

**Pathway to 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan  
Implementation Committee Meeting  
NIRPC Auditorium  
July 11, 2013  
Minutes**

**Attendees**

Alice Dahl, Cecile Petro, Michael Griffin, Cindy Rojas, Bruce Bendull, Dale Engquist, George Malis, Tyler Kent, Don Parker, Rich Herr, Pat Pullara, Richard Morrisroe, David Wright, Sergio Mendoza, Joe Wszolek, Christopher Meyers, Mark Maassel.

**Guests**

Craig Grabow, Pat Popa, Phillip Arteja, Thomas Gordon.

**Staff**

Gabrielle Biciunas, Jack Eskin, Eman Ibrahim, Kathy Luther, Sarah Geinosky.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Commissioner Michael Griffin called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

**Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Alice Dahl and a second by Don Parker, the minutes of the April 11, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

**Best Practices – Town of Highland**

Chairman Griffin introduced Pat Popa, owner of Popa Heating & Air Conditioning. Pat presented on various economic development interests which are beneficial to the Town of Highland. The Blue Top Restaurant which was iconic for the town unfortunately has closed. Other ways to attract people and businesses to Highland have included a scarecrow-building contest that was placed on the light poles. The *Downtown Ducks* were added. A 10 x 40 foot mural project, *Water under the Ridge*, was completed. Highland is a very walkable community. There is a good relationship between local business and municipal government. The South Shore poster for Highland was a good attractor. The loft lifestyle is a great concept for downtown living, but hasn't caught on quite yet in northwest Indiana.

**CRP Implementation – Marquette Plan Update**

Kathy Luther gave an update on the Marquette Plan, which was conceived by Rep. Pete Visclosky as a reinvestment strategy. The first phase traverses Lake County from the Indiana-Illinois state line to the City of Portage and was completed in 2005. Phase 2 extends from Portage to LaPorte County. The Plan covers 43 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and is intended to recapture 75% of the lakeshore for public use. The poster plan describes all the projects in the Marquette Plan that were identified. The update will include the status of projects in the Plan and the recommendations for those not yet completed. Both phases will be aligned; color coding will be updated. A GIS database will be created and historic landmarks will be added. There is a page on the RDA's website which will be expanded. The Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission

will act as an advisory body. Stakeholder interviews have begun with meetings to be held over the next two months. Some of NIRPC's committees are providing input. Regional and specific goals in the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan also apply to the Marquette Plan. Brief discussion followed.

### **Land Use Committee Report**

An update on Livable Centers was provided by Eman Ibrahim. 18 livable centers and 31 neighborhood centers were identified within the 18 communities visited to date. In Lake County, we still need to meet with Hobart, Griffith, Merrillville, St. John and Winfield. A workshop will be held at NIRPC with communities of less than 2,000 people to identify their centers. Access management, road quality, signage, design, lighting, on-street parking, set-backs, speed limits, density, vacancy rates, type of housing, commercial, retail, walkability, and bikeability are examined to determine a good livable center. We are also doing the Creating Livable Communities funding program. The Land Use Committee will be doing the application process and criteria and expect to release the funding opportunity in the fall.

### **Current Initiatives**

- Kathy Luther announced that the RDA applied for and both NIRPC and RDA partnered with Gary, Hammond and East Chicago and received an \$800,000 grant from the US EPA for a Federal Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund. The RDA is providing the in-kind/additional services match for \$160,000. There are also supplemental resources available.
- Sergio Mendoza presented on the DNR Coastal Program. Lake Michigan shorelines deal with high wind hazards as opposed to other issues faced by the east and west coasts. \$1 million is received from NOAA and about 60% is reallocated to the communities within the Lake Michigan watershed. Six categories are provided and projects are selected. The Coastal Advisory Board then decides on the particular category; however, other projects do receive funding. This year's priorities include natural area restoration, land acquisition along the Little Calumet River east branch, climate resiliency planning, early detection and rapid response for invasive species, an alley greenway handbook for impervious surfaces and drain infrastructure. Grant workshops will begin in September.
- Jack Eskin reported on redevelopment of the Gary north side. The EPA recently released a list of recommendations of loose opportunities and challenges in four redevelopment areas of Miller, Aetna, Emerson and Horace Mann. A meeting will be held on July 19 with these areas to discuss redevelopment projects and what must be done to drive them. David Wright added that a tour of the areas for targeted stakeholders will be held that day and GPTC will provide two buses for this tour. Sergio Mendoza added that on July 24 and 25, Coastal will bring in NOAA staff to do a project design and evaluation. A public comment period will follow. Eman said EPA is also holding an event in October to present all this work.

### **Schedule of Meetings – 2013**

The next meetings will be held October 10 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC and January 9, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC. Meetings are held the second Thursday of the month, quarterly.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business brought before the committee.

Chairman Griffin adjourned the meeting at approximately 10:30 a.m.

Handouts and materials provided:

- Agenda Packet

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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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