

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN
April 20, 2017
Minutes

Call to Order

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

Executive Board members present included Geof Benson, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Michael Griffin, Justin Kiel, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Greg Stinson and James Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Kyle Allen, Jr., Christopher Anderson, Jan Bapst, Tim Bietry, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Lori Collmar, Jon Costas, Bill Emerson, Jr., Will Farrellbegg, Tom Fath, Richard Hardaway, Jack Jeralds, Tim Jones, Christian Jorgensen, Andrew Kyres, Jeff Larson, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer, Mary Tanis and George Topoll.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Lyndsay Quist, Jean Manna, Zully Alvarata, Matt Deitchley, Pam Eanes, Tim Zorn, David Wright, Bill McCall, George Van Til, Nick Barbknecht, Tim Zorn and Andrew Steele. Joyce Newland and Mary Enright participated via conference phone.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Gary Evers and Mary Thorne.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 16, 2017 meeting of the Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Bob Carnahan.

Report of the Chair

Michael Griffin said that the Cline Avenue Bridge resolution of support for expediency in rebuilding the bridge will be tabled until he can meet with Mayor Anthony Copeland.

Report of the Executive Director

- Ty Warner reported that the CommuniTree launch will be held next Wednesday, April 26 in East Chicago to replant 50 trees to replace those affected by the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Ty Warner said the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority will launch the Moving Forward Program with a focus on Lake County.
- There is no change in information on the MPO consolidation bill. There has been great bipartisan support to repeal the bill.
- NIRPC received copies of letters signed by Senate and House subcommittees on appropriations by HUD regarding the capital investment grants program for New Starts and the Core Communities programs. Congressman Pete Visclosky and another representative signed a letter and a separate letter was signed by 93 house representatives for FY 2018 proposed budget. Thirty-three senators including Senator Donnelly signed a letter as well.
- The TED-x Conference is this afternoon at County Line Orchard.

Legislative Committee

Blair Milo said an agreement on the road funding bill has come to Conference Committee. Local governments should be pleased to see it. There is a lot of discussion on the local match. A final vote will be taken tomorrow. The double tracking is moving forward rapidly and productively. Representative Slater's HB 1144 combined TOD concept into double tracking and creating Transportation

Development Districts (TDDs). Blair Milo will testify in Washington next week on the experience of the American worker.

Environmental Management Policy Committee

Geof Benson said the March minutes were in the packet. The committee heard presentations from the EPA on lead in the water in Flint and East Chicago. The committee will meet the first Thursday in May at 9 a.m. at NIRPC. Discussion was also held on priorities of the President's skinny budget cutting a lot of funding to NOAA, Coastal, GLRI, EPA, etc.

Technical Planning Committee

- Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on April 11 and heard a presentation by Kathy Luther regarding the "protected natural and rural areas" goal from the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*. The public comment period for the next amendment to the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion* and the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program runs through Friday, April 21. See Mitch Barloga for details.
- Scott Weber explained Resolution 17-08, the Congestion Management Process for the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Companion Update, Amendment #4*. On a motion by George Topoll and a second by Dave Shafer, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-08.
- Gary Evers explained Resolution 17-09, Amendment #35 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP. The amendment was submitted for a 7-day comment period and reviewed by the Interagency Consultation Group. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Greg Stinson and others, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 7-09, Amendment #35 to the FY 2016-2019 TIP.
- Gary Evers explained Resolution 17-10, the funding allocations requested by the Transportation Resource & Oversight Committee for Lake and Porter Counties. Geof Benson briefly explained the process for the benefit of the newer Commissioners. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by George Topoll, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-10.
- The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee is scheduled for April 11 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC.

Indiana Department of Transportation

Rick Powers reported that the public comment session held on April 11 was favorable and well attended with around 100 present. The deadline for additional comments is May 1. Wire thefts continue and it is hoped the thief will be caught. INDOT asks that salvagers be aware of what people are bringing in. Another public comment period will be held on April 27 on the widening of I-65 at Crown Point High School at 5 p.m. A completion timeline depends on funding. Commissioners commented about work INDOT did on various roads in the region. The Lake County Surveyor suggested looking at the Cline Avenue Bridge project and the impact it could have on congestion in the region.

Other Business

Mitch Barloga discussed trail counters and asked communities to purchase them. There are already three in Schererville and six in Whiting. Contact Mitch for more information.

Public Comment

- Pam Eanes, Munster, asked communities to think about ethics ordinances with regard to profiting from your own projects with regard to transportation development districts.
- George Van Til, Merrillville, commented on low cost beautification landscaping in median strips.

Announcements

- Michael Griffin welcomed Councilman Tim Bietry, the Michigan City appointment to the NIRPC Commission.
- Joyce Newland announced the FHWA/FTA certification review of NIRPC's transportation process which will take place on July 18 and 19 and report out to the Commission at their meeting on July 20.

- Mary Enright said INDOT is finalizing the UPWP and once the approval letters are received from FHWA, they will send the supplement agreement back to NIRPC on the UPWP planning funding.
- Kevin Breitzke announced that the Porter County Expo Center is celebrating Earth Day on Saturday.
- Bob Carnahan announced that the Lake County Advancement Committee meeting is tomorrow at Tiebel's at noon on the Bi-state Kankakee Water Trail. Also, the Indiana Welcome Center will host *Explore the South Shore* on April 29 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.