

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
February 20, 2014
Minutes

Chairman Brian Snedecor called the meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:30 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call of the Executive Board members.

Commissioners present included Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Dave Decker, Eugene Guernsey, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Rich Murphy, Joe Simonetto, Brian Snedecor and Jim Ton.

Others present included Bob Alderman, Addison Pollack, Jeff Huet, Deb Backhus, Carol Kuznicki, Dave Nellens, Robert Carnahan, David Wright, Teresa Torres, Renae Jackson, Jim Nowacki and Christopher Meyers.

Staff present included Ty Warner, David Hollenbeck, Steve Strains, Belinda Petroskey, Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Scott Weber, Jack Eskin, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric, Angie Hayes, Eman Ibrahim, and Mary Thorne.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

- Renae Jackson of Gary announced that Daryl Lampkins is leaving GPTC. Everybody Counts provided detailed information to the Transportation Policy Committee as to steps to be taken according to the federal regulations as well as recommendations by the ad hoc committee regarding the public participation plan and has not heard anything further. With regard to the lawsuit, there has been extensive movement by the attorneys but nothing has been mentioned at any of the meetings.
- Teresa Torres of Merrillville expressed disappointment that NIRPC is spending dollars to defend its compliance with the consent decree and provided copies of the legal filings to Brian Snedecor this morning. There has been correspondence between Everybody Counts, Steve Strains, the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) and a number of others over the last several months. Teresa Torres asked NIRPC staff, the TPC, and the Finance & Personnel Committee who made the decision to allocate the 2013 Public Mass Transit Funds (PMTF) of \$.5 million earned by the RBA to Porter County and South Lake County instead of Hammond, Gary and East Chicago. Teresa Torres stated that Steve Strains read a statement on the disbursement of the RBA PMTF funds at the TPC meeting. Teresa Torres said the statement was a history of PMTF funds, was unsatisfactory and wanted to know who wrote the statement. Tom McDermott asked for copies of the documents from Teresa Torres.
- Jim Nowacki of Gary said he wanted to speak at the RDA meeting regarding SB 367 but was cut off by the board since it was not on their agenda. Although not on today's agenda, NIRPC passed a resolution in support of the reauthorization of the RDA with some stipulations made by Mayor McDermott that current levels of support and participation is kept the same. SB 367 authorizes money taken from homeowner tax credit, generated from casinos to be transferred to the RDA for the expansion of the South Shore to Dyer. This is not the formula authorized by NIRPC. Jim Nowacki said he felt we got a lot of money but we did not get good value from the RDA and urged the Commission to reexamine the bill and the resolution and oppose the reauthorization of the RDA. Tom McDermott, Legislative Committee Chair, was to respond in his report later in the meeting.

Certificate of Appointment: Ty Warner announced the appointment of Eugene Guernsey to the NIRPC Commission by the Town of Merrillville. Brian Snedecor welcomed Eugene Guernsey adding that he was in law enforcement for 31 years.

Report of the Chair:

- **Committee Appointments:** Brian Snedecor announced the Chairs and Vice Chairs for the NIRPC Committees:
 - Transportation Policy Committee: Chair Jim Polarek, Vice Chair Stan Dobosz
 - Environmental Management Policy Committee: Chair Geof Benson, Vice Chair Karen Freeman-Wilson
 - Finance & Personnel Committee: Chair Jim Ton, Vice Chair Jeff Dekker
 - Legislative Committee: Chair Tom McDermott, Vice Chair Jon Costas
 - Local Government Assistance Committee: Chair Joe Stahura, Vice Chair Don Ensign
 - Land Use Committee: Chair Kevin Breitzke, Vice Chair Anthony Hendricks
 - 2040 Plan Implementation Committee: Chair Michael Griffin, Vice Chair Nancy AdamsCommissioners should contact Brian Snedecor with any changes. Bob Alderman of INDOT is not a voting member but volunteered to assist on the Legislative Committee.
- **National Association of Regional Councils Conference:** Brian Snedecor said the National Association of Regional Councils Conference was good adding that visits to Senators Coats and Donnelly and Congressional representatives Visclosky and Walorski regarding MAP-21 funding, sustained funding for transportation and other issues and credited Ty Warner for the legislative packet and snapshot of NIRPC information given to the legislators. Other attendees included Geof Benson, Dave Shafer, Blair Milo and Nancy Adams. Geof Benson remarked that this was the first time in five years that there was any optimism expressed. The budget was just passed and they were going on to the debt ceiling and work was being accomplished. Ty Warner added that the materials given to the legislators had information addressing MAP-21 concerns, including concern over the highway trust fund which is due to deplete next year if there is no action. Also included were transportation positions adopted by the Indiana Association of Regional Councils and NIRPC's resolution in support of commuter rail expansion, particularly the West Lake Corridor expansion. Other information was provided on transit-oriented development and on Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones (RIIZ), which is an innovative solution to put forth changes in the tax code to allow for private funds as part of a local share for infrastructure improvement. Geof Benson added that voting will take place on a new NARC Executive Director to replace Fred Abouselman upon his retirement.
- Brian Snedecor expressed NIRPC's thanks to Daryl Lampkins for his work with GPTC and wished him well in his new endeavors. He announced that Blair Milo will be leading an effort to look at committee structure and possible inefficiencies. Blair Milo said she will meet with staff for their suggestions including a need for different committees in early March. Commissioners were invited to participate in a meeting she will plan for late March to examine staff recommendations and discuss committee structure. Recommendation would be made to the Full Commission at the meeting in April. Any changes would be made prior to the fiscal year ending September 30 to be implemented in the new calendar year.

Minutes: It was noted that the date of the meeting minutes was incorrectly shown on the agenda. The minutes of the January 30, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Nancy Adams and a second by Dave Decker.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning. There is one action item for the addition of an addendum to the software license and services agreement by Routematch Software Inc. and NIRPC in the amount of \$22,656 for the purchase of an automatic vehicle location/mobile data computer system for 32 vehicles to allow for notification of changes in service to demand response riders. Per

recommendation of the Finance & Personnel Committee, Jim Ton moved to adopt the addendum to the software license and services agreement; seconded by Blair Milo. Motion carried.

Transportation Policy Committee: Mitch Barloga reported that the committee met on February 11 and heard presentations from Munster on the 45th Avenue realignment project and from staff regarding the air conformity modeling process and the Intelligent Transportation System network.

There are three actions for consideration. Belinda Petroskey described Resolution 14-05 Amendment #9 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program adding 4 new INDOT projects. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Dave Decker, the Executive Board approved Resolution 14-05.

Belinda Petroskey described Resolution 14-06, the Amendment #12 to the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program adding local projects and phases for Hobart, Portage, Munster, La Porte County, Lake Station, Merrillville, Gary and Lake County Parks. On a motion by Dave Decker and a second by Nancy Adams, the Executive Board approved Resolution 14-06.

Belinda Petroskey described Resolution 14-07 Amendment #8 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program adding a transit project of a feasibility study of bikes on the South Shore. Jack Eskin reported that the Bikes on Trains feasibility study was the result of collaboration between NIRPC and Save the Dunes and the local match for the study was a joint contribution by NICTD, Porter County, LaPorte, Arcelor-Mittal, the RDA, National Park Service, The Greenway Foundation and NIPSCO. Stephen Sostaric referred to the report from the eight-day public comment period adding that 80 comments and a 300-signature petition were received via comment line, social media, email and postal mail. Only one comment was against the study. Rich Murphy said he was encouraged by the positive comments and supported the study as it captures the vision of the 2040 Plan. On a motion by Rich Murphy and a second by Nancy Adams, the Executive Board approved Resolution 14-07.

The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is Tuesday, March 11 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

Introduction to Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit (ICAT):

Steve Strains introduced Addison Pollack, Coordinator for the Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit. ICAT is a statewide organization; a new initiative of Health by Design, an Indianapolis-based coalition of partners focusing on insuring that communities have the infrastructure available to promote healthy lifestyles. Other initiatives include Complete Streets, Safe Routes to Schools and a pedestrian work group. ICAT educates on the benefits of transit and greater transit options. ICAT is currently following the transit bill in the statehouse, holding mobility workshops throughout the state affecting older adults and persons with disabilities and they are updating their communications plan. Contact them for assistance with transit related issues.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Bob Alderman reported on the problems caused by the severe weather, including the pothole issues. The two right lanes of I-94 just east of Portage are closed due to the repair of a six-foot pothole. Resurfacing work on Cline Avenue will start in April. Over \$1 million of overtime has been paid over two two-week pay periods alone. The damage to the roads in the region will be expensive. Tom McDermott stated that INDOT closed the Cline Avenue Bridge almost five years ago. Almost 30,000 vehicles per day including 18-wheelers that used the bridge are now using Calumet Avenue, Indianapolis Boulevard and Michigan Avenue. Hammond's roads are literally falling apart because they're taking on traffic that they were not designed to handle. It's unsafe and something must be done immediately. Tom McDermott said he is very frustrated as Mayor to know that the state made the decision to not rebuild the bridge and Hammond is now having to deal with the repercussions of that decision every day. And every day is one more day of unsafe conditions. Bob Alderman committed that he will get with Mayor Copeland, other principals and Indianapolis to try to get

something done. Mitch Barloga offered that at TPC in March a presentation will be made from the concessionaires from the Cline Avenue Bridge project about that project. NIRPC is in the public review process and is working to add it to the 2040 Plan. With respect to the asphalt plans, Bob Alderman commented that Reith Riley in Indianapolis is opening their hot mix plant. At this point, there is not enough joint commitment to bring their La Porte plant on line. Also, a three-day window is needed. Blair Milo commented that until there is enough snowmelt, it's difficult to gauge the amount of mix needed. Bob Alderman commented that a joint pooling of resources is needed to handle the problems collectively. He suggested exploring an opportunity to create a unified mobilization and deployment committee. Brian Snedecor added that several years ago, Lake County's emergency management undertook an effort to inventory equipment within the county. He suggested that the three-county region expand that effort on a larger scale and work with INDOT to identify accessibility of equipment. Roosevelt Allen suggested that could also be done by the First District Homeland Security to keep that inventory on record. Purchase and rental of a scarifier was also discussed.

Northwest Indiana Economic Development District: Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the CEDS committee met on February 6 to discuss strategies to meet the changing criteria of the Economic Development Administration. They suggested the reduction in the size of the NWIEDD board from 17 to 11 members. **A motion to present a change in by-laws to the full board at their March meeting passed by a two-thirds vote.** The district continues to maintain the CEDS document and the primary goal is to get district designation by the EDA in order to get an operations planning grant to help with grant assistance to units of government. In the interim, the district can apply for another planning grant. There is currently \$25,000 in the budget. The district is waiting for resolutions from Porter County, La Porte County, Governor Pence and the Indiana Director of Commerce; resolutions have been received from Lake County. It is hoped that once these resolutions are submitted to the EDA, they will grant district status to the NWIEDD.

Legislative Committee:

Tom McDermott responded to Jim Nowacki's earlier comment saying that Bill #367 passed the senate and is pending in the house. As it concerns two resolutions passed by the NIRPC board for the South Shore Expansion and the RDA reauthorization, the Legislative Committee will meet to discuss this bill next Friday, February 28 at 1:00 p.m. at NIRPC. Mary will have copies of SB 367 and the two resolutions available at the meeting. All are invited to attend.

On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Dave Decker, Brian Snedecor adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.