

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC AUDITORIUM, PORTAGE, IN

November 6, 2014

Members/Guests Present: Lauri Keagle, Deb Backhus, Jennifer Gadzala, Dorreen Carey, Charlotte Read, Brenda Scott Henry, Jeff Edstrom, Mike Molnar, Tom Clouser, Maggie Byrne, Kris Krouse, Kevin Breitzke, Bob Daum, Dan Plath, Kay Nelson

NIPRC Staff: Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

In the absence of Chairman Benson, Kathy Luther asked Jennifer Gadzala to chair the meeting. Jennifer called the meeting to order at 9:09 with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of October 2, 2014 EMPC Minutes

Upon motion by Deb Backhus and second by Andrew Pellosso and no opposition, the minutes of the October 2, 2014 meeting were approved.

Presentations:

a. Lake Michigan Coastal Program Enhancement Assessment & Prioritization – *Mike Molnar & Dorreen Carey, Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program*

The CZMA Section 309 Enhancement program allows every state with a coastal program to conduct a self-assessment every 5 years and in doing so develop a plan and identify specific projects. A small amount of match free cash is provided by NOAA to do the projects. The next five year cycle begins in 2016 and runs through 2020. A survey is currently being conducted by the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program to help set priorities for projects and identify issues. The end-date for the survey is November 14th and is available in paper format as well as on-line.

Section 309 Enhancement areas include: wetlands; public access; coastal hazards; cumulative and secondary impacts; energy and government facility siting; lake debris; lake resources management; special area management plans (SAMP); and aquaculture. Phase One of the project began in October and will run through November and is high level assessment with a lot of data and GIS work. Public priorities will be set in November. Phase Two will begin in December 2014 with strategy development in January 2015. Public comment will begin on February 1, 2015 and a draft submitted to NOAA as well. Projects funds will be available July 1, 2016.

Several past projects were cited. 309 strategy requirements must generally describe projects the state will undertake to address the priority enhancement area needs identified in the Assessment; projects must lead to a program change; detailed descriptions and budgets are submitted in annual program applications; and strategy, in combination with Assessment, is submitted to NOAA-OCRM for evaluation and approval. Program changes involve a change to coastal zone boundaries; new or revised authorities; new or revised local coastal programs and implementing ordinances; new or revised coastal land acquisition, management, and restoration programs, new or revised special area management plans or plans for areas of particular concern (APC); or new or revised guidelines, procedures, and policy documents that are formally adopted by a state. The 309 enhancement objectives for Wetlands; coastal hazards; public access, marine debris (which is not as big of an issue as it is in ocean states), cumulative and secondary impacts; Special Area Management Planning (SAMP); ocean/great lakes resources; energy and government facility siting; and aquaculture were presented.

During discussion it was pointed out that funds in the past have been handled in-house through contracts and multiple years' worth of funding is allowed to be used as long as the project has discreet deliverables. Some of the money may be used for implementation after the fact and for education and outreach. A paper copy of the survey was provided for those in attendance.

b. Solarize Northwest Indiana – Kathy Luther, NIRPC

The U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge is a collaborative national effort that aggressively drives innovation to make solar energy fully cost-competitive with traditional energy sources before the end of the decade. Through SunShot, DOE support efforts by private companies, academia, and national laboratories to drive down the cost of solar electricity to \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour. Solar Ready II is a program partnering with Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), Meister Consultants Group (MCG), and Council of State Governments (CSG). The goals of Solar Ready II are to implement solar best management practices, training materials and methods, and other proven implementation strategies previously established by MARC's 2012 Solar Ready Kansas City Initiative with an ultimate result of more streamlined and standardized practices and will achieve measureable improvements in solar market conditions and access for ten million people across the US.

Kathy has been involved with the project for about a year and would like to implement Solarize NWI by Spring 2015. The goals of the Solar Ready NWI program are to create solar market maturity metrics (SM₃S); create a NWI solar road map of planning and zoning BMPs, permitting/process BMPs, and financing tolls; and to have 10-30 LPAs adopt or implement a BMP.

The myths of *It's not sunny enough where I live* and *Solar costs too much and is heavily subsidized* were addressed. Germany is the country with the most solar and has about the same sun exposure as Alaska. The total installed solar capacity in the US is 7.7 GW and Germany installed 7.6 GW in 2012 alone. Globally, solar energy costs decreased 36% between 2009 and 2011 and current technology solar is cost competitive with NG plants and should compete with coal within five years. Some misunderstandings regarding solar in NWI are solar panels are ugly and reduce property values; solar technology is new and complicated; and solar energy is for tree huggers. However, in surveyed California subdivisions solar homes sold 20% faster and for 17% more than the equivalent non-solar homes; photovoltaic has been around for 30 years and 90% of American's think it is important.

In discussion regarding benefits and barriers to solar adoption, Kathy relayed that solar is a \$12 billion industry in the US and jobs in the US have grown from 2006 to 2012. As of November 2013, there were more than 142,000 solar jobs in the US which is nearly a 20% increase since the 2012 census. During that time period, solar created jobs at a rate that was ten times faster than the overall economy's employment growth. Solar can add economic value to currently underutilized rooftops, brownfield and landfills and is a smart investment for businesses and government. A survey showed some of the highest rated barriers to solar adoption were high upfront cost and low ROI; lack of information and education; unfriendly policy environment and lack of incentives; and local zoning and permitting. There are 5,000+ utilities with unique interconnection requirements and 18,000+ local jurisdictions with unique zoning and permitting requirements. Another challenge to consumers is the amount of paperwork required. Examples of opportunities presented by Kathy included communities in California with favorable permitting practices saw 4-12% lower costs and 25% shorter development time as compared to standard communities. Efforts from the Solar Ready KC Rooftop Solar Challenge teams resulted in 12% lower permitting costs and 40% faster permitting time.

Building the Solar Ready NWI road map will include planning improvement (improve solar access, educate developers and homeowners, improve solar readiness and engage HOAs) and process improvement (standardize permit fees, pre-qualify plans and installers, streamline permits and notify utility) BMPs. The top five priority BMPs established at stakeholder meetings held in April 2014 were a Solarize Program; engage HOAs; streamlining permits; improve solar readiness; and improve solar access. The planning, process and financing & adoption steps for the Solar Ready NWI road map were presented. The Solarize Harvard Mass Program featuring a group purchase, community outreach and limited-time offer approach was exemplified and resulted in 429 household sign-ups and 75 completed contracts. This resulted in a 30% reduction in installation costs and 575% increase in residential installations. The program for this area would begin with selecting an installer and targeting communities in January 2015 with marketing and workshops to

follow. Enrollment is targeted for March 2015 with site assessments, decision and installation to follow. The installer selection process will begin with NIRPC issuing a request for proposals to certified installers in the Indiana and Chicago region. Proposals will be reviewed by members of an advisory group. In-person interviews with two finalists will be held after which a contractor will be selected. EMPC members were advised they can help by assisting with marketing and outreach; hosting a workshop; and promoting the program with their local governments.

During discussion following the presentation it was pointed out that NIPSCO is currently in discussions and heavily subsidizing solar programs and have to approve the solar connection.

NIRPC BUSINESS:

a. CMAQ & HSIP Notice of Funding Availability

A solicitation/call for federal-aid transportation projects for Lake, Porter and LaPorte Counties has been issued. The Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality (CMAQ) Program has \$13.4m and the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) has \$9.9m available for Lake and Porter Counties with funds to be made available beginning in State Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016). The CMAQ Program has \$2.6m, the HSIP Program has \$1.5m and the Surface Transportation Program (STP II) has \$4.7m available for LaPorte County with funds to be made available beginning in State Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015). The new MAP-21 legislation allows for monies to be moved between categories.

The CMAQ applications must be transportation and related activities that result in the reduction of internal combustion engine emissions that produce ground-level ozone. No cap has been set for funding requests. Whatever is submitted will be decided upon. While education projects are not being actively solicited, Kathy relayed that she could work on making it a sub-project of her already funded air-quality education project.

The applications are available on the NIRPC website and are due December 1, 2014. Some of the CMAQ applications will be reviewed by an EMPC sub-committee. Volunteers are needed to review the project applications on December 3. The reviewed and scored projects will be brought to the EMPC meeting on December 4 for a recommendation to be given to the NIRPC Full Commission at their December 11 meeting. The Transportation Policy and Ped, Pedal and Paddle Committees will review their respective project applications for recommendation to the NIRPC Full Commission.

Public Comment:

None.

Announcements:

- Announcements will be forwarded to the EMPC email distribution list.

On motion by Kevin Breitze and second from Kay Nelson, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.