



**COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
FEBRUARY 27, 2014
MINUTES**

Members & Guests – Don Parker, Matt Keiser, Tim Cole, John Novacich, Chris Moore, Craig Zandstra, Bruce Spires, Walter Lenckos, Julie Mandon, Brian Niksch, Steve Coughlin, Kay Coughlin, Sedrick Green, Shannon Eason, Craig Earley, Lauren Whitman, Natalie Johnson, Dan McGuire, Ron Brown, Peter Kohut, Michele Bollinger, Trisha Nugent, Phil Gralik, Jan Dick, Frank Seilheimer, Nick Minich, Chris Nesper, Jake Dammarell, Lexi Zditosky, Dmytro Sergiyenko, Mark Heintz, Craig Phillips, Skyler York, Therese Davis

Staff – Mitch Barloga, Kathy Luther, Gary Evers, Jack Eskin, Joe Exl, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order with self-introductions.

Ped

South Shore Trails - Update

The group is in the process of planning activities for the year. The SST annual meeting is being held March 26th at Crown Brewing.

Pedal

Presentation: Le Tour de Shore 2014 – Steve Coughlin

Le Tour de Shore is a fund raising biking event for the Maywood Fine Arts Association that started 10 years ago with four riders and has increased to 362 riders in 2013. The projected rider participation is 500 for 2014. The ride will be June 13 and 14 (Fri and Sat) 2014 and is a two-stage ride with the first day's ride from the Chicago lakefront to Michigan City and the second day from Michigan City to New Buffalo, Michigan. There are three options for the ride and include the ride only, ride and camp, or ride 'n dine which includes a gear check truck which drops off bags to hotels on the route. A que sheet is provided that notes every turn and includes mile marker and landmarks to aid riders, but most riders use yellow road marks which are painted on the route. Bike mechanics are also on the route. The cost of the ride also includes a bus ride back to Chicago.

Presentation: NICTD BIKES ON TRAINS STUDY – Jack Eskin

Jack presented the group with an update on the study which is a partnership between NIRPC, NICTD and Save the Dunes. \$205k will be used for an engineering feasibility study to assess what needs to happen for bicycles to be accommodated on trains. Once the federal transit dollars for the study have been approved the RFP for a consultant will be released. The public comment period was completed with 80 comments received, most of which were in support of the project. A petition from South Shore Trails was received and included 300 signatures in favor of the study and getting the program bikes on trains as soon as possible. The issue was brought in front of Transportation Policy Committee and NIRPC Executive Board with approval from both to amend the project into the TIP budget. The amendment has now been sent to INDOT for approval and after approval will then be sent to FHWA and FTA. Within the next month the advisory board will be convening to develop project selection criteria and the RFP will hopefully be released in late April or early May with a consultant selection by June or July. It was clear from the public comment period that this is something a lot of people have wanted for a while. The goal is to have a final report in the spring of 2015. It will then be up to NICTD to move forward with the implementation recommendation. This study is one more step on the path of getting bikes on trains and the study will begin to come up with a lot of "how-tos". A lot of the NICTD equipment is currently not conducive for bikes on trains, but as stock is replaced that can be changed and become part of the normal process. This is not something that will happen quickly.

TAP 2014 Update:

A few things are changing with the Transportation Alternatives Program. Applications from all over the region are being encouraged and not just from the urbanized areas. Beginning in 2014 the program will now be a multi-year program from this point forward with a minimum of five years with about \$5m to program for the five years. New funding targets will be established; the application will be revised (high interest in how to handle safe routes to schools); projects will be programmed by phase, engineering right of way and construction/construction engineering are also items changing. Existing categories consist of 80% for ped & bike projects, 10% for historic/environment and 10% for Safe Routes to School. Maximum requests will be the first to change and funding targets reevaluated. The Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) will be charged with the responsibility of programming the money for environmental projects. An application schedule was provided for the group with a proposed tap workshop March 27 with the goals of setting new funding targets, revising the application (if necessary) and revising eligibility and local match (if necessary). The application date is targeted for April 1st with applications due May 16th. Mitch reviewed the target dates for the TAP and environmental subcommittee meetings for ranking as well as targeted dates for approval by TPC and NIRPC commission. He noted the priority trails corridor map will also be reviewed during the process. Gary Evers commented it will be a two year cycle. INDOT is changing the way they are dealing with NIRPC and are giving three years to begin spending approximately the same amount of money on projects and getting the money out the door and are moving to a cash based system that will be more exacting. If a project gets hung up another project will be needed to take its place. NIRPC will be relying heavily on the engineering community for good and accurate engineering schedules. The projects will remain in the system and will take a board option to remove a project from the program. Quarterly reports will be submitted and the goal is to move projects within the system more quickly.

Paddle –

a. NWI Paddling Association – Update -

Don Parker commented that every Sunday afternoon until mid-April, the Elston Jr. High in Michigan City is allowing the use of their pool for kayaking.

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates:

- The Sign 'em Up program is still happening, but is moving slowly and there has been no progress with the MOU. INDOT is being a stickler with environmental requirements.
- Phil Gralik announced mid-March construction on the Oak Savannah is anticipated and will complete the Hobart section of the trail.
- Bruce Spires announced the letting date for the C&O Phase II is September of 2014.

B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes

- A video was shown on how to deal with bicycles in intersections using protected intersection designs.

C. General Announcements (upcoming rides, events, etc.)

- No upcoming rides or events were announced.

D. Cornucopia '14 will be held April 24th at the Historic LaPorte Civic Auditorium.

E. Next Meeting is Thursday, March 27, 2014 – TAP Workshop

Meeting Adjourned.