



**COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
DECEMBER 5, 2013
MINUTES**

Members & Guests – Jerry Rosko, Denarie Kane, John Novacich, Chris Moore, Chris Nesper, Jake Dammarell, Jan Dick, Bob Huffman, Diane Banta, Ron Brown, Gregg Calpino, Brian Niksch, Walter Lenckos, Merk Heintz, Carl Fisher, Bob Allen, Zeta Allen, Steve Buchtel

Staff - Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. with self-introductions.

Ped

South Shore Trails - Update

Bob Huffman reported that after discussion and debate, South Shore Trails opposes the Illiana and Don Parker voted that way at the TPC meeting. The gap between the river and River Drive on the Little Cal River project and trail has now been fixed; the levy trail coming from the west meets a sidewalk on Columbia and is now a safe connection.

More Miles – Hammond, Porter & Indiana Dunes State Park!

Mitch reported on several projects that were underway in 2013. He gave updates on the Hammond Wolf Lake Trail, the Porter Dunes-Kankakee and Calumet Trail and the Porter Orchard Path.

Pedal

Trails Saved My Life – Diane Banta, Steve Buchtel & Gregg Calpino

The three presenters teamed up to present on different aspects of trails. The history of trails was discussed; there has always been a need for places for people on the go and the need to connect people on the go to our region. Trails have been around a long time, probably developed from animals. Trails have economic benefit and allowed trade routes to be established and enabled goods to be transported across areas. Trails also allowed for human migrations and eventually became roads. The history of Chicago cycling and trail development was also presented.

The Cal-Sag trail which is a 26 mile trail which passes through 9 communities was discussed. Planned developments were shown, as well as urban, suburban and state evolution and plans for the future. Health survey findings showed 43% of people primarily use trails for health reasons and 30% use trails 21 or more days in fall, spring and summer. Economic findings showed 1/3 spend money during their trail visit with an average amount spent of \$30.40. More survey findings were reported as well.

The process of developing trails is sometimes the difficult part. While there are no shortage of plans or thoughts for trails, the process is typically 10-20 years. There is often a misconception of myths versus facts. Instead of a miles metric, it should be looked at as acres preserved, lives saved, jobs created, revenue generated, cars converted, etc. Thinking more broadly opens up new revenue sources. Sometimes it's about changing your approach to the process; explore new alliances, adapt to a political clock, understand the funder's objectives, focus on benefits, sell the numbers, change the metric, think holistically, and adapt. A sing-a-long and question and answer session on topics such as dealing with railroads and tolls on trails followed the presentation.

Paddle –

a. **NWI Paddling Association – Update -**

None

b. **Camping on the Kank – Update**

Work is being done to establish more camping and access sites in addition to La Porte County.

Grab Bag

A. Project Updates:

- Bob Huffman reported that about half of the State Line generating property has been purchased and asked if anyone had any information about what the plans were for the sight. INDOT put out the request and letters of interest had been turned in to build a bike trail on the property. Funding was awarded through TAP and once the project is awarded to a consultant real estate acquisition will go forward through the city of Hammond. Chris Moore also noted that he had meetings with the city of Hammond for further bike trail expansion in that area on the outside skirts of the property.
- John Novacich reported that some agreements have been approved for the title abstract work to be done through the Town of Schererville's attorney for the Pennsy Greenway. DLZ is also completing environmental work for NEPA documentation, but it will be a while before property acquisition takes place.
- Brian Niksch reported that the City of La Porte trails plan will be complete by December 11th for presentation to the Park Board. Over 22 miles of bike trails in the city have been identified.
- Jan Dick reported that the Five Points roundabout has been opened in Valparaiso and will be a lot safer pedestrian crossing.

B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes

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

- A Santa run will be held in Hobart on Saturday, December 7 at 9:00 a.m.
- Mitch noted that one of the Illiana recommendations from NIRPC staff is to build a parallel trail facility along the entire length of the expressway. How that will be accomplished will be discussed at the next meeting and if the Illiana is approved it will move forward with keeping INDOT and IDOT honest with best practices proposed.

D. Next Meeting is Thursday, January 23

Meeting Adjourned.