



# **CREATING TOMORROW TODAY**

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## ***CREATING THE PLAN***

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission 6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368 (219) 763-6060

### **2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Steering Committee Meeting NIRPC Auditorium May 28, 2009 Minutes**

#### **Members**

Don Abraham, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Mike Aylesworth, Don Babcock, Geof Benson, Joan Bliss, David Blumenthal, Mitch Bishop, Lee Botts, Kathy Chroback, Tim Cole, Jan Dick, Joe Eberts, Dale Engquist, Phil Gralik, Michael Griffin, Jerry Halperin, Rich Herr, Pat Jackson, George T. Janiec, Keith Kirkpatrick, Eric Kurtz, Geroge Malis, Sergio Mendoza, Bryant Mitol, Christopher Meyers, Leigh Morris, Richard Morrisroe, Kay Nelson, Sandy O'Brien, Chuck Oberlie, Pat Pulara, Joel Polaschek, Lauren Riga, Daniel Suson, Debbie Thomas, Garry Traynham, Olga Velazquez, Joe Wszolek,

#### **Guests**

Marge Hefner, Holly Jones, Sherry Lloyd-Schultz, Susan Mihalo, AJ Monroe, Eric Neagu, Charlotte Read, Troy Smith

#### **Consultants**

Daniel Clark

#### **Staff**

Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Bill Brown, Ryan Hicks, Eman Ibrahim, Belinda Petroskey, Lauren Rhein, Steve Strains, Mary Thorne, Tom Vander Woude

#### **Welcome & Minutes**

Mayor Oberlie chaired, calling the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with self-introductions. He said a letter dated May 18 from Sandy O'Brien will be discussed under "Staff Comments." Pat Jackson referred to Page 2 of the minutes, saying that "an on-campus sponsor" be changed to "Debbie Thomas." As to a second suggestion of listing the meeting dates, Steve Strains added that the minutes are a summary. Mary Thorne said the dates discussed were tentative and will change the minutes to reflect that. On a motion by David Blumenthal and a second by Dale Engquist, the minutes of April 23 stood approved as amended.

### Outreach Subcommittee

Sergio Mendoza reported that meetings are being held with the urban network, the Gary Central District Organization and Gary City Council with presentations given on the NIRPC educational program with a second session scheduled for June 8. The first program was given to the Greater Northwest Indiana Association of REALTORS (GNIAR) with Joe Wsolek. The second meeting is scheduled with the Gary Council, through an invitation from Mary Brown, on the Comprehensive Regional Plan. A contact list was established to work with other agencies throughout the region. A request was made for a sixth goal-setting session to be held in Gary. The sub-committee will be meeting after the steering committee meeting today to discuss logistics and dates for this session. Some of the people targeted for the December 6 event had transportation issues, the elderly and younger adults. It is hoped that attendance at the Gary session will enable those individuals to contribute to the formation of the plan. On a motion by Joan Bliss and a second by Richard Morrisroe, consensus was reached to hold the sixth goal setting session in Gary. Steve Strains explained that an application was made for additional state-wide discretionary federal planning funds, and if granted, would be used in additional outreach efforts for an outreach coordinator to work with community groups throughout the region with a concentration in environmental justice. A draft scope of work will be shared with the outreach sub-committee.

### Goal-Setting Workgroup Session Update

Steve Strains reported that two of the six workshops were held; some of the raw data is posted on the wall. The sessions seem to be going well with about 20 people participating. GNIAR has helped with outreach efforts through their membership. Several people participated at the December 6 event. A SWOT challenge (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) was done at the last session. Each member carries some responsibility to take the message back to their constituents. Chuck Oberlie sent more than 30 letters out to tenant councils and neighborhood associations, etc. in Michigan City in an outreach effort. Sign up sheets are provided at every session.

### Greenways & Blueways Plan

Mitch gave a presentation on the Greenways & Blueways Plan, which is available on NIRPC's website under the "Archives" link. Highlights included the benefits, implementation, coordination, corridor identification and the next steps. Portage Lakefront Park and Riverwalk is a key element of the Marquette Plan and demonstrates the Greenways Plan. Brochures on the Plan will be distributed on June 13, which coincides with the Burnham Water Trail Expedition. A website will be launched in June. A discussion followed and suggestions by the Steering Committee included ensuring equal use of the benefits, utilizing universities as a research resource, outreach & educate children and youth, and public safety measures.

### Other Business

- Sandy O'Brien of Dunelands Sierra Club submitted a letter to NIRPC calling for social, economic and quality of life impacts to be included in regional maps used as planning tools to reflect an accurate picture of the region. Eman Ibrahim reported that NIRPC staff reviewed the bullet-point items in the letter and found that several items have already been mapped. Some of the data is missing and requests have been made to the appropriate municipalities and counties. A suggested sub-group may be formed with Eman, Lauren Rhein, Sandy O'Brien and any one else

interested to gather the missing data. Data from the American Community Survey will be gathered and must be geographically referenced in order to map the data. Data from the 2010 Census will not be available in time for use in the 2040 Plan, however the American Community Survey data will be used. A new GIS staff member has been hired.

- Michigan City's Trail Creek is canoeable and accessible by a diverse population.
- The CRP will last many years; redevelopment should be included, using preservation as a tool to recapture and reuse materials.
- Sergio Mendoza said he will be taking news of the Greenways & Blueways Plan to Hobart; it is everyone's responsibility to inform their own communities.
- Public comment: the region has a wealth of information and opening up communities to greenways tends to reduce crime. The economic benefits outweigh the costs associated with ecotourism; however, the communities need to be aware of preparations that need to be made.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on June 25 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Handouts provided:

- Agenda
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Minutes
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Summary
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Outreach Subcommittee Meeting Notes
- Report on Outreach Activities
- Letter from Sandy O'Brien
- Greenways & Blueways Plan Poster Plan

*Audio tapes of this meeting are filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC should you wish to schedule a time to hear them.*

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Thorne  
Planning Secretary  
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission  
June 8, 2009

