

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting  
NIRPC Office, Lake Michigan Room  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
May 19, 2016  
Minutes

Chairman Jim Ton called the meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commission members present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Michael Griffin, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Ed Soliday, Greg Stinson, Jim Ton, Kyle Allen, Jr., Jeannette Bapst, Toni Biancardi, Christine Cid, Jeff Dekker, Bill Emerson, Jr., Will Farrellbegg, Tom Fath, Jeff Good, Sylvia Graham, Richard Hardaway, Jack Jeralds, Justin Kiel, Cary Kirkham, Kathryn Kniola, Rick Ryfa, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer, Fred Siminski, Brian Snedecor, George Topoll. Bob Carnahan participated via conference phone.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Justin Mount, Natalie Johnson, Matt Deitchley, Jeff Sheridan, Nathanael Pilla, Christopher Murphy, Deb Backhus, David Wright, Jill Murr, Julia Surber, Nicole Barker, Jim Nowacki, Andrew Steele and Tim Zorn.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Dave Hollenbeck, Angie Hayes, Kathleen Honl, Kathy Luther, Mitch Barloga, Belinda Petroskey, Gabrielle Biciunas, Scott Weber, Sarah Geinosky, Eman Ibrahim, Stephen Sostaric, James Winters and Mary Thorne.

**Presentation:** Natalie Johnson, Urban Waters Coordinator at Purdue University, presented on Northwest Indiana's Septic Maintenance and Care. Failing septic systems are causing impaired water quality in the Little Calumet-Galien watershed, with high E. coli levels resulting in beach closures and high bacteria counts. Many systems are over 20 years old. Homeowners must be proactive and informed, have their septic tank inspected, know the proper use of septic systems and become better educated on the use and maintenance of their septic systems. A link to a short survey will be sent to the Commissioners which will help target the areas to focus on for this outreach and education program. For more information go to [savedunes.org/septics-awareness/](http://savedunes.org/septics-awareness/) or [epa.gov/septic](http://epa.gov/septic).

**Approval of Minutes:** On a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Kevin Breitzke, the minutes of the April 17, 2016 Executive Board meeting were approved as presented.

**Report of the Chair – Jim Ton**

- Ty Warner and Heather Ennis were featured in the current issue of NWI Business Magazine.
- The Committee Assignments have been completed and will be shared with the Commissioners after the meeting. Committee member contact information will be shared with the Committee Chairs via email.

**Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner**

- Ty Warner introduced Sarah Geinosky who reported on the Marquette Action Plan, which is the implementation phase of the recently updated Marquette Plan. The survey for the public to take

is available until May 31 and can be found at <http://nirpc.org/hot-topics/marquette-action-plan-survey.aspx>.

- The Unified Planning Work Program is a comprehensive document of the work NIRPC engages in, and the draft FY 2017-2018 UPWP document is available on NIRPC's website. It is out for public comment until June 16.
- Ty Warner presented Angie Hayes with a staff award for 10 years of service.

#### **Finance & Personnel Committee:**

Diane Noll reported that the committee met this morning and there are three items being brought to the Commission today.

- The Committee recommended the 2016 budget amendment for \$1,000 for additional local funds to be spent on the trail guides project. On a motion by Diane Noll and a second by Geof Benson, the Commission approved the 2016 budget amendment for the trail guides project.
- The Committee recommended Resolution 16-19, the Updated Management Plan for the LaPorte County Revolving Loan Fund. NIRPC is the administrator and depository for the fund. On a motion by Diane Noll and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission approved Resolution 16-19.
- The Committee recommended approval of the procurement for the I-65 and US 30 corridor study for a *Safety at the Crossroads* safety plan. The recommendation is to issue a solicitation for the procurement of consulting services for the study. On a motion by Diane Noll and a second by Geof Benson, the Commission approved the procurement recommendation.

#### **Environmental Management Policy Committee:**

Geof Benson reported that the approved minutes from the joint Environmental Management Policy Committee – Urban Waters Partnership Meeting of April 7 were in the packet.

#### **Transportation Policy Committee:**

Kevin Breitzke reported that the Transportation Policy Committee met on May 10th. The Committee heard a presentation from Carl Lisek, South Shore Clean Cities on the Northwest Indiana Green Fleet. A brief presentation by Zach Hurst, ITR Concessions Co, LLC was also made on the progress of the \$200 million 80/90 PUSH project upgrading the Indiana Toll Road from Lake Station to Elkhart.

The following items relate to the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project, which is being recommended today as an amendment to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*.

- The Public Comment Report on the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project from SR 2 to SR 10 was described by Stephen Sostaric. The comment period ran from March 16 to April 15 with one public meeting in Lowell. Most of the comments were positive; one expressed concerns but caused no significant change in the intent of the project.
- The first action was the approval of Resolution 16-13, the adoption of the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project. Scott Weber described the air quality conformity determination between the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan as updated and amended, the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program and the Indiana State Implementation Plan for Air Quality which concluded that the emissions resulting from the project area at or less than the budgets established in the Maintenance Plan. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended approval at their March 15 meeting of Resolution 16-13. Michael Griffin

motioned to approve the Air Quality Conformity Determination and Greg Stinson seconded the motion. The Commission was reminded that the process was approved for the segment from US 30 to SR 2 and this segment is from SR 2 to SR 10. The emissions are decreasing due to improvements in fuel efficiency. The Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-13, the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project from SR 2 to SR 10.

- The second action was the approval of Resolution 16-14, the adoption of the Environmental Justice Analysis for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project. James Winters described the analysis which concluded that the I-65 added travel lanes project will not negatively affect the environmental justice communities in Northwest Indiana and with some adjustments to policy, risks of suburban sprawl and continued disinvestment of the urban core can be avoided. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-14. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Michael Griffin, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-14, the Environmental Justice Analysis for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project.
- The third action was the approval of Resolution 16-15, the Congestion Management Process for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project. Scott Weber described the Congestion Management Process, which concludes that only the added travel lanes alternative achieves a level of service in 2040 consistent with existing conditions. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-15. In answer to a question from Tom McDermott about the width of the median, Matt Deitchley responded that there was enough room on the shoulders to accommodate those extra lanes and avoid narrowing the median. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke, seconded by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-15, the Congestion Management Process for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project.
- The fourth action was the approval of Resolution 16-16, the second amendment to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion*. Mitch Barloga described the amendment, which expands an existing project currently listed in the Capacity Expansion Projects published in the Plan, adding the I-65 added travel lanes from US 30 to SR 2. This new segment runs from SR 2 to SR 10. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-16, Amendment #2 to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion*. Blair Milo motioned to approve, seconded by Tom McDermott. Responding to questions raised by Geof Benson that the action was contrary to the goals of the *2040 Plan* about sprawl and reinvestment in the urban core, Mitch Barloga said the environmental justice analysis was taken a step further to respond to the concern of sprawl and that there are good smart growth policies in place in Lowell. Tom McDermott agreed with Geof Benson and declared that he would vote against it, though he had seconded the motion. As a point of clarification, Michael Griffin commented that in parliamentary procedure, a second is made to afford discussion of the matter and also to afford an opportunity to vote for or against a matter. The Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-16, the second amendment to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion* with 23 affirmative votes and 7 opposing votes.
- The fifth action was the approval of Resolution 16-17, the seventeenth amendment to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project from SR 2 to SR 10. Stephen Sostaric described the amendment adding the I-65 Added Travel Lane segments to the Transportation Improvement Program. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-17. On a motion by Geof Benson, seconded by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-17, Amendment 17 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for the I-65 Added Travel Lanes project.

- The sixth action was the approval of Resolution 16-18, the twentieth amendment to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program. Stephen Sostaric described the eight INDOT projects found in this amendment. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-18. On a motion by Greg Stinson, seconded by Blair Milo, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-18, Amendment 20 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program.
- The final action was the approval of Resolution 16-20, the twenty-third amendment to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program for 5310 Projects for LaPorte County. Belinda Petroskey described the FTA Section 5310 LaPorte County transit projects for Michiana Resources, LaPorte County Comprehensive Mental Health and Parents and Friends, Inc. for replacement vehicles. The Transportation Policy Committee recommended action on Resolution 16-20, Amendment 23 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program. On a motion by Blair Milo, seconded by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to approve Resolution 16-18, Amendment 20 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program.

The next meeting date of the Transportation Policy Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 14th at 9 a.m. at the NIRPC office.

#### **Indiana Department of Transportation:**

Rick Powers thanked Representative Ed Soliday for serving Northwest Indiana in transportation. He also reported that the cable barriers are up except for the construction zone areas. Summer work consisting of herbicide applications, pothole repair, bridge maintenance, and culvert work is ongoing. I-94 from Illinois to Michigan is in some state of repair and it was intentionally done all at once. ITR Concessions is also working on the Indiana Toll Road.

Scheduled on May 31 are two one-and-a-half-hour educational sessions to be held at the LaPorte INDOT District offices on local road funding and asset management plans, the first opportunity being at 10:00 a.m. and the second at 1:00 p.m. INDOT will be holding another such meeting opportunity at the Fair Oaks Farms Dairy.

Ed Soliday added that the Times article and editorial on SB 1001 are incorrect. Communities can use four different sources of local match: rebate money from local option income tax (LOIT) withholding, local tax money, wheel tax, or rainy day fund. Communities must have an asset management plan in place. You must furnish the six pieces of data that describes the condition of the road. It must be a local public road. There is \$186 million in match money, with half going to smaller counties. The bill takes another 1.5 cents from gas sales tax to have at least \$100 million in matching money every year from now on. It is a partnership between the state and local governments. In order to be able to draw on the wheel tax in January, a resolution must be passed by June 30. If locals want to wait to pass a resolution in July or August, or not pass it at all, they can draw their first money in 2018. The rough cap is about \$1 million of matching money. The application is one page and priority will be given to preservation and maintenance. The day you sign the contract for the project, a check will be issued.

Any amount over-budgeted will be absorbed by the locals. If you are under budget you can keep the money. The law says you must pass the ordinance before July 1 to draw the money in 2017. The effective date of the change in rate must be after January 1, 2017. The \$1 million cap is per project but bundling may be an option. The contracts will be examined. A call for projects for federal money

is May; the call for projects for this match is June. The level of engineering design will be minimal. A road study is not required, as the emphasis this year is on preservation and maintenance. There is no penalty for not enacting a wheel tax in order to access the funds in 2017. The Commissioners with more questions were again encouraged to attend one of the two meetings at INDOT LaPorte District on May 31 where INDOT will also offer assistance in developing an asset management plan.

Blair Milo commented that the City of LaPorte will leverage every option they can as they need \$17 million for their local roads.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:**

- David Wright, GPTC, provided a letter to INDOT asking for an investigation of the standing water on Broadway between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues, water that interferes with the function of one of its major bus stops.
- Jim Nowacki, resident of Gary, also commented on the standing water issue and said he found a piece of geotextile fabric at one of the sewers that was clogged and preventing water from draining.

**Announcements:**

- Dave Shafer announced that at the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) conference in Salt Lake City in June, Geof Benson will stand for election as Senior Vice President of NARC. Presuming his successful election, his board position will be vacant and Blair Milo will stand for election as a NARC board member.
- Michael Griffin congratulated both Commissioners. He is Chairman of the Board of the American Red Cross and extended an invitation to their Open House in Merrillville at 781 E. 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue today. As he is a volunteer of the Bicentennial Commission Lake County Committee, Michael Griffin is sending a letter to Lake County elected officials with information pertaining to Lake County, as a Bicentennial Legacy Project, displaying the 20-star 1818 US flag.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Tom McDermott, Jim Ton adjourned the meeting at 10:50 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](mailto: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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