

NIRPC Executive Board/Full Commission Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
October 17, 2013
Minutes

Call to Order: Chairman Dave Uran called the meeting to order at 9:25 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. There was a quorum of the Executive Board.

Commissioners present included Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., John Bayler, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Christine Cid, Tom Clouser, Anthony Copeland, Jon Costas, Dave Decker, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Don Ensign, Michael Griffin, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Rich Mrozinski, Rich Murphy, Diane Noll, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer, Jim Simmons, Brian Snedecor, Greg Stinson, Jim Ton, Dave Uran and George Van Til.

Others present included Robert Alderman, Jeff Gable, LuAnn Franklin, Jim Nowacki, Jim Earl, Sarah Rubin, Angie Fegaras, Jim Pinkerton, R. P. Kurmis, Matt Mikus, Ann Anderson, Sanjay Patel, Julia Surber, Joe Crnkovich, Christopher Murphy, Christopher Meyers, David Wright, Louise Karwowski, Marcella Kunstek, Teresa Torres, Rudy Velasco, Renae Jackson, William (Mac) McCraven Sr., Rob Strader.

Staff present included Ty Warner, David Hollenbeck, Angie Hayes, Kathy Luther, Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, Steve Strains, Gary Evers, Sarah Geinosky, Jody Melton, Gabrielle Biciunas, Stephen Sostaric, Jack Eskin and Mary Thorne.

Report of the Chair: Dave Uran introduced a matter brought to his attention by Mac McCraven of Lake County Citizens for Accessible Transportation regarding South Lake County Community Services demand response service. Mr. McCraven described transportation problems with the operation of buses provided by South Lake Community Services to members of the disability community. Because of damage to an entrance gate system at the residential complex at 8400 Grant Street, South Lake Community Services now requires residents with disabilities to walk outside the four buildings more than 50 feet to board the buses. He said that people who use wheelchairs will be unable to get there. It was and should be door-to-door service. Mr. McCraven also expressed that he can't always get to every NIRPC meeting and thanked Chairman Uran for bringing the matter to the Commission. He added that he felt there was hostility and unforgiveness in the room and asked that he not be patronized by anyone.

At this point, Dave Uran announced that there was now a quorum for a meeting of the Full Commission. He called for a motion to authorize NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner to contact Margot Sabato at South Lake County Community Services to investigate the matter. Robert Carnahan serves on the South Lake County transit operator's board and said he would question them as well. Tom McDermott remarked that perhaps this matter should be taken up with a NIRPC committee which would then bring this up to the full board. Chairman Uran responded that he created a policy last month by which our constituents can bring a matter to their Commissioner to be brought before a NIRPC meeting. Jim Ton made a motion to authorize NIRPC Executive Director Ty Warner to contact Margot Sabato at South Lake County Community Services to insure that they are compliant with door-to-door response; seconded by Bob Carnahan. Motion carried.

Dave Uran said he reviewed with Ty Warner and Dave Hollenbeck a report received from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Public Participation Plan. Dave Uran said that there are a lot of good ideas in it and

he expressed his appreciation of the effort of the committee and others who also participated in this effort. The draft will now become part of the public record. Dave Uran said that since the Transportation Policy Committee earlier recommended the draft plan to the Full Commission for a vote, the earlier version (May 23, 2013) and this revised version will go back to the Transportation Policy Committee who will work with the Ad Hoc Committee to see if there are some common ideas and the Public Participation Plan can be forwarded toward action. Every commissioner will receive an electronic version of the Public Participation Plan and the TPC and Ad Hoc Committee would be happy to dialog with the commissioners regarding this document. Dave Hollenbeck confirmed that this document would go back to the TPC to consider it as any additional changes to the Plan.

Dave Hollenbeck reported that he met with staff and secured the information needed to fully respond to questions from Everybody Counts. The response is now underway and will be completed expeditiously.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the September 19, 2013 Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Michael Griffin and a second by Kevin Breitzke.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Committee Chair Blair Milo reported that the committee met this morning. Resolution 13-21 was formulated due to some processing delays in funds from INDOT. The Committee looked at the need to establish a letter of credit with Horizon Bank for up to \$600,000 with an interest rate of 3% over the savings investment made. As the processing delays are being worked on with INDOT, the Finance & Personnel Committee at their meeting tabled this resolution.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Kevin Breitzke referred to the draft minutes in the materials. The meetings are held the first Thursday of every month. Upcoming meetings will feature a discussion on the Dark Skies Initiative, to stem unnecessary lighting and a demonstration of model local ordinances. The Indiana Natural Resources Commission currently has no representation from Northwest Indiana. EMPC thinks this should be brought to the attention of Governor Pence.

Transportation Policy Committee: Committee member Stan Dobosz reported the TPC met on October 8 and heard an update on the I-65 widening and the Illiana Expressway process outlining the timeline leading to possible action to amend NIRPC's Comprehensive Regional Plan at the December 12 commission meeting. The public comment period is from October 14 through November 20 with four public meetings being held to hear comments.

Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 13-20 amending the 2014 Unified Public Work Program to add a total of \$18,000 funds for the Transportation Data Collection program; seconded by Dave Shafer. Motion carried.

Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 13-22, Amendment 3 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program adding projects for the City of Portage and the City of East Chicago; seconded by Greg Stinson. Motion carried. The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee will be on November 12 at 9:00 a.m.

Pathway to 2040 Committee: Committee Chair Michael Griffin reported that the committee met on October 10 and heard a report on the At-Grade Crossing Study which identified the 15 worst crossings in Northwest Indiana as well as an update on the Illiana. Michael Griffin indicated that due to the nature of the request regarding its conformity to the 2040 Plan, he felt the committee had a special charge to

review this request and issue a recommendation. The Committee will convene a special meeting on December 4 to deliberate and form their input to be delivered to the Commission.

With regard to the Livable Centers program and boundary map, Eman Ibrahim said a lot of staff worked on the project. Sarah Geinosky has done the cartography of the livable centers map. Livable centers were identified, criteria established based on density, connectivity, transit-oriented development and land use. Staff met with 19 cities and towns and a workshop was held to define livable center boundaries for the remaining 22 communities. Examples of livable centers and improvements were shown. Projects will be identified for the Creating Livable Centers Program, to be released in November. There will be \$400,000 in funding for two years with a 20% local match. Michael Griffin added that there was one change to the resolution which will read "Now therefore be it resolved, that the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission hereby adopts the Creating Livable Centers Program and the defined Livable Centers Boundary Map for Northwest Indiana." Kevin Breitzke moved to recommend adoption of Resolution 13-23; Roosevelt Allen, Jr. seconded. Motion carried.

Land Use Committee: Committee Chair Rich Murphy reported that the committee supports the livable centers program, adding that staff did an excellent job in working with each community to produce these high quality maps which gives a good snapshot of where the opportunities are in the livable centers. Livable centers are growing concepts throughout the country for a healthy community. The Land Use Committee met on September 18 and approved the draft application, recommended approval of the Livable Centers Boundary Map and recommended approval of the resolution.

Legislative Committee: Committee Chair Tom McDermott reported that the next meeting will be held tomorrow, October 18 at 2:00 p.m. at NIRPC to discuss and possibly draft resolutions for the next Commission meeting on recomposition of the NICTD Board, MAP-21 reauthorization, the West Lake Corridor, formation of a NIRPC task force for the reauthorization of the RDA and support of Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones (RIIZ). The Commissioners were asked to let Tom McDermott know if there are any other issues to be discussed.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District: Committee Chair Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that sequestration and the government shutdown have affected the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) budgets and there is not a lot of activity. The Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) is still being maintained. Formal district status is still being sought and the NWIEDD is seeking resolutions of support from the three county commissions and letters of support from the Governor and the Commerce Secretary. Once district status has been achieved, the district can apply for an operations grant and more affluent communities that do not meet the distressed community parameters can still apply for a public infrastructure grant from the EDA. There is still a lot of uncertainty due to actions by the federal government with the EDA.

INDOT: Robert Alderman reported on several items. The construction on the Cline Avenue bridge replacement could start after the first of 2014. Work on the Nine Span Bridge in Hammond should be completed in early December with a planned ribbon-cutting with the Hammond Mayor and possibly the Governor. A ribbon-cutting will be held later this month on the Hoosier Heartland down south. NIRPC's Purchase Order for planning funds has been cut as of this morning. The FY 2012-13 June metrics for the six transportation districts indicate LaPorte is tied with Fort Wayne as the best in INDOT. A roundabout in Crown Point is needed. Robert Alderman said he turned down a job in Indianapolis. Bob Carnahan thanked INDOT for the pothole repairs on US 41 at 133rd. Roosevelt Allen, Jr. expressed his thanks and satisfaction with the work done on 4th and 5th Avenues in Gary. Anthony Copeland indicated there were

large potholes on Chicago Avenue in East Chicago and Bob Alderman agreed to patch them. Dave Decker said the Pyrotechnics Guild wanted to come back to LaPorte and asked that SR 2 be closed in order to get it done and Bob Alderman agreed. Jim Pinkerton announced that an agreement to keep the Hoosier State line running has been made in principle and said that no existing public mass transit funds would be used to fund it but that the General Assembly has created a special budget provision will be created in the state highway fund. Jim Ton thanked the Governor and all involved in keeping the Hoosier State line in operation. In answer to a question from Tom McDermott as to what would happen if CMAP voted against the Illiana this afternoon, Bob Alderman said the project would only be delayed pending whatever steps might be needed to insure a positive vote.

Other Business:

- Bob Carnahan announced that Cedar Lake is holding a parade of lights on November 23 and requested three NIRPC commission members to judge the parade entries. Whiting and Lowell are also holding a parade of lights. Bob Carnahan was grateful for the use of “Molly the Trolley” and thanked Michael Griffin for volunteering to be one of the judges, joining Karen Freeman Wilson and Paul Nelson from Channel 56.
- Christine Cid reported that NICTD developed a transit-oriented development policy in 2009 and she will forward a copy to Ty Warner and the Commission.

Public Comment:

- Jim Nowacki, Gary said the Livable Centers program has a lot of benefits to communities to bring better connectivity between livable areas. There are still gaps in sidewalks even in the 4th/5th Avenue corridor project, some of which are only a few hundred feet long. NICTD should not move the train station.
- Louise Karwowski, Sierra Club said she and the Sierra Club do not support the Illiana and a resolution was sent to NIRPC.
- Renae Jackson, Everybody Counts asked for clarification as to why in dealing with the consent decree NIRPC’s attorney does not respond to Everybody Counts’ attorney. Dave Hollenbeck replied that he does respond and Chairman Uran said their attorney can file the appropriate motions or Ty Warner may also be contacted. John Costas added that every citizen is represented by a Commissioner and people can work through their elected officials. Dave Uran said there is representation by city or town and county, and added he provided a list of the NIRPC commission to the people gathered at Crown Point City Hall yesterday.
- Teresa Torres, Everybody Counts said the status of the Public Participation Plan is not on the agenda nor on the website. Everybody Counts receives federal funds to represent those who do not have access to public transportation to come to these meetings. Ms. Torres stated that NIRPC is under a consent decree, federal regulations are not being followed and asked when they might expect answers. Ms. Torres said she would continue to be the voice for those who can’t come to NIRPC meetings.
- Mac McCraven said it is hard to listen to the things he is hearing, the same old song. There are people in this community that can’t get to Meijer’s because there is not a sidewalk or a safe way to get there for people with disabilities. Chairman Uran responded that a motion was passed today to address his concern with South Lake County Community Services. George Van Til expressed his displeasure with being insulted and interrupted in meetings.

Dave Uran closed the public comment section.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner said this is a very innovative time for Northwest Indiana and he thanked the Commission for passing the livable centers program and also thanked INDOT for cutting the Purchase Order and commented on the positive relationship between INDOT and Northwest Indiana. Mr. Warner said he attended the MPO conference in Terre Haute on ways to improve communications and there was good discussion on getting better data. Rep. Soliday was not in attendance but received an award for meritorious service by an elected official and Mr. Warner thanked him for his work in identifying available funding sources for projects and the gap between what is needed and what is there. Mr. Warner also attended the NARC Executive Directors' Conference which is more peer-oriented. The Legislative Committee will be getting into the MAP-21 reauthorization issue. A roundtable event attended by Mr. Warner, Steve Strains and Dave Shafer in Indianapolis while back discussed the MAP-21 reauthorization issue and the report was completed by NARC and will be shared with the Legislative Committee. Concerns due to the government shutdown included FTA payments, the functioning of the EDA, our work with the EPA and the National Park shutdown. The December 12 Commission meeting space may be problematic because of the interest in the Illiana and another meeting venue is being researched. The public comment period is open and NIRPC has a web page on the Illiana. Blair Milo was recognized by Northwest Indiana/Chicagoland BusINess as one of the 20 Under 40 Group, along with B.R. Lane from Gary and Ian Nicolini of Cedar Lake. Mr. Warner congratulated Gary Evers on his 20th Year Service Anniversary with NIRPC.

Adjournment: On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Tom McDermott, Chairman Uran adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.