



Committee Meeting ~ NIRPC Auditorium March 26, 2015 Minutes

Members & Guests – Shannon Eason, Mark Heintz, Walter Lenckos, Julie Mandon, Chris Moore, John Novacich, Don Parker, Jerry Rosko, Joe Rurode, Craig Zandstra, Mark Gordish, Stan Dostatni, Jeff Brechbill, Bruce Spires, James Mandon, Craig Phillips, Jan Orlich, Jacob Ballah, Jake Dammarell, Steve Antonetti, La’Kisha Girder, David Wright, Beth Shrader, Marino Solorio and Dan Plath by conference call
Staff – Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell

Vice-Chair John Novacich called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. with self-introductions.

Ped

South Shore Trails - Update

Don Parker reported they are planning spring events. The Ride of Silence memorial ride will be held in mid-May and activities are being planned to coincide with Chicago bike week at the end of June. Trails Day is the first Saturday in June and South Shore Trails would like to help promote events in the communities around the region.

Paddle –

NWI Paddling Association – Update

The majority of NWIPA’s time recently has been spent on the application to make the bi-state, 133 mile Kankakee River a National Water Trail. Letters of support have been received and the application efforts are almost complete. There has been a lot of outreach with the agricultural community and meetings have been held with the farm bureaus in every county around the River. With the exception of Starke County who remained neutral, unanimous support was received. The application will most likely be submitted toward the end of March and hopefully a dedication can be held to coincide with the Sand Hill Crane Paddle this fall. In addition there will be a week-long expedition of the Kankakee and will involve the Boy Scouts and Illinois partners. Wilderness Inquiry should be back to the area for a month to month and a half with money from the Kankakee River Basin Commission, the National Park Service and Michigan City. The EIS on the East Cal is still in process and word from the park service being waited on.

Pedal

A. CMAQ, HSIP & STP-2 Funding Cycle – Application Workshop

A handout of trail-related NOFA Projects for review for the Chicago Urbanized Area and the Michigan City/LaPorte Urbanized Area was provided to the group. Mitch noted that Schererville’s Indianapolis Blvd to Dyer Central Park application had been accidentally left off of the list of projects. The City of Gary’s project was also not on the list because it was a sidewalk and not a trail project. Since the requests for funds are greater than funds available, NIRPC staff recommends prioritizing the projects. 3PC would be a recommendation body only with the CMAQ committee ranking emissions and having the final word on projects funded. Craig Phillips stated that typically the three major elected officials from Michigan City, LaPorte and LaPorte County meet and decide how the funds are split for the Michigan City/LaPorte Urbanized Area. Mitch clarified that 3PC is not preempting decision making, just offering guidance. Mitch suggested using the ped & bike project selection criteria from the TAP application as the scoring criteria for ranking the projects since some method of guidance is needed to prevent a free-for-all when presented at the committee level. At this point the amount of funds available for the bike and ped projects is not known and no target amount amounts have been set. In the past TAP funding applications have had a cap, but CMAQ has not. STP road projects also have a cap while STP trail projects do not. Concerns were raised regarding the fact that previously CMAQ funding was a way for trail projects that did not necessarily score well on the TAP application and the fact that there were issues with the

application during the last TAP funding round. The goal was to update the application for this funding cycle and then bring it back for a more detailed review for the next round of TAP funding. After review and discussion of the ped & bike application the following changes were agreed to:

- Section IV - Intermodal Connection: Since CMAQ does not fund trail heads, remove B.
- Section VIII – Overmatch Above the 20% Local Match: Remove
- Section IX – Previously Awarded TAP Bones: Remove
- Section X – Point Deduction: Remove

All other sections will remain as is and the revised application will be sent out the LPAs. The application will need to be completed for review by a sub-committee and then will be reviewed at the next 3PC meeting on April 23rd. It was reiterated that this application change is only for CMAQ and STP and will reviewed again for the next TAP funding cycle.

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates:

- Merrillville: Bruce Spires reported that the second phase of the C & O will be let in September 2015. They are hoping to do some clearing before winter and begin construction in spring 2016 with completion slated for late summer/early fall 2016.
- La Porte: Beth Shrader reported they are currently reviewing letters of interest for the Chesapeake I Trail and will hopefully all their paperwork to INDOT before May 1st.
- Michigan City: The letting date for Singing Sands I has been moved to January 2017. Singing Sands III is in the post application, application process.
- Hobart: The ADA canoe and kayak launch projects will be starting mid-May.
- Lake County: Construction crews are clearing for the Erie Lackawanna and Oak Savannah connection. Hopefully building will start in fall 2015.
- Hammond: The Sheffield project is to be constructed any day now and the 129th to NIPSCO trail is to be built this summer. The lakefront to Illinois project is in negotiations with the property owner.
- East Chicago: Cleaning the Grand Cal is in the planning stages and they are looking at four strategic locations to put stopping/kayak launch areas. Once the Grand Cal is completed they are looking to clean up the canal and are hoping to host some sort of triathlon this summer. The Mayor has committed to actively seeking grants.
- Porter County: Clearing has started for the one and a half mile trail in Brincka Cross Gardens which will be completed this year through the recreational trails program. Now that the county is ready to move forward Calumet Trail project, NIPSCO informed them that they have a pipeline project scheduled to begin right after the trail completion. They are working with INDOT to see if both projects can be completed within the same scope.
- Schererville: There are two issues regarding the Pennsy; still trying to do acquisition even though the railroad filed for an extension and the railroad wants to remove the bridge the trail was going to go under. Designs have been submitted for a culvert installation and they are waiting on what costs will be. Some designs are just for a trail and some incorporate an east-west road. Another alternative involves using a culvert that currently exists under the tracks, but property would need to be purchased and a little more environmental work completed if that route is used.

B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes:

- Shannon Eason questioned if any of the communities do not allow dogs on their trail systems. Most of them do as long as they are leashed. East Chicago has signs for no dogs allowed in their parks, but it is not enforced and there are dogs everywhere.

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

- Hansen Park Kayak Launch ribbon cutting May 31, 2015.

D. Next Meeting is Thursday, April 23, 2015

Meeting Adjourned at 3:05 p.m.