

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC AUDITORIUM, PORTAGE, IN

November 7, 2013

Members/Guests Present: Lee Botts, Richard Morrisroe, Matt Mikus, Kevin Breitzke, Charlotte Read, Lauri Keagle, Courtney Blouzdis, Mark Reshkin, Brenda Scott-Henry, Dan Plath, Chandra Viswanathan, Alexis Faust, Dorreen Carey, Susan MiHalo, Elizabeth McCloskey, Jared O'Brien, John Ervin, Ian Elliot-Ervin, Katie Rizer, Rafti Wilkinson, Pat Wisniewski, Jenny Orsburn, Geoff Benson, Nicole Messacar, Alan Bell, Rosemary Bell, Jody Melton
NIPRC Staff: Joe Exl, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Breitzke called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of October 3, 2013 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Geoff Benson, second by Jody Melton and no opposition the October 3, 2013 EMPC meeting minutes were approved as presented.

NIRPC Business:

NIRPC is partnering with the National Association of Regional Councils and other groups to work to implement best management practices, training materials and additional proven implementation strategies for solar energy in Indiana. Funding was awarded from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Public open houses for public input on the status of the Marquette Plan update are being held. Two meetings have already occurred; one in Gary and one in Whiting. Two more are scheduled to be held NIRPC and in Michigan City.

Public meetings are being held to gather public input regarding the proposed amendment to the 2040 CRP for the Illiana Expressway and I-65 expansion projects. The public comment period is open until November 20. Four meetings are scheduled with two already been held in Gary at IUN and in Lowell. The next two will be at NIRPC and in Michigan City. There will be a vote regarding the proposed amendment at the December 3rd Transportation Policy Committee Meeting and the NIRPC Full Commission will vote at their December 12th meeting. NIRPC staff is currently working on an analysis (white paper) which looks at the Illiana compared to the 2040 Plan and when complete will be placed on the NIRPC website. The freight study completed by NIRPC is being included in the analysis, but ties back to the CRP.

Presentations:

a. Dark Skies – Alan and Rosemary Bell, International Dark Sky Initiative

Prior to the start of the presentation, Chairman Breitzke noted that Porter County Commissioners passed a resolution in October of 2010 pertaining to the Dark Sky initiative. That resolution can be made available. The Bells moved to Beverly Shores in 2003 and in 2006 joined the environment committee and went on to join the International Dark-Sky Association a couple of years later. A campaign was started to implement downward shielding of the 61 street lights in Beverly Shores. An earlier initiative that began in 2006 to shut off all the lights failed. One of the first steps was to contact NIPSCO regarding the initiative and while difficult in the beginning Geoff Benson helped and eventually NIPSCO engineer Tom Miltenberger was extremely helpful in the process. The final downward shield cost was \$195.00 per unit. The benefits of the downward shield were touted through the Beverly Shores' newsletter and when asked to investigate LEDs, it was found that they are not friendly to people or animals. The Bells demonstrated the downward shielding process which helps with light pollution, security and threat to wildlife. The Beverly Shores community was incredibly generous and eventually more funds than were needed were received. A big contributor to light is the Indiana Department of Corrections and while amenable to downward shielding their lights, more time was needed for funding. The pumping station also had

very glaring lights and the Michigan City Water Department was contacted they downward shielded the lights.

The completed project included 48 lights as some of the original 61 lights had been shut off. Two of the environment committee members drove around to residences to take an informal inventory and Dark Sky has a letter to send to residents to begin a dialogue about how they can downward shield their lights. The process is currently in the stages of being finalized for Beverly Shores to become the fifth Dark Sky community in the world. A lighting code had to be created and is almost complete. They would like to partner with Dune Acres, which has no lights, and Ogden Dunes to have three beach towns that are designated as Dark Sky communities and would be a great accomplishment for the region. The Dark Sky designation only deals with public lighting and does not have to include residential lighting but they would like to see an ordinance regarding lumens per acre and community government taking steps to get light under control. Allen remarked that NIPSCO donated the first full cut-off light that went on a street light post in Beverly Shores which gave residents an opportunity to see the difference. A power point presentation provided by the International Dark Sky Association was given on light pollution; its effects and the benefits of light shielding. After the presentation, Chairman Breitzke mentioned additional economical ways to deal with lighting and brief discussion was held regarding law enforcement, which were not a problem in the process and residential motion detector lights which are highly recommended by the Dark Sky Association. A Beverly Shores resident at the meeting commented there has been a dramatic difference. The Bells noted that stating light pollution is one of the easiest forms of pollution to address is a technical statement and since people are unaware of the technical realities, education is a big part of the process. Letters of endorsement or support are one of the things needed in order to become a dark sky community. After discussion it was determined the Bells would forward a draft letter to NIRPC. Dorreen Carey made motion recommending the EMPC write an endorsement upon receipt of the draft letter. With second by Lee Botts and no opposition, the motion passed.

a. Importance of Entrepreneurship in the Ongoing Management of Native Plants – John Ervin, Ecologist

John gave a brief background of his 30 year work dealing with invasive species which has resulted in his working on attacking the problem with different information and more on a fiscal basis. With not being able to eradicate species; new introductions and grant funding being cut, combating invasive species has been basically a loss based system and is not sustainable. John is working with a group of entrepreneurs to model ideas to create an investment and return based system in the private sector by using properties from invasive species for positive uses such as medicine; roof thatching; fuel; etc. In essence it would involve taking something uncontrollable and controlling it by using a market system to create a community based cooperative business where everyone is an independent business owner. The example of Asian carp and how it is now being used for food was cited. Currently they are in the modeling stages and looking at species in a specific way and hope to have a working product within five years. John wanted feedback and questions and supplied his email address, primal_elegance@live.com for the group to submit their questions and ideas. Chairman Breitzke mentioned a new invasive coming through the area called giant hogweed and is dangerous to people. It is coming from the coast and the toxins are worse than poison oak and ivy and can result in third degree burns.

Announcements:

Jim Sweeney noted his hope that the EMPC would want to make a recommendation on the Illiana to the full NIRPC Board. Chairman Breitzke stated it would be discussed more at the next meeting which will be prior to the Full Commission voting.

1st Source Bank is celebrating their 150th anniversary and is currently running a program to give \$1,000k a week away to 150 non-profits until the end of December and in the end will name two award winners which will receive \$15,000k. The awards are based on both quality and number of

applications and Dan Plath asked the attendees to complete applications for the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association. They already received \$1,000k the first week of the program.

Joe Exl announced he received the signed copies of the 319 grant for the Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway. The project will start in January. The EMPC's request for the TMDL is basically where the project started.

Marquette Plan Update Public Open Houses

When: Tuesday, November 12, 2013 / 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Where: Michigan City, City Hall Operations Center
100 E. Michigan Blvd., Michigan City, IN 46360

When: Monday, November 18, 2013 / 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Where: NIRPC
6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368

Contact Information: Kathy Luther, kluther@nirpc.org (219) 763-6060 ext. 127

Proposed Illiana Expressway & I-65 Expansion Public Meetings for Public Comment

When: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 / 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Where: NIRPC
6100 Southport Rd., Portage, IN 46368

When: Tuesday, November 19, 2013 / 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Where: Michigan City, City Hall
100 E. Michigan Blvd., Michigan City, IN 46360

Contact Information: Stephen Sostaric, ssostaric@nirpc.org (219) 763-6060 ext. 155

Geof Benson remarked that in December there is the EMPC meeting, the Transportation Policy Committee meeting and the 2040 Implementation Committee meeting and all of those will make recommendations to the Full Commission and the Full Commission will vote.

On motion by Geof Benson and second by Jody Melton, the meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.