stan Dobosz reported that the fourth action is on Resolution 15-28, Amendment 8 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary Evers described the amendment making changes to projects for both the Chicago Urbanized Area for Lake and Porter Counties and the Michigan City Urbanized Area. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Kevin Breitzke, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-21.
- Stan Dobosz reported that the fifth action is on Resolution 15-29, the Selection of New Federal-Aid Projects for FY 2016-2021. Gary Evers described the amendment, which lists the projects for

the limited solicitation for unallocated Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Michael Griffin, the Commission Resolution 15-29.

- Stan Dobosz reported that the final action recommended by the TPC is on Resolution 15-32, Amendment 9 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for transit projects. Belinda Petroskey described the amendment adding two vehicle replacements for Michigan City Transit under Federal Transit Administration Section 5339. (Note: The program provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities.) On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 15-32.
- The Transportation Policy Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 12 at 9 a.m. here at the Construction Advancement Foundation location.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Ty Warner reported for Rick Powers, who had to leave the meeting, and said that the Governor was in Northwest Indiana last week to announce the \$70 million allocation for added travel lanes on I-65 from US 30 to SR 2, to be completed in April of 2017.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District (NWIEDD): Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that NWIEDD met on November 25. The request for official district designation was submitted in December to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. A letter of recommendation was received from the Indiana Secretary of Commerce from the Regional Development Authority along with resolutions by the counties of Lake, Porter and LaPorte, along with a letter of commitment between the NWIEDD and NIRPC.

Other Business:

Ed Soliday said there is a proposed State bill, which is a priority for the Farm Bureau to create regional oversight boards of INDOT, which would have authority to reject a project such as a roundabout. That original bill has been changed to an advisory panel. Many roads in the state are in metropolitan areas, and are therefore covered by the MPOs through their TIP program. There should be no conflicts between advisory boards and the MPOs. Ed Soliday said that a northwest Indiana legislator has been approached by a town manager to change NIRPC membership so that non-elected alternates can be sent to attend and vote at NIRPC board meetings, and he recommended they talk to NIRPC's Executive Director. Ty Warner commented that he had a long conversation with that legislator to explain the workings of NIRPC and the various opportunities for a town manager to serve on a committee or committees.

Bob Carnahan shared that Lake County Advancement Committee will meet on the second Friday of January at Tiebel's. The keynote speaker is Ed Soliday.

Stan Dobosz commented that in his travels to Poland, he noted that the country has a very successful roundabout system.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Jim Nowacki, Gary resident, commented that there is opposition regarding the plans for the West Lake Corridor. Promises have been made to the region and commitments have been made by communities but no benefits have yet been seen. Blair Milo said there are opportunities presented to the region, not promises, but that they are not always awarded.

Announcements:

Geof Benson wished those present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Blair Milo thanked the Commissioners for attending this important meeting. Hearing no other business, on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Stan Dobosz, Blair Milo adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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