

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

January 17, 2019

Draft Minutes

Call to Order - Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

Commissioners present included Kyle Allen, Sr., Christopher Anderson, Geof Benson, Tim Bietry, Jim Biggs, Charlie Brown, Robert Carnahan, Lori Colmar, Don Ensign, Will Farrellbegg, Tom Fath, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Michael Griffin, Richard Hardaway, Jack Jeralds, Jane Jordan, Justin Kiel, Steve Kramer, Mark Krentz, Andrew Kyres, Tom McDermott, Diane Noll, Mike Rosenbaum, Dave Shafer, Brian Snedecor, Joe Stahura, Greg Stinson, James Ton and George Topoll.

Guests present included Lauri Keagle, Jon Kruger, Beth Courtright, Rich Courtright, Pete Doherty, Lisa Shrader, Terri Saltzman, Jeff Huet, Terry Velligan, Rick Powers, John Swanson, Ismail Attallah, K-Todd Behling, David Wright, Randy Strasser, Christopher Murphy, Matt Deitchley, Tim Zorn and Andrew Steele.

Staff present included Ethan Lowe, Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Daria Sztaba, Talaya Jones, Charles Bradsky, Eman Ibrahim, Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Lisa Todd, Peter Kimball, Dominique Edwards, Candi Eklund, Allen Hammond, Meredith Stilwell and Mary Thorne.

Public Comments –

There were no comments from the public.

New Appointments – Ethan Lowe announced the appointments to the Commission of Charlie Brown and Steven Kramer.

Presentation of Norman E. Tufford Award – The Norman E. Tufford Award was posthumously awarded to Paul Doherty for his service to NIRPC and the region. Ty Warner, Geof Benson, and Michael Griffin presented the Award to Paul Doherty, Jr., Beth Courtright and her husband Rick, Philip Doherty and Pete Doherty, family members of Paul Doherty.

Minutes – The minutes of the November 15, 2018 Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Robert Carnahan and a second by Mark Krentz.

Report of the Chair – Geof Benson

Geof Benson reported that the Bike Share presentation will be given at a later Commission meeting.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Geof Benson, Diane Noll, Karen Freeman-Wilson

and George Topoll presented the recommendation for the slate of Officers and Executive Board members.

The slate presented was:

Officers:	Chair	Diane Noll
	Vice Chair	Karen Freeman-Wilson
	Secretary	George Topoll
	Treasurer	Justin Kiel

Executive Board:

Lake County:	Anthony Copeland
Lake County:	Tom McDermott
LaPorte County:	Mark Krentz
LaPorte County:	Tim Bietry
Porter County:	Jim Ton
Porter County:	Greg Stinson

The continued appointment of Rep. Ed Soliday as the Governor's appointee to the Executive Board is assumed. There were no nominations from the floor. On a motion by Michael Griffin and a second by Kyle Allen, Sr., the Commission voted to adopt the 2019 slate as presented.

Geof Benson turned the gavel over to newly-elected Chair Diane Noll. To celebrate his service as 2018 Chairman, Ty Warner presented Geof Benson with the Gavel Plaque.

The 2018 Schedule of Meetings was provided in the meeting materials.

Diane Noll said staff will email the Commissioners the Committee preference survey so that they can make two choices of their preferred committee on which to serve.

Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner

Mr. Warner welcomed two new Commissioners, Charlie Brown from Lake County Council and Steven Kramer from the Town of Dyer.

The schedule of meetings is different from what was floated at the November meeting and is based on the items needing approvals during 2019.

With regard to the government shutdown, most of NIRPC's work is funded through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) from the Highway Trust Fund so the majority of NIRPC's business will be unaffected. Funding sources which are impacted by the shutdown include the Federal Transit Association (FTA), Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Should the shutdown occur long enough for transit

operators to have to start reducing service, there are processes in place for notify riders and this will not happen immediately.

A flyer is available on the Quick Impact Placebased Grant. The applications will be accepted January 14 through March 8.

Gabrielle Biciunas passed the grant administration course and is now NIRPC's certified grant administrator through the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, which will enable NIRPC to provide more value for members in the way of grant assistance.

The rail crossing task force met and attendees included communities, rail employees and police departments. Communities can no longer issue tickets to railroads for blocking intersections due to a Supreme Court action invalidating a portion of Indiana statute. NIRPC is reaching out to other councils of governments around the nation on this issue through the National Association of Regional Councils. Tom McDermott said State Representative Carolyn Jackson (D-Hammond) authored House Bill 1090 which would fine railroads \$200 if they fail to notify police departments of blockages over 10 minutes. The police would share that information with emergency responders. Karen Freeman-Wilson motioned to support this bill, seconded by Jim Ton. Tom McDermott expressed appreciation for the action on the bill as this is a major issue in his community. Jim Ton seconded Tom McDermott's comments. Greg Stinson said he understood the need for expediency, but he could not vote to support the legislation without even looking at it. Tom McDermott said action at the Executive Board meeting next month would allow enough time to examine HB 1090. Karen Freeman-Wilson suggested that the Legislative Committee meet to review the bill so that we could make that recommendation of support. Charlie Brown suggested it would be more advantageous to take a vote on the concept. It is a matter of voting today to encourage our fellow board member, Rep. Soliday, to throw his support behind it and to also encourage whatever committee to which it is assigned to at least have the chairman of that committee give the legislation a hearing. Karen Freeman-Wilson amended her motion that the Commission conceptually support the concept of a bill which allows us to take action when trains block railroad crossings in our communities and to further endorse once we have gone through our process and communicate our support to Representative Jackson and Representative Soliday and a request for a hearing. Jim Ton amended his second to reflect support of the amended motion. Tom McDermott said the Legislative Committee will follow up with a Resolution of Support for the Executive Board for adoption at its February 21 meeting. The motion carried.

Mr. Warner presented perfect attendance awards to Geof Benson, Justin Kiel, Jim Ton and George Topoll for attending all nine meetings in 2018.

Finance & Personnel Committee – Justin Kiel

Justin Kiel said the committee met this morning to review the financial status, reconciliation of expenses, and approve the claims register.

Daria Sztaba presented the 2019 Budget, recommended by the Executive Board in November, noting one change on the handout of the budget to the one contained in the packet. Justin Kiel said the budget was recommended by the Finance & Personnel Committee. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to adopt the 2019 NIRPC Budget.

Daria Sztaba presented the Employment Agreement for the Executive Director, noting a 4% salary increase. Geof Benson noted that Mr. Warner still has a year in his previous contract; this would replace that with a three-year agreement. The Executive Board had recommended at its last meeting. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Michael Griffin, the Commission voted to adopt the Employment Agreement.

Environmental Management Policy Committee – Kathy Luther

Kathy Luther reported that the committee met on January 10 to discuss implementation of the *2050 Plan*. The next meeting will be on February 7 at 9 a.m. to review applications for CMAQ and environmental projects.

Technical Planning Committee – Jim Ton

Jim Ton reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on January 8 and heard a staff presentation on the Next Level Trails Program and a presentation on Community Crossings Program from INDOT.

Mitch Barloga reported that no comments were received on the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion Amendment #6. Resolution 19-02 adds Amendment #6, the safety, pavement condition, bridge condition, system performance, freight, congestion and air quality performance measure targets adopted by the Commission, to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion. On a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Geof Benson, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 19-02, Amendment #6 to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion Amendment.

Kathy Luther explained the 7-day public comment period report and Resolution 19-03, Amendment #1 to the 2019 Unified Planning Work Program which was recommended by the Technical Planning Committee. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 19-03, Amendment #1 to the 2019 Unified Planning Work Program.

Charles Bradsky explained the 30-day public comment period report and Resolution 19-04, Amendment #19 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program for safety, pavement condition, bridge condition, system performance, freight, congestion and air quality performance measure targets. The Technical Planning Committee recommended the resolution. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Will Farrellbegg, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 19-04, Amendment #19 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

Charles Bradsky explained the 30-day public comment period report and Resolution 19-05, Amendment #18 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program for local projects and project phases which was recommended by the Technical Planning Committee. On a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by George Topoll, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 19-04, Amendment #19 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

Indiana Department of Transportation – Rick Powers

Rick Powers reported on the Community Crossings grant. A presentation was made to the TPC by Marcie Blansett. Previous awarded funds must be closed out with repayment to INDOT before submitting another application. The match is 75/25 or 50/50. There were no reported copper wire thefts. Tom McDermott commented that a professional crew was observed and arrested by federal authorities.

Legislative Committee – Michael Griffin

The Committee met in October. Mr. Griffin previously sent draft language for NIRPC's enabling legislation for discussion by the Committee regarding the per capita rate adjustment which would be determined based on the US Inflation Calculator and authorize use from any source, not just property or circuit breaker taxes. Our legislators would be contacted in the hopes it would be discussed in the short session. He noted that NIRPC is the sole Metropolitan Planning Organization which is a Council of Government without a funding mechanism to take into account the added missions tasked us in 2003 for economic development and environment.

Other Commission Business –

Bob Carnahan asked for NIRPC's help with a traffic study at 141st and US 41..

Announcements –

Bob Carnahan announced the 16 Plus meeting will feature Tim Brown, the Executive Director of the Lake County Community Economic Development Department, regarding the Community Development Block Grant Funds.

Brian Snedecor expressed his displeasure with Chicago mayoral candidate Gery Chico for his comment in a Mayors' forum that he would consider filing lawsuits against Cabela's, Indiana and Wisconsin citing easy access to guns as a major reason for violent crimes in Chicago. Brian Snedecor added that a lot of crime in Hobart and Merrillville retail corridors are committed by Chicagoans.

Ty Warner congratulated Joe Stahura on the opening of the Mascot Hall of Fame Museum.

Responding to a question from Charlie Brown as to information on the General Assembly, Ty Warner said most of NIRPC's member municipalities get their legislative information primarily from Aim (formerly the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns), and NIRPC also partners

with the Northwest Indiana Forum to stay abreast of issues, given that NIRPC does not have the immediate staff capacity under available funding to track legislation intently. Tom McDermott recommended Charlie Brown chair the Legislative Committee, citing his service as a former state representative.

Brian Snedecor said Rep. Eddie Melton will be at a subcommittee hearing in Indianapolis on some potential amendments to the TIFF guidelines.

Adjournment –

Hearing no other business, Diane Noll adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m. The Executive Board will meet on February 21, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

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.

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