

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
August 21, 2014
Minutes

Chairman Brian Snedecor called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. There was a quorum for a meeting of the Executive Board.

Executive Board members present included Brian Snedecor, Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Anthony Copeland, Jim Ton, Don Ensign, Rich Murphy and Tom Schmitt.

Other Commissioners present included John Bayler, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Bill Emerson, Jr., Karen Freeman-Wilson, Tom McDermott, Rich Murphy, Lori Reno, Joe Simonetto, James Snyder, Joe Stahura, Ron Stallings and Eldon Strong.

Others present included Nancy Dollar, Bruce Oertel, Robert Alderman, Val Gomez, Justin Mount, Ray Dumbrys, Bob Carnahan, Rebecca "Sis" Williams, Kay Nelson, Deb Backhus, Renae Jackson, Teresa Torres, Rudy Velasco, Jim Nowacki, Bob Moore, Cristin Lazerus and Andrew Steele.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Angie Hayes, Kathy Luther, Belinda Petroskey, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Jack Eskin, Sarah Geinosky, and Mary Thorne.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the July 17, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

Certificate of Appointment: Ty Warner announced the reappointment of Karen Freeman-Wilson to the NIRPC Commission.

Presentation: The Board heard a presentation by Bruce Oertel and Nancy Dollar of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management on restrictive covenants and ordinances. Remediation programs are available to address leaking underground storage tanks, superfund sites, brownfields, and other sites such as dry cleaners, petroleum storage terminals, etc. Groundwater contaminants include petroleum chemicals (gas stations) and chlorinated compounds (dry cleaners). There are over 3,700 active sites in Indiana. Environmental restrictive covenants list land use restrictions on a specific property and are enforceable by IDEM. Environmental restrictive ordinances defined in 2009 and control the use of groundwater to a degree that protects human health and the environment from hazardous substances are local law and not enforceable by IDEM. Discussion followed. Ty Warner added that NIRPC has a lot of GIS data available and communities may contact Sarah Geinosky. Contact IDEM for more information about environmental restrictive covenants, ordinances and remediation.

Report of the Chair: No report was given.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner reported on several items:

- The NIRPC office remodel is on track.

- Ty congratulated the City of Hobart on their acquisition of the first compressed natural gas (CNG) waste hauler in Lake County. South Shore Clean Cities partnered with the City through the Green Fleets Program. Contact Kathy Luther for more information.
- A stop gap measure was passed by Congress and signed by the president for the highway trust fund which will take us out to May of 2015. Tony Fox, Secretary of Transportation, earlier issued a letter of concern for funds available for projects and has now issued a follow up letter that there would be no reduction in funds.
- As required, NIRPC is updating its award-winning 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan with a series of meetings taking place in the next couple of months to gather input for the update. Ty noted that NIRPC has received about eight awards for this plan. A preliminary handout was available.
- NIRPC is taking a strong leadership role with transportation logistics groups as part of the tri-state effort, Alliance for Regional Development, in terms of economic development across three states to develop a regional asset database. A major summit will be held in December.
- A recent rooftop solar workshop put together with a grant from the Department of Energy was successful, with a track on challenges to municipal ordinances in implementing solar facilities.

“Strong Cities, Strong Communities, Strong Northwestern Indiana Symposium” – Ty Warner congratulated the City of Gary as a recipient of an EPA green infrastructure grant and a strong cities designation from the White House. NIRPC was happy to help with logistics for the symposium for that grant which was attended by 250 people.

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson conveyed her pleasure with the Gary gaining that day. The Strong Cities Strong Communities designation adds capacity to what Gary is doing. There is a planning component and an implementation component. She said that NIRPC engages in planning every day, but communities do not. One of the benefits is to look at planning for sustainability and for maximizing the implementation both for the short term and the long term in areas of economic development, transportation, land use, public health, housing and community development. It is important to look at how we connect with our neighbors and overall region. There is a benefit that comes with our ability to access whatever federal, state or local partnerships to benefit specific projects and how those successes like transit-oriented development looks at the environment and benefits all of northwest Indiana through remediation efforts of contaminated areas. Another benefit is the engagement of our many universities and maximizing our partnerships with them. As the City of Gary grows stronger, it will positively impact the region. NIRPC was a lead partner on the symposium which was unprecedented. Planning participants were from non-profits, public and private entities. These partnerships make us all stronger.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning and received various information, updates and reports. Budget amendments #3 and 4 are to add new funds to the budget for contractual expenses for a green streets workshop and for the Strong Cities, Strong Communities, Strong Northwest Indiana Symposium. The Finance & Personnel Committee recommends action from the Executive Board to approve the budget amendments. On a motion by Nancy Adams and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr., the Executive Board voted to approve the budget amendments.

Jim Ton said budget amendment #5 is to transfer funds from Occupancy Office lease to Audit and Accounting to cover the a 20% increase in costs not anticipated for the 2013 audit. The Finance & Personnel Committee recommends action from the Executive Board to approve the budget amendment. On a motion by Don Ensign and a second by Tom Schmitt, the Executive Board voted to approve the budget amendment.

The last item was the basic agreement between NIRPC and Quandel Consultants for the Bikes on Trains Study procured under RFP 14-04 for \$194,750. The services must be completed by July 31, 2015. NIRPC is acting as a flow through for contributions from various agencies to fund this study. The Finance & Personnel Committee recommends action from the Executive Board to approve the contract. On a motion by Nancy Adams and a second by Don Ensign, the Executive Board voted to approve the Bikes on Trains Study contract.

Jim Ton reported that the committee heard a presentation from Holladay Properties on the building update. The plans will be sent to the State for approval within the next couple of weeks. The State must give their approval before any work is done. Alternate meeting locations will then need to be determined. Jim Ton added that Comcast will install service in September. Ty Warner added that Construction Advancement Foundation has offered their facility in September if necessary. He also said that NIRPC staffer Jack Eskin is the lead on the Bikes on Trains project and Bob Moore is the Quandel Consultant.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Geof Benson said the draft minutes were available in the packet. The committee will meet on September 5, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

Northwestern Indiana Economic Development District: Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the District (NWIEDD) met on July 31. The by-laws were amended to meet the requirements and suggestions from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to reduce the members of the board from 17 to 11. The members will be selected by the board. There was further discussion on the accounting review. Some of the representatives met with the accounting firm of Joe Kiernan & Associates for an exit interview.

Roosevelt Allen, Jr. said he received a letter on August 11 from Jeanette Tamayo, Director for the Midwest EDA, that the District is one of the finalists for some additional grant funding in the amount of \$20,000 under the short term planning program grant. The District continues to meet the criteria of the EDA. A discussion also took place at the meeting on obtaining additional local funds from the Regional Development Authority (RDA) to assist with operations. Currently a lot of the operations are through an in-kind assistance through NIRPC and the Northwest Indiana Forum. The primary function of the NWIEDD is to assist local units of government in obtaining funding from the EDA. The District continues to maintain the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as required by the EDA and is still positioning itself to obtain final official district status with the EDA. The District would then qualify for an operations grant from the EDA and grant writing assistance would also be provided.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Bob Alderman reported that emergency repair contract work began in St. Joseph County and is moving west. Major damage is in Lake County. Every road north of US 30 is probably damaged from the winter. INDOT is working on a lot of damage on its roads in the cities and towns.

Bob Alderman also said he is working hard to fill job openings in the LaPorte district. Coming changes in the Public Employees Retirement Fund have encouraged many workers to retire. He is short about 60 people.

Tom McDermott expressed concern about heavy truck traffic forced off of Cline Avenue causing heavy damage to local roads. Anthony Copeland responded that work on the bridge replacement was on schedule, funding was secured and the bridge design will be submitted to INDOT shortly. He will be announcing a projected completion date shortly.

Other Business: Tom McDermott said the Legislative Committee will be meeting before the next board meeting. Senator Karen Tallian has asked to be included on the distribution list.

Announcements:

- Ty Warner announced that NIRPC staffer, Stephen Sostaric, has a photography exhibit at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

- Renae Jackson, Gary, spoke on the upcoming public meeting in October, recommending a change in the wording of the meeting notice. She also commented that the future of fixed route, demand response and complimentary para-transit services is a topic of concern. She noted that 19% of the people in Lake County are disabled, encouraging NIRPC to communicate with them.
- Rudy Velasco, East Chicago, expressed concern that Northwest Indiana got a D rating in ADA compliance, which is something he heard at the Livable Communities Symposium.
- Jim Nowacki, Gary, said he attended the Symposium and was surprised there was no provision to waive the \$45 registration fee for those who could not afford the cost. He noted a report from NICTD where it said, "The I-65/US 12-20 area has been targeted as a future livable urban center through large scale adaptive reuse for retrofit." He said NICTD wants to close the downtown and the Miller stations and target an area where no one lives.

Tom McDermott commented that the EIS statement for the NICTD study will be completed in 2015 and nothing is concrete at this time. Karen Freeman-Wilson asked to correct the record in that the Strong Cities Strong Communities plan focuses specifically on Emerson, Miller, incorporating the lakefront, Glen Ryan, Edmond and Horace Mann. Seminal in that plan are the train stations in the downtown area and on Lake Street. The City of Gary understands what NICTD has been publishing for years, but also knows what the U.S. DOT requires and prefers and that is consistent with what the City of Gary is planning. This was discussed at the symposium held in July.

- Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts, commented that the only responses to Everybody Counts' communications were through NIRPC's attorney. She mentioned a Portage man who wrote about being unable to access transportation which would allow him to attend classes at Ivy Tech. She further commented on the discussions that took place recently between representatives of NIRPC and Everybody Counts as part of the Settlement Agreement and asked for an additional response about the disbursement of PMTF funds last year.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Anthony Copeland, Brian Snedecor adjourned the meeting at 10:45 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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