

## **Transportation Policy Committee Meeting**

NIRPC Lake Michigan Room  
6100 Southport Road, Portage

April 12, 2016

### MINUTES

#### **Members Present**

Bob Carnahan, Lyndsay Quist, Art Biciunas, David Wright, Taylor Wegrzyn, Dean Button, Tom MacLennan, Phil Gralik, Claudia Taylor, Margot Sabato, Bruce Lindner, Bruce Spires, Joe Crnkovich, Mitch Bishop, Mark O'Dell, Robin Barzoni-Tillman, Spike Peller, Jerry Siska, Frank Rosado, Jr., Mike Yacullo, Catherine Yoder, Susan Orona, with Mary Enright and Joyce Newland on the conference phone.

#### **Guests**

Mark Gordish, Mark McLoughlin, Chris Moore, Jeff Sheridan, Jill Murr, Rebecca "Sis" Williams, K-Todd Behling, Jarvis Jointer, Eric Wolverton, Ismail Attallah, Andrew Steele, James Mandon, Denny Cobb, Jake Dammarrell and Ron Wiedeman.

#### **NIRPC Staff**

Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Gary Evers, Eman Ibrahim, Scott Weber, Belinda Petroskey, James Winters, Gabrielle Biciunas, Mary Thorne and Stephen Sostaric.

#### **1. Call to Order, Opening and Announcements**

- a) Bruce Spires called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.
- b) The INDOT voluntary participation survey was available for attendees to complete.
- c) On a motion by David Wright and a second by Bruce Lindner, the minutes of the March 8, 2016 meeting were approved as presented.

**2. Presentation:** Mitch Barloga gave a presentation on the 2016 trails regional network. There are currently over 600 miles of trails, 145 miles of them paved. Nine miles of trails will be constructed in 2016. New trails highlighted include the C&O Greenway, Marquette Greenway segment in Hammond, Gary Greenlink Phase II, and Oak-Savanna. Once completed, there will then be a confluence of three major trails – the C&O to the Oak-Savanna to the Erie Lackawanna within three years. Other new trail segments include the Dunes Kankakee connection from US 20 to the Visitor's Center, a Crown Point project which will provide a trailhead and side path at 93<sup>rd</sup> on the Erie Lackawanna; Chesterton Westchester Library Trail Phase II, and a Valpo Pathways trail. The Calumet Trail failed due to drainage issues, but a remedial project will hopefully be completed in 5-10 years.

Bob Carnahan announced that a meeting will be held at Schererville Town Hall on April 27 at 9 a.m. to fight business tax reduction efforts.

### 3. Programming

- a) Stephen Sostaric reported that the 7 day public comment period on TIP Amendments 18 and 19 ended with no comments. The report will be presented at the NIRPC Board meeting on April 21. The I-65 added travel lane public comment period ends this Friday, with the report to follow.
- b) Gary Evers described the two Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Projects and the four new INDOT projects in Amendment #18 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). On a motion by Dean Button and a second by Francisco Rosado, the Committee voted to recommend FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program amendment #18 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- c) Belinda Petroskey described the NICTD transit projects in Amendment #19 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program from Section 5337 funds for NICTD only. Joe Crnkovich added that NICTD is getting \$2 million from the FAST Act. On a motion by Francisco Rosado and a second by Phil Gralik, the Committee voted to recommend FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program amendment #18 to the NIRPC Board for adoption.
- d) Gary Evers discussed the closeout report for FY 2016. In the Lake and Porter urbanized area, the current projected total expense was \$22.6 million. There is \$1.149 million in unprogrammed funds which is at risk of being returned to INDOT. The STIP submission window deadline is April 13 and NIRPC can issue an emergency amendment today. April 29 is the final date for FMIS requests for change orders. Transfers to FTA are due May 2. The INDOT deadline for CAPWISE is May 6. Requests for unprogrammed funds came from Opportunity Enterprises, South Lake County Community Services, Valpo Dash, Porter County Aging & Community Services, East Chicago Transit and two from Gary Public Transportation Corp. totaling \$3.8 million. The minimum available is \$1.149 million and the maximum available is \$1.397 million. Dean Button promoted Hammond's \$800,000 request for funding for right of way purchase for its project to widen Chicago Street. Belinda Petroskey said she met with the transit operators about their needs and the status of their fleet replacements. The operators are requesting \$1.5 million. This is the only opportunity for them to get additional funding. Transit projects move very quickly, unlike highway projects. In answer to a question from David Wright, Gary Evers said that GPTC's project would be funded as originally submitted. The distribution of the unprogrammed funds needs to be decided today by consensus. A lengthy discussion on the funding requests followed with Hammond and the transit operators outlining their needs and justification for their share of the funding.

Mark O'Dell moved to divide the \$1.149 million as follows: \$104,000 to Opportunity Enterprises, \$120,000 to South Lake County Community Services, \$32,000 to Porter County Aging and Community Services, \$300,000 to East Chicago Transit, \$120,000 to GPTC and \$473,836 to the City of Hammond. Dean Button seconded the motion. On a voice vote of 14 no to 3 yes, the motion failed.

Bruce Lindner moved to award \$200,000 to Hammond with the balance to the transit operators to be apportioned out by them at their meeting immediately following the Transportation Policy Committee meeting. Taylor Wegrzyn seconded the motion. Gary Evers said this could not be done as the decision would need to go before the Board and the decision needed to be agreed upon today. He said the operators have another solicitation program coming up. Bruce Lindner withdrew his motion and Taylor Wegrzyn removed his second.

David Wright moved to award Hammond \$200,000 and prorate the remaining funds based on the project applications. Margot Sabato called for point of clarification that the funds are only those from the unprogrammed funds. The motion was seconded by Bruce Lindner. On a voice vote of 9 yes to 8 no, the motion passed.

With regard to the \$247,530 in the high risk project category, which projects may or may not make the deadline, Dean Button moved that if the projects do not make the deadline, the entire amount of \$247,530 be awarded to Hammond. Mark O'Dell seconded the motion. On a voice vote of 6 yes, 8 no and 3 abstention, the motion failed.

Tom MacLennan moved to award the \$247,530 from the high risk projects to the transit operators if the projects do not make the deadline. The motion was seconded by Francisco Rosado. On a voice vote of 12 yes, 4 no, 1 abstention, the motion passed.

With regard to the Michigan City Urbanized Area, Gary Evers said over one-third of all funds (\$1.2 million) are going to transit projects due to a failure of construction and right of way projects to make it in the system. The one letting came in less than expected.

#### **4. Planning**

- a) Steve Strains said MAP-21 caused some things to change and new agreements have been signed with our neighboring metropolitan planning organizations, CMAP in Illinois and SWMPC in Michigan. The agreements will go before the NIRPC Board next week.
- b) Gabrielle Biciunas presented on the Marquette Action Plan Survey. Responses to the survey are crucial for producing the Marquette Action Plan, which will detail ways to make Lake Michigan more accessible. A press release and a smart phone e-link were provided. The survey is available at <http://nirpc.org/hot-topics/marquette-action-plan-survey.aspx>.
- c) Mitch Barloga gave an update on the trail wayfinding signage. The inter-local agreement is being rewritten, redistributing the local match for Erie Lackawanna and Prairie Duneland Trails. The wayfinding guide advisory committee being formed has a good cross section of experience, ideas, etc.

#### **5. Indiana Department of Transportation**

Lyndsay Quist reported on the INDOT lettings through April. This week is Work Zone Safety Awareness Week.

## 6. Transit Operators Reports

- a) **GPTC** – David Wright reported that March ridership was up 6% over March 2015. A naming survey for the Broadway Rapid Transit ends Friday and can be found on their website and Facebook. The bus shelters are now a part of an INDOT resurfacing project.
- b) **NICTD** – Joe Crnkovich reported that March ridership was down 1% due to the weather. Contracts were let for rehabilitation of five bridges under way this summer. There will be no service interruptions. A contract for double tracking from Gary to Michigan City for \$4 million was issued for engineering. The work is expected to be completed in 2020. Catenary replacement work is ongoing in LaPorte. No busing is needed this year. The fare increase hearings are ongoing, with one tonight at Michigan City City Hall. The Bikes on Trains pilot program started April 2. People are going from Chicago to Indiana. A pamphlet was available. The bad weather restricted ridership.
- c) **Opportunity Enterprises** – Claudia Taylor said the RTAP Roadeo will be held April 16 in Columbus, Indiana. Eight drivers from OE are participating.
- d) **Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services** – Bruce Lindner said a maintenance contract was signed for both Opportunity Enterprises and Porter County Council on Aging and Community Services.
- e) **South Lake County Community Services** – Margot Sabato reported that they just started procurement for maintenance services. Referrals are needed.

## 7. Regional Transportation Partners –

South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC) – Catherine Yoder reported that Green Fleet projects will be implemented this year for Hobart, Valparaiso, East Chicago, Alpha Baking, Hammond, Michigan City and Bohren Transportation. There is also 100% funding available through CMAQ and NIRPC for bus heaters for any school district in Lake, Porter or La Porte Counties. Grants are coming out for replacing diesel vehicles with cleaner newer diesel vehicles or alternative fuels. They are working with National Park Service on a grant due April 15 for green vehicles to the national and state park. Finally, Midwest Drives is a US DOE funded program offering fleets free demonstrations of advanced and alternate fuel and technology vehicles. Upcoming events include Earth Day April 16, Clean Diesel Refuse Truck acquisition press conference at Whiting City Hall on April 18 and Green Drives Conference and Expo on May 19 in Naperville.

8. **Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration** – No reports were given.

9. **Planning Neighbors** – No reports were given.

10. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – No comments were given.

## 11. Other Business, Staff Announcements and Upcoming Meetings

a) **Staff Announcements** –

- James Winters said the Great Lakes Basin Railroad project is privately funded. NIRPC has no direct authorization or position, but is following it closely. Contact the Surface Transportation Board or Great Lakes Basin Railroad for more information. Meeting dates can be found on their websites.
- Belinda Petroskey said there is a transit bus in the parking lot for viewing and inspection.
- Steve Strains referred to a flyer on a *For the Love of the Region* workshop to be held April 19 at the Blue Chip Casino in Michigan City.
- Amanda Pollard referred to the 2016 schedule of quarterly tracking meetings and encouraged the LPAs to fill out their reports.

**b) Upcoming Meetings at NIRPC –**

- The Executive Board will meet on Thursday, April 21 at 9 a.m. in the NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, 6100 Southport Road, Portage.
- The Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee will meet on April 28 at 1:30 p.m. in the NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, 6100 Southport Road, Portage
- The Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on May 5 at 9 a.m. in the NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, 6100 Southport Road, Portage

The next Transportation Policy Committee will be on May 10, 2016 at 9 a.m. in the NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, 6100 Southport Road, Portage.

On a motion by Francisco Rosado and a second by Tom MacLennan, Bruce Spires adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

*A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone number or email below should you wish to receive a copy or a portion of it.*

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

*The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.*