

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
June 19, 2014
Minutes

Vice Chair Blair Milo called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief stretch session.

Executive Board members present included Blair Milo, Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Dave Decker, Don Ensign, Rich Murphy, Ed Soliday and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included John Bayler, Geof Benson, Tom Clouser, Stan Dobosz, Diane Noll, Joe Simonetto and Ron Stallings.

Others present included Justin Mount, Robert Alderman, Jim Earl, Jennifer Alander, Pat Mussman, Harold Mussman, Jr., Ray Dumbrys, Keith Benman, Bob Carnahan, Jim Nowacki, Mike Molnar, Ron Kurmis, David Wright, Carole Carlson and Rudy Velasco.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Angie Hayes, Jody Melton, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Stephen Sostaric, Mary Thorne and Attorney David Hollenbeck.

Appointment to the Commission: Dave Hollenbeck announced that notification was received from Pottawattomie Park of the appointment of Roger Miller, Council member, as the town's appointment to the NIRPC Commission.

Report of the Vice-Chair: Blair Milo reported that the work continues on the Committee on Committees to the Commission. A template was created to help restructure the committees for transparency, ease of decision making and increased public participation. Some concerns were received regarding requirements in tracking projects after they have been awarded as to how the money is being spent and whether the projects are moving forward. The committee is looking at how to fit this into the committee structure as to due diligence and followed through required for some of our grant processes.

Blair Milo attended the Indiana Conference of Mayors and discussions included how local government is financed, impacts of the state legislature addressing property tax issues over the years, and understanding challenges with funding of local government. More information will follow after analyses are performed.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner announced new branding of materials for thematic consistency with the new website. The agenda is on the new letterhead and new business cards have been created. NIRPC is now using Constant Contact for its electronic mailings.

The building lease has been signed but there is still some work to be done with the architectural drawings, and NIRPC is working with Portage on furniture fund appropriation. The office configuration should take place later this summer and into fall. The auditorium will house staff for a time and the July Full Commission meeting may need to be at another location; if it is, the location will be duly

posted. *[Follow up Note: The July meeting will be held at NIRPC offices as usual.]* Also, the August Executive Board meeting may be cancelled in order to facilitate the transition. Ample notice of any changes will be provided. David Capp, US Department of Justice, will present on crime in Northwest Indiana at the July meeting. Northwest Indiana Chiefs of Police will be invited to hear the presentation.

Ty Warner also reported on the National Association of Regional Councils annual meeting in Louisville which he attended along with Geof Benson, Brian Snedecor and Dave Decker. There was a large focus on transportation. The proposed rulemaking for MAP-21 is out. The Grow America Act, the administration's new proposed successor to MAP-21, was released. A panel discussed multiple possible solutions to the Highway Trust Fund shortfall. Yesterday, Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) issued legislation to increase the federal fuel tax. A continuing resolution is anticipated for the short term.

Kathy Luther and Jack Eskin attended for the Solar Ready grant project, which Kathy presented to the Full Commission in April. Ty Warner was on a panel on the possible future planning implications of autonomous/driverless vehicles. The whole group was addressed by USDOT Secretary Anthony Fox on the importance of regional councils. Regions are where the money is going and where the focus is on allocating resources. Needs must be communicated to Washington if they are to be addressed. Funding will go to areas with concrete plans.

Geof Benson was reelected as District VI Representative to the NARC Board and Ty Warner was reelected to the Executive Directors' Council. Geof Benson added that as Vice Chair of the Environmental Management Policy Committee, he tries to steer the agenda towards things that can actually be accomplished. Joanna Turner, the new Executive Director of NARC, was a former senior staff member of USDOT and she was influential in getting Secretary Fox to come to Louisville to address the group.

Dave Decker said he is on the National Association of Counties (NACO) transportation committee and said NARC was the best conference he has ever attended for getting useful information at every session. The transportation bill will be a temporary fix.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 15, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning. Action is requested on Amendment #4 for an extension of the contract between NIRPC and Conservation Design Forum for Green Infrastructure Technical Support Services for a program for East Chicago. The contract was funded by the Donnelley Foundation and the extension was already funded by a Coastal Program grant. Funds cannot be disbursed until this budget amendment is passed. The work must be completed by June 30, 2014. Dave Decker motioned to approve the amendment; seconded by Ed Soliday. Motion carried.

Jim Ton also reported that the exit interview with the Audit team was very positive and is now on the State Board of Accounts website. No adverse findings were in the audit.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Geof Benson reported that the committee met on June 5 and reviewed and approved Hobart's environmental project for the next phase.

Transportation Policy Committee: Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on June 19 and heard a presentation on the US Highway 20 Corridor Plan by AJ Monroe of the City of Portage. The TPC Committee voted 16-7 to send the Transportation Alternative Program back to the Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee for further deliberation and will be represented to the Transportation Policy Committee at the July 8th meeting.

The only action was the adoption of Resolution 14-19, the 20th Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, to add one INDOT exempt culvert clean and repair project to the TIP for SR 149, 1.64 miles south of US Highway 20. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Dave Decker, the Executive Board adopted Resolution 14-19, Amendment #20 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program.

The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., Tuesday, July 8th at the NIRPC office.

Local Government Assistance Committee: Don Ensign reported that the committee met on May 29 and heard presentations from Kathy Luther and Jody Melton on the Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission, the Marquette Plan update and a solar ready project initiative. After discussion of public access to the lakefront in Gary, Don Ensign will arrange a meeting with Kathy Luther and a person at Carmeuse Lime. Reporting for Ty Warner, Jody Melton announced that the NIRPC office construction should start in July or August.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District: Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the board met on May 28. A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 20 at 9 a.m. Official district status application to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) is being prepared by Forum and NIRPC staff. The by-laws will be changed to reduce the number of board members from 17 to 11, consisting of six elected officials and five from the private sector in the tri-county area. Any elected official wishing to serve may contact Ty Warner. A planning grant application was submitted to the EDA to assist the board with contracting staff to assist communities with grant applications. Technical planning and assistance grants may be submitted at any time as long as the project is part of the CEDS document. An accounting review is being conducted as required by the grant. The report will be made public upon completion of the review within the next 30 days with a copy to be distributed to the NIRPC Commission.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Bob Alderman reported that he and Ty Warner were present at the Governor's announcement of the Gateway Rail Project two weeks ago. Ed Soliday was instrumental in bringing that project to the region and it will have a great impact on freight and passenger rail confluence issues. Bob Alderman said that later he, Ty Warner and Karen Hedlund, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Rail Administration (FRA), were at the Lake Shore Chamber of Commerce for a great opportunity for the FRA to better understand our region and our relationships. There are two emergency repair contracts for the north and the south district areas. The US 20 project from the Porter-La Porte County line to I-94 will take place this year. Cline Avenue is progressing.

INDOT Project Manager Jim Earl gave an update on the Illiana, explaining that ongoing consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on how to protect habitat such as the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, water quality and species of sheep-nose mussel have moved some dates for the project, with construction now expected to start in the late summer or fall of 2015. The Illinois General Assembly

failed to vote on a bill which would funnel payments to investors through creation of an Illiana Expressway Public Private Trust Fund.

Ed Soliday said no special legislation will be needed in Indiana to finance the Illiana Expressway or enter into a public-private partnership. Indiana law already allows the Indiana Finance Authority and INDOT to take the actions needed. Ed Soliday added that if nothing is done, and this would happen in the next 10 to 20 years, there would be absolute gridlock on 80/94.

Bob Alderman asked that communities notify the LaPorte District of any festivals so that construction does not impede the festivities.

Other Business:

Ed Soliday discussed property tax caps, the gas tax and the need to make empirical arguments to communicate our most important economic development needs and our transportation needs including aging infrastructure downstate for funding at the state level. Brief discussion followed.

Dave Decker commented that the Kingsbury Logistics Park is coming together. A grain intermodal is going in which will tie four railroads together which will enable the conducting of their business anywhere in the United States.

Ty Warner announced the Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission will meet at 11 a.m. today.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

- Patricia Mussman, West Creek Township, addressed some of the Illiana issues regarding the concerns of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, landowner, financing and the Commission's December vote. Jim Earl responded that certain aspects of work will continue to progress unless INDOT and IDOT are ordered to stop. Work is consistently being assessed as the project progresses.

Dave Decker commented that he would like to see the Illiana go all the way to I-69, adding that in the next five years, the multimodal facilities will add 600-900 trucks a week to the roadways. Robert Alderman commented that of the 200,000 vehicles traveling the Borman daily, 60,000 are trucks. He cited the gridlock that occurred on I-65 during a lake-effect snowfall on one day in January, adding that having the Illiana would have provided an alternative to the Borman, eliminating the gridlock. Roosevelt Allen Jr. commented that the Illinois General Assembly will not guarantee payment to the investors of the toll road operators. Those operators will want to mitigate their risk with a requirement for a baseline revenue stream. If the revenue falls below that baseline, the state taxpayers will have to make up the shortfall. The Illiana investors will want a baseline requirement too. Blair Milo said INDOT will address future concerns as they arise throughout the process.

- Jim Nowacki, Gary, commented as a follow up to the problems with the 12/20 corridor in Gary that some, not all of the problems were addressed. In meetings of the Gary Sanitary District, Jim Nowacki commented on drainage issues on the project. Robert Alderman responded that within the Gary city limits, INDOT's legal responsibility is curb to curb. Some sidewalk work was done as a courtesy and the drainage issues result from aged infrastructure.

Hearing no further business, Blair Milo adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m. on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Don Ensign.

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.

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