

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC - Lake Michigan Room

June 7, 2018

Minutes

Members/Guests: Bill Emerson, Jr., Collin Simick, Jacob Fenske, Sherryl Doerr, Jen Birchfield, Tim Kingsland, Sarah Nimetz, Leslie Dorworth, Elizabeth McCloskey, George Malis, Kathryn Vallis, David Wosonecki-Ellis, Susan Mihalo, Robert Verbik, Lauri Keagle, Jeff Loewe, Kris Krouse, Greg Towler, Peg Donnelly, Geof Benson and Brenda Scott Henry.

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Gabrielle Biciunas, Eman Ibrahim, Mary Thorne and Candi Eklund.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Bill Emerson, Jr., called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Kathy Luther introduced Candi Eklund, NIRPC's new Administrative Assistant.

NIRPC Business:

a) Approval of Minutes

On motion by Tim Kingsland and a second by Sarah Nimetz, the May 3, 2018 EMPC meeting minutes were approved as presented.

b) Review Comment Letter for US Steel Corporation

Kathy Luther presented the comments written for the Proposed Consent Decree-United States et al v. United States Steel Corporation. Comments were submitted on June 6, 2018. The comments focused on coordinating spill responses with local government. Further clarification on the proposed notification plan that US Steel Midwest put in that was part of the proposed Consent Decree. If state and federal agencies were going to pursue legal settlements, they should contact their local governments and give them the opportunity to participate.

Marquette Action Plan

Gabrielle Biciunas presented the lakefront Marquette Action Plan (MAP). The plan was initiated by Congressman Pete Visclosky to have a vision and a strategy in creating a local lakefront and a goal to increase the shoreline access to 75%. In 2000, the open active shoreline access was 33%. Phase 1 took place in 2005 and focused on reclaiming the areas between the Indiana / Illinois state line to Portage, achieving 44% of shoreline access. Phase 2 began in 2008 and extended the area to include Portage to Michigan, achieving 66%. With the implementation of the MAP, the accessible shoreline reached 76% in 2017. Gabrielle noted that there is now an average of one access point of accessible lakefront for every two miles within the 45 miles of shoreline.

The draft plan is currently in a public comment period from May 30 to June 28.

Deep River Dam Feasibility Study

Joe Exl provided an overview and a history of the Deep River Dam feasibility study. In 2016, with the help of many partners, a recommended action of the Watershed Plan was to evaluate potentially removing or modifying the existing structure. Grant funding from the Department of Natural Resources was secured to conduct the lakes and river enhancements program and Lake Michigan coastal plan. The reasons for the modifications were for safety, improved recreational opportunities and increased biodiversity.

Three public meetings took place to hear the public's concerns. Of the four options proposed, the fourth option, to construct a riffle, is being presented moving forward.

The next phase is to obtain preliminary cost estimates with a letter of support from the Little Calumet River Basin Commission. The total cost of the project would be \$1.25 to \$1.55 million dollars.

Announcements

The event announcements submitted will be distributed in an email to the committee.

Kathy Luther presented the award that NIRPC received for the 2018 Medium Metro Achievement in Recognition of its Greenway and Blueways 2020 Plan.

The meeting for July has been cancelled. The next meeting of the Environmental Management Policy Committee will be held on August 2, 2018 at 9 a.m.

Hearing no other business, Bill Emerson adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Candi Eklund at 219-763-6060 or ceklund@nirpc.org should you wish to receive a copy of it.