

Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee Meeting
Virtual Meeting
August 6, 2020
Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order 20-39. All persons were meeting remotely on a Google Meet platform that allowed for real time interaction and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. When the agenda item was provided for public comment, this was supported as well. A roll call was taken to motion and approve the agenda items.

Mayor Brian Snedecor called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call. In attendance were John Novacich (Town of Schererville Parks Department), Dean Button (Hammond Engineer), Esperanza Ramirez Ceja (East Chicago Compliance Manager), Mark Schreiber (La Porte Parks and Recreation), Carolyn Saxton (Legacy Foundation), Jenny Osburn (IDNR), George Topoll (Union Township), Donna Catalano (Legacy Foundation), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Tess Conway (Calumet Collaborative), Zully Alvarado (Causes for Change), Tim Jones (Kouts Town Council President), Erik Sprenne, Kathryn Vallis (IDNR), Andrew Kyres (Crown Point), Chris Murphy (American Structurepoint), Dennis Cobb (First Group Engineering), and Shannon Eason (Michigan City Parks and Recreation).

NIRPC staff present were James Winters, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, Mitch Barloga, and Flor Baum.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the March 5, 2020 meeting were approved on motion by George Topoll and second John Novacich.

James Winters and Mitch Barloga presented on the plans for the upcoming Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA); general information, Complete Streets Program and the Multi-use Trail Program application. The NOFA will be open to receive applications from September 11 to October 21. Similar to last year, a workshop will be conducted on September 29 to discuss any questions regarding the application. NIRPC staff will also be available for one-on-one assistance. Between November through February, the topical committees will review the applications. The Technical Planning Committee will meet February 9th to award the projects. In April of 2021, the TIP is expected to be adopted with all the new projects at The Commission meeting. Generally, the application is similar to the past NOFA. Please see below for the changes.

- In the previous NOFA application, funds were set aside for risk. Now, funds will be set aside for future PE and ROW.
- Question 13A of the programming rules covers group one (1), in which \$250 thousand per year will be set aside for PE and ROW. Question 13B of the programming rules covers group two (2), in which \$70 thousand per year will be set aside for PE and ROW.
- Any project exceeding \$6 million and cannot be broken into phases, shall be deemed a Transformative Project. It will be reviewed separately from the other NOFA projects by the TPC.
- All LPA's are to provide uninflated funding requests. NIRPC staff will put together a matrix and inflate all funding according to historical spending.
- Currently, there is no Federal Transportation Highway bill, therefore the funding overview amounts have not changed.
- The General Project Information section will be populated with all the risk. This includes, but is not limited to railroad involvement, ROW needs and type, regional significance, and NEPA documentation.
- Lastly, the LPAs will submit all project applications and supporting materials through a Google Form. This has a couple benefits:
 - A notification will be sent to Charles and the LPA and will include what was submitted.

- The project's general information will be accessible to the public on a Google spreadsheet after October 21.

The Complete Streets Program and the Multi-use Trail Program applications are the responsibility of 3PC to review and rank. The Complete Streets Program application changed points allocated to Access and Connections, Economic Generation, and Environmental Benefits. This application is like the former NOFA application. The impact of railroads is a new question on the application. Due to the difficulty to carry out business with the railroad, the readiness of the project will be affected. The Multi-use Trail Program application (the larger application) has minor shifting in point allocation for different requirements. Trip generator points were adjusted. Visionary Corridors projects will receive an additional 5 points. The Legacy Project is a new addition to the application. It is defined to be a stand-alone project or phase of a project that has an approved NEPA document or has already received federal funding through NIRPC. No points will be given if there is railroad involvement within the project. The committee discussed the application questions of the NOFA regarding what percentage of school-aged children are being driven to school. The data will be tracked by either a community or by census, but not by a specific street. Most of the data questions will have a source listed.

Mitch updated the committee on the Living Streets Resolution. The Commission approved the resolution last month. Green Streets language was added into the Living Streets Resolution. There will be an emphasis on environmental infrastructure, drainage, stormwater retention and management, and rain garden swales. Living Streets does not have its own application, rather it is spread throughout other NOFA applications.

Dean Button presented on the request for the City of Hammond scope and program change for Des #1601145, Marquette Greenway Trail. The multi-use trail will be changed to a Complete Streets project. \$1.2 million of CMAQ construction (CN) funds and \$540 thousand in Right of Way (ROW) funds are being requested to be moved from Marquette Greenway Trail to Hohman Ave Phase-2 Complete Streets (Des No. is to be determined). Dean Button stated that the initial project would follow the North bank of the Grand Calumet River, scoring very well in terms of funding. However, there has been recent reflection to reconsider the location because it travels closer to a newly constructed sewer overflow basin of the wastewater treatment facility plant. This would not be a pleasant experience using the multi-use trail. The City of Hammond would commit to a street trail connector project, using local funds to be able to make this connection. This project would be supplementing the Phase-2 project of Hohman Ave. Comparative scoring between the Multi-use Trail project (which scored well) and the Complete Streets project shows that the scoring ranked higher as the latter. Mitch confirmed that NIRPC has reviewed the scores, and they are accurate. The committee discussed mobility and sensory accessibility on Hohman Ave. The project will provide pedestrian and non-motorized improvements in the area. There will also be raised intersections. On motion by George Topoll and second by Shannon Eason, the request for The City of Hammond to change scope and program for Des #1601145 was approved. A roll call was taken, and the decision was unanimously in favor of the request.

Mitch Barloga presented on Next Level Trails. The second round, which is a \$30 million statewide allocation release of funds, has been placed on hold by Governor Holcomb due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Indiana Legislative Trails Caucus, a bipartisan group of state legislators, wrote a letter to Governor Holcomb with a focus on the statewide impact that regional trail networks have delivered, despite the pandemic, in hopes to release the second round of funding.

Mitch updated the committee on the trail use and bicycle retail surge. The Erie Lackawanna Trail in Highland had over 4K users in March of 2019 and surged to 6700 users in March of 2020. April of 2019 had 7K users and spiked to 13K users in April of 2020. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has ongoing research for outdoor recreation, which shows a rise in trail usage. Due to the influx of cyclist activity, retail stores are also having a difficult time keeping bicycles and parts stocked. Rails to Trails Conservancy has been reaching out to groups throughout Indiana to communicate with state legislators and the governor's office to reconsider funding.

Zully Alvarado updated the committee on the NWI Paddling Association (NWIPA). The NWIPA is working with the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the Town of Porter, and others, to secure funding for equipment and volunteers to complete the cleanup of the East branch of the Little Calumet River. NWIPA is also working with Lake Station and New Chicago to add an ADA universal launch in 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all paddling events have been cancelled.

Mitch presented on project updates. The mobile bicycle map app is in the initial stages and continues to be created. The paper map is tentatively scheduled to be printed as a 2020 publication before the riding season is over. Mitch informed the committee that NIRPC is stocked with 2018 paper maps.

Announcements

Announcements were made. Shannon Eason of Michigan City Parks and Recreation announced Singing Sands projects phase one (1) and two (2) are scheduled to be complete by November of 2020. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held in the late spring of 2021. Phase three (3) is underway.

Sarah Coulter announced the Calumet Collaborative, with partners, is working on putting together the "Nature for All" map, which will be available in NIRPC's mobile app. The map will connect trails to green spaces and natural areas.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lake Michigan Room at NIRPC.

Hearing no further business, on motion by George Topoll and second by Zully Alvarado the meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.