

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
Construction Advancement Foundation Training Center
6050 Southport Road, Portage, IN
March 17, 2016
Minutes

Chairman Jim Ton called the meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Executive Board members present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Anthony Copeland, Dave Decker, Michael Griffin, Tom McDermott, Diane Noll, Greg Stinson and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Kyle W. Allen, Sr., Toni Biancardi, Bob Carnahan, Will Farrellbegg, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Richard Hardaway, Roger Miller, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer and George Topoll.

Guests present included Justin Mount, Mike Noland, John Parsons, Matt Deitchley, Val Gomez, Nancy Adams, Jeff Huet, Rick Powers, David Wright, Dewey Lemley, Paul Panther, Joe Crnkovich, Jill Murr, Julia Surber, Carole Carlson and Andrew Steele.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Dave Hollenbeck, Angie Hayes, Kathy Luther, Eman Ibrahim, Gary Evers, Belinda Petroskey, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric and Mary Thorne.

Approval of Minutes: Kevin Breitzke asked that the minutes be amended to show a motion by a Commissioner, which was omitted at the 4th bullet point on page 4. On a motion by Tom McDermott and a second by Michael Griffin the minutes of the February 18, 2016 meeting of the full Commission were approved as amended by a voice vote.

Report of the Chair: Jim Ton said the Commissioners have received an electronic transmission asking to respond to the committee assignments they would like to have and asked that they provide their choices as soon as possible by clicking on the link in the email so that the new committees can get underway.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner reported that copies of the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion will be available at the next meeting. He thanked Construction Advancement Foundation's Dewey Pearman for allowing NIRPC to use the facilities for its meetings while their office was undergoing remodeling. NIRPC's meeting rooms have all been renamed. NIRPC's auditorium is now called the Lake Michigan Room and should be available for the meeting next month.

Finance & Personnel Committee:

Diane Noll, Treasurer, reported that the committee met this morning. Items were reviewed and approved. One item was presented for approval today, which is the contract between NIRPC and the Kankakee River Basin Commission (KRBC). There were no changes from the 2015 agreement. The agreement between NIRPC and KRBC was approved by the Executive Board on a motion by Kevin Breitzke, seconded by Greg Stinson.

Environmental Management Policy Committee:

Geof Benson reported that the minutes of the February 4 meeting were in the packet. The 30-day Public Comment Period on the Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Watershed Management Plan runs from March 3 through April 2. The communities in the watershed were named. The watershed management plan is a policy planning implementation recommendation for a multi-jurisdictional area. It is not enforcement or regulatory. The planners, stakeholders, engineers and stormwater managers should be aware of it. It follows the format of the most current IDEM Watershed Management Planning Checklist and focuses on the resource intensive watershed inventory elements that provide a snapshot of current watershed conditions. The EMPC will ask for adoption of the Deep River-Portage Burns Waterway Watershed Plan report at the Board meeting next month.

Transportation Policy Committee:

Dave Decker reported that the Transportation Policy Committee met on March 15th. The Committee heard a presentation from the Indiana Toll Road operator about their 80/90 PUSH project, a planned 73-mile rehabilitation of the Toll Road from Lake Station to Elkhart. The \$200 million project is scheduled to start in April, and finish by December of 2017. For more information please visit <http://www.ezpassin.com/road-construction/8090-push/>.

There is one action for consideration, Resolution 16-09, the 16th Amendment to the Fiscal Year 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program. Reporting for Gary Evers, Belinda Petroskey described the proposed amendment which consists of installation by INDOT of train-activated gates at various highway rail crossing locations on the NICTD line in Porter and LaPorte Counties and replacement buses for Michigan City. On a motion by Dave Decker and a second by Kevin Breitzke, the Executive Board voted to approve Resolution 16-09 Amendment 16 to the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program.

Dave Decker said the Committee also took action on a number of products related to an amendment of NIRPC's 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update Companion for I-65 added travel lanes between US 30 and SR 10. These included recommended approvals for the Air Quality Determination, Environmental Justice Analysis and Congestion Management Process. Each of these products will be before the NIRPC Commission at the May meeting, along with approvals pertaining to the plan update. Ahead of this will be a 30-day public comment period, which Stephen Sostaric said will run from March 16 to April 15 for the I-65 added travel lanes between US 30 and SR 10.

Dave Decker said the next meeting date of the Transportation Policy Committee will be Tuesday, April 12 at a location to be determined.

Indiana Department of Transportation:

Rick Powers said his staff will be working on potholes and beginning to transition from their winter work plan throughout the District. A downed guardrail will be repaired. SR 41 will be resurfaced this summer from north of US 30 to SR 231. Flashing yellow light placement is subject to traffic studies. SR 49 will be repaired this year.

In answer to concerns raised by Roger Miller, Matt Deitchley said a lot of the problems on U.S. 20 at Renaissance Academy in LaPorte, as in other areas of the state, are due to driver error or inattention. INDOT met this week with officials from the Renaissance Academy and officers from LaPorte County Sheriff's Department to discuss safety near the school, located on U.S. 20 between U.S. 35 and State Road 39. Improved safety features will be implemented in the coming weeks, in addition to an expedited center turn lane project which was originally planned for construction in 2018. A center turn lane project was added to INDOT's project schedule back in 2013, with construction now planned for 2017, which is the soonest possible time frame. A project of this nature takes several years to bring to completion from initial design, due to property acquisition, utility relocation, federal regulations and many other factors.

In the interim, before the turn lane project, several safety measures will be implemented in the coming weeks including additional "School Ahead" signage, right lane only for trucks, large "SCHOOL" pavement markings, and timing will be adjusted on the current school zone flashing light signage to better alert drivers of busy school drop off/pick up hours.

Public Comment on Agenda Items:

Jim Ton said no requests were received and closed the comment portion.

Presentation:

Update: Mike Noland reported that the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) is working on stations and parking locations for the West Lake expansion from Munster to Dyer as well as progressing on the double tracking project. WI-FI is now available on almost all of the trains. NICTD has offered free westbound rides this week on the South Shore to attract new riders. Friday is the final day.

Presentation: The South Shore commuter rail line's bikes-on-trains pilot program is set to start April 2 and continue on weekends through the end of October. The service will be available at high-level platforms that allow level entry and exit. Low-level platforms, requiring use of a narrow staircase to enter and exit cars, won't accommodate bikes, for safety reasons. Stations with high-level platforms are South Bend, Dune Park, East Chicago, Hammond and all Illinois stations. Once the double-tracking project is complete, its other stations will be bike-ready. NICTD has removed half the seats from three South Shore cars allowing for 26 bikes and they removed one quarter of the seats from four other cars, allowing for 14 bikes. The total number of spots available for bikes on all trains through the course of the summer will be 130,000. NICTD believes this program will be very successful, and believes it will be able to meet the demand, but demand levels can't be predicted. All standard bicycles will fit the racks, not tricycles, tandem or recumbent. If successful, NICTD is ready to expand the service. The bike service will not be available on weekends of special events in Chicago, including the Blues Festival,

Taste of Chicago, Air and Water Show, and Lollapalooza. NICTD would like to explore bike trail connections and expand bike-related opportunities by locating a Divvy-type bike rental service at stations, with bike rental racks at nearby locations that could help draw visitors. Tom McDermott Jr. said Hammond officials are considering a bike rental program. Go to www.nictd.com for more information.

Announcements:

Bob Carnahan announced the Cedar Lake Chamber of Commerce will present a business and organization showcase on Saturday, March 19 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by Anthony Copeland and a second by Dave Decker. Jim Ton adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

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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