



**COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
DECEMBER 13, 2012
MINUTES**

MEMBERS & GUESTS – Jan Dick, James Mandon, Dorreen Carey, Bob Huffman, Eric Ehn, Dan Plath, Kevin Crawford, Don Parker, A J Bytnar, A J Monroe, John Novacich, Mark O’Dell, Brian Niksch, Michelle Bollinger, Jenny Orsburn, John Siebert, Ron Wiedeman, Matt Keiser, Walter Lenckos, Christopher Meyer, Shannon Eason, Jan Orlich
STAFF - Mitch Barloga, Meredith Stilwell, Stephen Sostaric, Bill Brown, John Swanson, Gary Evers

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. with self-introductions.

PED

SOUTH SHORE TRAILS -

The annual party and connection and connectors award ceremony will be Wednesday, January 23 at the Hammond marina. \$5 per person or free for South Shore Trails members. The work plan for 2013 will also be released at the event. It was noted that South Shore Trails representatives participated in the TAP update process.

PEDAL

FEATURE PRESENTATION: TAP Workshop Proposed Revision & ACTION

A series of workshops were held and a handout of the proposed TAP application revisions and priority corridor map revisions were given to the Committee for review. Mitch noted Indiana is keeping the RTP. The new transportation bill does not specify standards for the competitive application process which is why the workshops needed to be held to establish what to do in this region. Roughly \$1.1 million will be available for TAP on a yearly basis. Ineligible projects that were determined during the workshops were reviewed by Mitch. The three major eligible categories determined during the workshops were Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects (80%) with a maximum funding request of 1/3 of the 80%; Historic Projects/ Environment (10%) with a maximum funding request of 1/2; and Safe Routes to School (10%) with maximum funding requests of 70% for infrastructure and 30% for non-infrastructure. Ten proposed revisions to the application were detailed on the handout and some were briefly reviewed by Mitch, two being that all projects should now have a maintenance plan and all project phases will now be allowed. Bonus points for overmatch will still be awarded. The newly revised priority corridor map was determined through vigorous debate and looked at which communities are on the ball with projects which have demonstrated interest in moving forward with many of the corridors arranged accordingly. Mitch discussed the priority ranking changes as well as any name changes or changes in funding status. It was pointed out that the State Visionary Trails are ranked high and are given bonus points and were ranked as such in the past. After lengthy discussion regarding trail rankings and the system of ranking and criteria, during which it was suggested to set numbers to the ranking system instead of just being a subjective methodology, it was recommended by John Novacich to raise the priority for the Old Plank Road small interconnect on the Michigan Central Trail at the State line (roughly three miles) from low to medium. The Chairman requested a show of hands for those in favor of raising the priority from low to medium with one only representative from each community able to vote. With a majority vote of yes the consensus was to change the priority ranking from low to medium. It was also asked if there was discussion regarding adding water trails as eligible for TA funding to which Mitch indicated there was not, but is something that can be revisited from year to year. John Swanson indicated that when the State developed its trails plan, NIRPC’s plan was essentially embraced as a model. Further discussion was held regarding keeping all phases in the funding and the challenge in not seeing built outcomes especially with fewer resources. It was also mentioned that could possibly be an opportunity to see more complete streets projects since they are less expensive than trails building and could connect nodes. There were a couple of suggestions to show breaks in a couple of places on the map that currently show complete trails but the trails have not been completed. Mitch indicated those areas could be fixed. Chris Meyers motioned to approve the TAP application revisions as well as the priority regional trails and corridors map with revisions taking place in Hammond, along the Michigan Central, The Pennsy, and the American Discovery Trail. Don Park seconded the motion. Chairman Dick requested a show of hands in favor and a show of hands opposed. With 11 yes votes and no opposition, the motion passed.

OLD PLANK ROAD TRAIL CORRIDOR ACQUISITION – UPDATE

Mitch updated on the acquisition attempt. Dyer and Schererville are being looked on connecting to the State line and eventually to Illinois. Norfolk Southern filed for abandonment and Openlands put it a railbanking request which was

denied. A public use condition applies, but leaves the door open for anyone to negotiate with Norfolk Southern and not just the sponsoring entities. Mitch is in negotiations with Norfolk's Virginia office and hopes to have direction from them shortly.

MARQUETTE GREENWAY MICHIANA PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE

Interest has been displayed by Michigan in connecting trails. Mitch attended a trails workshop in Saugatuck and was talked to about the Marquette Greenway. The goal is to bring together between Michigan City and New Buffalo to complete the Greenway. New Buffalo would bet the eastern termini of the Greenway. Four Winds Casino has funded civic projects and are very interested in trail projects. Hope is to have the first meeting in Jan 2013 to begin dialogue.

PADDLE –

NWI PADDLING ASSOCIATION – UPDATE

No public canoeing and kayaking events right now, just smaller groups due to weather. Winter months are typically used to plan for education and stewardship programs. Dan Plath updated on making the Hansen Park launch site in Michigan City fully ADA compliant. NWIPA is working with various partners to gain letters of support for the project. The rules have been worked through and funding is lined up for the Kankakee River water trail and will hopefully open in spring 2013. Chickees will hopefully be installed by summer 2013. NWIPA hopes to work with Porter and Lake Counties and Illinois to create a camping site across the state line. NWIPA, along with others surveyed Deep River north of Lake George and it appears ripe for a water trail development and would like to install safety features immediately. There is hope to complete the Lake Michigan water trail soon. Wisconsin is through its public notice and is applying, Michigan should be on board in a year or two and discussion is beginning with Illinois' north shore communities north of Chicago regarding the Illinois segment. The Parkids program will be held again this year and involves 20 kids and working with them in pool sessions in the winter; graduate to smaller lakes in spring graduate and eventually to a four-day paddle. NWIPA, along with a number of partners, brought in Wilderness Inquiry this year and ended up with 450 kids on the water during the program. The plan is to at double that for 2013 and have Wilderness Inquiry here for a week. Winter Rendezvous will be held January 12 at the Hammond Marina. Speakers will be featured and awards given. Invitations will be distributed closer to the event date. Dan reported Ralph Frese "Mr. Canoe", who was a very strong advocate for paddling in the area, passed away Monday, December 10.

GRAB BAG

A. MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES, CONCERNS, GRIPES & A BIT OF FUN

B. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS (UPCOMING RIDES, EVENTS, ETC.) – *SPECIAL PRESENTATION*

Mitch gave a presentation honoring John Swanson for his influence and legacy in the non-motorized presence in northwest IN. When John came aboard at NIRPC faced a lot of challenges but has tried to balance the many different interests in the region. Nearly 40 miles of trails have been built since he came on board. Many programs, plans and projects were mentioned that have been developed during his tenure including the Rack 'em Up Program, Greenways and Blueways plan, Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan, Kankakee River Water Trail and map development, Complete Streets, Greenway and Blueways maps, Marquette Greenway projected route for connector to the National Lakeshore, American Discovery Trail. John thanked the group and noted the change in the attitude towards trails and remarked it's wonderful to see what has been accomplished.

Bob Huffman spoke briefly about the controversial bike lanes on Dearborn in Chicago. Links to reports on the issue are available on the South Shore Trails website.

Update from Michigan City: NICTD is doing a realignment project through Michigan City and 6 of the 12 routes run over the planned trail system. The Mayor has been asked what to do since the railroad does not have funding for the project and he has committed to moving the Singing Sands Trail forward and the City is in right of way acquisition now with plan construction in September 2014. The Mayor has also committed to looking at the partially funded NIPSCO Greenway Trail and will make a decision within 4-6 months in moving forward.

C. THE NEXT 3PC MEETING IS JANUARY 24, 2012.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:07.