

Land Use Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 17, 2013
NIRPC Packer Room

Members & Visitors: David Wright, George Malis, Sergio Mendoza, Christopher Meyers, Richard Murphy

NIRPC Staff: Eman Ibrahim, Jack Eskin, Gabrielle Biciunas, Sara Geinosky, Meredith Stilwell

1. Call to Order by Chairman

In the absence of Chairman Murphy, the meeting was called to order by Sergio Mendoza at 10:14 a.m.

a. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by members and staff present.

b. Approval of the May 22, 2013 Minutes

David Wright motioned for the May 22, 2013 minutes to be approved. With second by George Malis, one abstention and no opposition the minutes were approved.

NOTE: Chairman Murphy joined and began chairing the meeting at 10:16 a.m.

c. Committee Members final list (voting members)

Eman presented an updated 2013 Land Use Committee list of voting members. The list includes assigned NIRPC Commissioners, planners, environmental members and individuals who have been involved with the Committee for the last two years. Eman asked for suggestions or changes to be made. David Wright asked that the list include his title, Director of Planning & Marketing and Christopher Meyers asked that his title be corrected to Planning & Zoning Administrator.

Christopher Meyers motioned to approve the 2013 Land Use Committee list as amended. With second by Sergio Garcia and no opposition, the motion carried.

2. Regional Land Use Planning

a. Green Alley Presentation - DNR Coastal Program Sergio Mendoza

The 2014 Coastal Program priority setting recommendations were reviewed and voting resulted in a four-way tie. Because of the tie the planning committee reviewed the top vote getters and Green Alleys was set as the highest priority. Sergio presented green alley project examples from the Chicago Green Alley Handbook and the Green River Pattern book. Both books are available on the internet and are guides for planning and design. Before and after pictures were presented. The project designs result in low impact development, green infrastructure, improved water runoff and alleys that are inviting to use. The Green River Pattern book identifies areas along rivers and identifies best management practice concepts. The grant program timelines were reviewed and noted grant workshops will be held in August and September and the deadline for applications will be mid-September. Eman stated that safety and security in alleys are a big concern and this might be an element included in the Creating Livable Centers Program. Sergio referenced examples he is aware of and creating concepts like this for guidance and direction will lead to better site design moving forward. It was suggested that since there is only \$50k in that category maybe NIRPC could bring together stakeholders from the Transportation Policy; Ped, Pedal and Paddle and Land Use Committees and submit an application to create a Green Alleys handbook as a companion to NIRPC's Sensible Tools handbook. Discussion took place in which it was expressed that these concepts allow for a multi-tier approach in planning and is forward thinking. A Montreal tax credit program that has allows for gardens to flow into alleys, which helps with storm water, was mentioned and would be a way to deal with residential alleys that people don't pay attention to. Older commercial alleys which could use attention were brought up and it was noted this would be for all alleys, commercial or

residential. Chairman Murphy cited he could think of several areas in Michigan City that could use these concepts. Eman remarked it makes sense for the downtown areas for livable centers. It was also stated this idea is good when planning subdivision connectivity. When questioned if NIRPC would be the lead agency, the Committee members present discussed the need for 50% local match of \$25k which can be an in-kind match. Eman said this would be a good project for CLC. Discussion will follow.

b. Update on Livable Centers Initiative Project (presentation) Sara G./Jack E.

Since the Committee was last updated, meetings have been held with Lake Station, Burns Harbor and Portage. A map of livable centers was shown for those communities. GIS info is presented to and input is received from communities. Lake Station has a designated main center and a neighborhood center. Since it is a smaller community the criteria is a little lower than for bigger metro communities. Councilmen from Burns Harbor were met with a focus on where the livable center should increase. Portage has two areas of focus; a primary downtown center and the marina area. Moving forward the Livable Centers Group will be meeting with Merrillville, Hobart, St. John, Griffith and Winfield. There will be some small town workshops held. A question arose regarding if the smaller communities are on board with being part of a diverse group of towns. It was explained that although they will meet jointly, there will be breakout sessions in order to have separate discussions with each community. In total, 18 communities have been met with and from those meetings 18 livable centers and 31 neighborhood centers have been identified. Eman still foresees the I-65 and Route 30 area as a center.

c. Creating Livable Communities (CLC) Program

Eman would like to have Program details finalized by the September meeting for a recommendation to proceed with the final application. The Program is guided by the 2040 CRP livable center goals and objectives from. Eligible applicants and project eligibility were reviewed by Eman. The recipient will have funding agreements with both NIRPC and INDOT and projects must be located within the Livable Centers Map or Transit Area Map within the urbanized area. This round of funding is from STP funding group 1 and is for Lake and Porter counties for planning projects that revitalize existing centers, neighborhood, downtown, transit stop or transit corridors. Types of projects eligible were noted. There is still an issue with La Porte County, but funding may be available in 2014. Eligibility language will need to be changed to read that if existing codes/ordinances do not allow for the project, new or updated codes will be part of the project. Application guidelines/review criteria were presented by Eman. Discussion took place regarding changes or additions that should be made with suggestions to add an aspect of sustainable design with subtitles referencing the Green Alley Handbook. Clarification on transit and connectivity was requested and language will be added to the guidelines and review criteria to better explain. CLC study deliverables were detailed by Eman. Discussion was held regarding changes or additions to be made and included suggestions to add adaptive reuse and what the end product will include. It was explained that market studies for feasibility will not be detailed.

1. Review of Draft Application

The final application will include the livable centers report. Eman went over the application with the Committee and the need to add FTA and FHWA to wording in addition to US DOT funding was noted. Suggestions made to update the application included adding green alley/green river to the livable center/neighborhood center components; more specificity in wording for crash data in the attachment category; placing a maximum on number of attachment pages. In addition, the project area section needs to be changed to just yes or no options for all livable center/transit area questions. Scoring of project applications was discussed and percentages will need to be established for scoring criteria. Small communities were concerned they would never receive funds when scored against larger communities and it was explained projects will be scored on the project itself and not

location. It was suggested that location could be weighted to have an impact and not guide. Eman stated there will be an advisory group to make the final decision regarding this determination. More time was needed by the Committee to review the criteria and establish points/percentages. A meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on August 14 to establish scoring. At that meeting it will be determined if a meeting in September is needed. The expected application release is the first week of October. Eman will make the suggested changes and distribute the updated version to the committee for review by email a week before August meeting.

3. Local Communities Update

a. Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects

A federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities event is being held in Gary at the Genesis Center on July 19. City officials and stakeholders meeting with feds to discuss redevelopment visions for four Gary neighborhoods: Horace Mann, Downtown/Emerson/ Aetna and Miller. There will also be a tour of the four neighborhoods. Christopher Meyers asked that the Gary Comprehensive plan which has some very forward thinking be looked at and discussed the right sizing concept. The City also has a smart growth ordinance.

4. Announcements

a. Next Meeting Wednesday August 14, 2013 @ 10:00 a.m.

Christopher Meyers motioned to adjourn. With no opposition the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.