



**Committee Meeting ~ NIRPC Auditorium**  
**February 26, 2015**  
**Minutes**

**Members & Guests** – Shannon Eason, Alex Brown, Mark Heintz, Walter Lenkos, Julie Mandon, Chris Moore, Chris Nesper, John Novacich, Don Parker, Jerry Rosko, Joe Rurode, Craig Zandstra, Alison Zoll

**Staff** – Mitch Barloga, Gary Evers, Belinda Petrosky, Meredith Stilwell

Vice-Chair Shannon Eason called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. with self-introductions.

**Ped**

**South Shore Trails - Update**

Mitch Barloga reported on behalf on South Shore Trails. A meeting was held on February 25, 2015 and the membership have planned an aggressive agenda for 2015. They plan to have information and recruitment booths around the region on National Trails Day (June 6, 2015). The connector and connection of the year awards are upcoming with where and when to be determined.

**Pedal**

**A. Bikes on Trains Study Update – Belinda Petrosky, NIRPC Staff**

The Bikes on Trains Study is a technical study on the feasibility of putting bikes on the types of trains run by NICTD. Seven local sources were secured for the 20% match to the 80% federal funding. A Bikes on Trains survey was recently completed and the project consultants are working on the analysis from the results. There were around 1,500 responses. The consultants first completed report focused on other commuter train services and their bikes on trains policies. A handout of the case study assessment matrix from that report was provided as a handout to the group. The result of the survey analysis will be presented at a Bikes on Trains committee meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> after which talks will begin regarding potential recommendations and options. Outreach sessions will tentatively begin in late March or early April. The proposed completion date was originally the end of March, but that date has been pushed back but should be no later than May.

**B. CMAQ, HSIP & STP-2 Funding Cycle – Update from Gary Evers, NIRPC staff**

A handout of the CMAQ bicycle/pedestrian construction project requests received from the NOFA 2014-2 was provided to meeting attendees as part of their meeting packet. The requests will be presented at the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) March meeting. Gary noted this is the last opportunity for alternative fuels under CMAQ. The Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) will prioritize the alternative fuels requests. Following the March TPC meeting, funding recommendations will be made. The earliest the recommendations will go to the CMAQ eligibility committee is July so between March and July projects to be funded can be decided. The applications have not been reviewed in detail yet, but there appears to be close to \$35m in requests. Gary felt confident that the 3PC would play a role in prioritizing projects. This is a catch up solicitation and the funds will not be available until FY 2017. More money will be available in two years. This is a transportation linkage and not a recreational trails program. Mitch suggested using the March 3PC meeting to clarify the methodology on how to prioritize projects and using the April meeting to prioritize the projects. Gary encouraged the group to attend the March TPC meeting and notice the focus will only be on Lake and Porter County applications. The chief elected in La Porte County will be selecting their own projects.

## **Paddle –**

### **NWI Paddling Association – Update**

The NWIPA rendezvous and annual meeting is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup> at Memorial Hall in Michigan City. Michigan City is still waiting on the Army Corps permit for their Hansen Park kayak launch. As soon as the permit comes in, the launch will be installed and there will be a ribbon cutting Mary 31 or June 7<sup>th</sup> as part of the annual fun float and coastal awareness month.

## **Grab Bag**

### A. Project Updates:

- Julie Mandon reported that the Oak Savannah Trail in Hobart is complete and the ribbon cutting was held last fall.
- Craig Zandstra reported they are still working on land acquisition for the Veterans Trail and once that is complete they will need to find money to build it.
- Walter Lenckos reported that the construction inspection should be done on the Dunes Kankakee from the State Park to the visitors' center. County Road bikeway routes have been identified as a temporary route south of Valpo and additional signage is being looked into.
- John Novacich reported there are a couple of major holdups on the Pennsy. Norfolk Southern filed for another abandonment extension and they want to remove the bridge that the Pennsy goes under. Possibilities are being looked into and although they are ready to purchase properties, it is unclear how the abandonment will affect things. Letting is scheduled for 2017.
- Chris Moore reported that everything has been surveyed and meetings have been held with the city regarding the Stateline Trail. However, the property owner has a couple of changes one of which includes keeping two rails and maintaining them which has resulted in discussion regarding rerouting the trail. In addition, a road installation has begun and a detention pond has been installed in the next spot that was being looked at to buy for the trail. A meeting will be held to hash out a last ditch effort to complete the trail.
- Mitch reported there is still \$100k for the Sign 'em Up program, but INDOT doesn't really know how to deal with the sign installation. They view signs as actual construction which means federal procurement or letting has to be gone through for each project. He is attempting to get around this requirement so community Public Works Departments can install the signs instead of getting an outside installer. The hope is to secure the same vendor and same sign styles for all communities.

### B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes: *None*

- Mitch reported on the Greenways & Blueways 2020 Plan which is a combination of the Ped and Pedal and Greenways and Blueways Plans. The process should be completed throughout the balance of the year. Trails counters should be out on the trails in April or May and plan development should take place between July and September. There will be a public comment period and hopefully adoption by the NIRPC commission in December with printing of the plan to follow.
- Mitch addressed snow plowing on the trails and while aware that some communities do and some don't, NIRPC would encourage all trails be plowed during snow events since people use trails year round. Schererville, Hobart, Chesterton, Highland, Munster, Michigan City, Dyer and LaPorte all indicated they plow and spoke on how and when they plow. In all instances the priorities were for streets and main parking lots be plowed before trails. Sometimes that means over time more snow builds up on the trails which prohibits them getting plowed.
- Mitch reported that a trail maintenance fund bill HB 1220 which would provide funding statewide for repairs when communities have trouble did not get out of committee. This does not mean the bill is dead and could possibly be added as an amendment on another bill. He encouraged speaking with a legislator or state senator about the bill.

A video was shown regarding the Big Marsh Bike Park in southeast Chicago. This is a trail being developed into a multi-use bicycle park and will be maintained and operated by the Chicago park district. The park should open in Spring of this year.

C. General Announcements (upcoming rides, events, etc.):

- The Indiana Bike Summit will be held in Indianapolis on March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

D. Next Meeting is Thursday, March 26, 2014

Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 p.m.