



COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
JUNE 28, 2012
MINUTES

MEMBERS & GUESTS – Jan Dick, Walter Lenckos, Bob Huffman, Jerry Rosko, Bruce Spires, Leslie Phemister, Don Parker, Michele Bollinger, Matt Keiser, Jenny Orsburn, Mark Heintz, Rory Robinson, Kevin Crawford, Katie Lemon, Daniel Goldfarb, Michael Richardson, Craig Zandstra, A J Bytnar, Tim Cole
STAFF - Mitch Barloga, Bill Brown, Wenya Hou, Meredith Stilwell

Chairman Dick called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. with self-introductions.

PED

SOUTH SHORE TRAILS - UPDATE. The annual region ride was held June 2nd. There will be a meeting at NIRPC on Saturday June 30 to work on Part II of their strategic planning. There will be free and supervised bike parking at the Gary South Shore Air Show.

WILDLIFE HABITAT COUNCIL, DANIEL GOLDFARB – Wildlife Habitat Council has recently become involved with trails. Daniel gave background information and reviewed a couple projects that they hope to complete, but have not yet been built. Wildlife Habitat Council is a 22 year old organization founded by industry to manage and restore their wildlife habitats, natural and degraded areas and continue to work closely with industry. Daniel began working on ecological reuse of contaminated sites in northwest Indiana about nine years ago and now does more of the traditional ecological restoration and habitat management. One of the current programs involves working with employees of local industries to train and engage them in conservation and trail projects which will in turn provide a level of community outreach for their stewardship work. With the support of facilities managers, administration, and corporate level once there is a level of activity, the door can then be opened to reach out to schools, colleges and universities, and community groups. Training for industrial workers is provided by Wildlife Habitat Council in some cases or by partnering with other organizations and also help with communication and community outreach skills. In 2009 a \$300k grant was received from the Forest Service through stimulus funding and allowed for the hiring of a full time field manager and hiring and training of five unemployed steel, manufacturing, and railroad workers for 10 months. Extra funding to invest and complete the projects was provided through partnerships with NIPSCO, ArcelorMittal, and BP Whiting Refinery. Four projects highlighted included:

- **BP Whiting Refinery** – *Because they do not have much open space or areas for conservation with their employees, they have gone into the community and built five native gardens at schools in Hammond, East Chicago, and Whiting.*
- **ArcelorMittal Burns Harbor Plant** – *The Burns Harbor Plant and the US Steel Midwest Plant are squeezed between two large National Park Service Parcels. A group of employees and the environmental management group are working to understand what types of habitats are still available within the Burns Harbor facility. The project has generated interest and some support within the plant to look at creating trails within the plant and eventually linking to the Marquette Trail.*
- **Kindermorgan** – *They have a huge need for trained, qualified environmental technicians and have set up a leadership training program in which they visit five schools in the south side of Chicago and are tracking high school kids that have high GPAs for eight years, even paying for their college education, if they come and work for Kindermorgan. They are assisting Wildlife Habitat Council is setting up conservation leadership training program.*
- **Exxon Mobil** – *A student and professor from Purdue University in Lafayette's Landscape Architecture Program contacted Wildlife Habitat Council with their interest in working on an industrial renewal or reuse project in Northwest Indiana. Exxon Mobil owns 80 acres of land which is under a conservation easement and which they want to keep as wetlands. Trail plans and concepts for the site were produced by Purdue and could eventually be a research base, ecology center, and a mini-conservation area.*

The example of ArcelorMittal land being part of the Marquette Trail and transportation access, security and liability issues were mentioned and it was asked if Daniel had examples of projects where those issues had been addressed. Daniel noted there are good examples throughout the country that have trails and a lot of companies have controlled visits and accessed to enable them to better control safety, security and liability. Matt Keiser commented that the Town of Porter worked with Daniel on opening the Little Calumet River and the crew was extremely qualified and good and is a good program to look into since they are guys who really want to work and is good, free labor. Mitch remarked that the link between conservation and trail connectivity is critical since many trails are located in wildlife habitat corridors and places of conservation.

PEDAL

NWI GREENWAYS AND BLUEWAYS MAP 2012 — PICK EM' UP!

There is an abundance of maps remaining that need to be picked up. It was mentioned that an app for the Iphone is being developed pro bono.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Cardin-Cochran Amendment

MAP21, the new transportation bill, gets rid of the SAFETEA-LU funding programs of SRTS, Recreational Trails Program, and the TE program. Those programs are now lumped together in a category called additional activities, which also includes environmental mitigation and roadway improvement programs. In addition, different agencies have discretion on how the money will be spent for the additional programs. MAP21 was originally designed to be directly administered by the State with no local control and undefined MPO control. The Cardin-Cochran Amendment was intended to fix some of the ambiguity, first by providing funds directly to MPOs and local governments for the additional activities category and would allow flexibility for specific community needs. MPOs would have a grant cycle and INDOT would have a grant cycle for the local communities. The President has named this a jobs creator bill and has demanded passage of the bill. The Conference Committee has released a report revealing states will control half of the money and no local competition will be allowed and MPO control is still undefined. Going forward, the President will mostly likely sign the bill on Monday, July 2. From the 3PC perspective, depending on how much control the MPO retains, the TE application will have to be reconfigured significantly to allow for all of the new programs. Funding policies will need to be dictated and ironed out and there will be less money available. This is only a two year bill and will have to be revisited again in 2014.

Leslie Phimester announced that Active Transportation Alliance has developed a manual for designing complete streets and will be available online. It is an A-Z, graphic and user friendly document for designing complete streets. Several will be distributed in this region. Hopefully, this will help develop policies and standards for communities to embrace. A launch party will be held Tuesday, July 17.

MORE MILES! THE NEW GEORGE LAKE/MARQUETTE GREENWAY BRIDGE!

The bridge located in the Whiting and Hammond area has been constructed and opened. Mitch presented pictures of the planned elevation perspective as well as the constructed facility. It is called the George Lake connecting bridge, however, it is part of the Marquette Greenway system between Whiting, Hammond, and the George Lake area. Mitch encouraged the group to visit the newly constructed bridge.

Mitch presented pictures of the newly laid portion of the Porter Brickyard trail in the National Park between US 20 and 12. The trail maintains an ADA slope throughout its profile and reaches the bridge at US 12 at grade. Because of a railroad issue, the trail currently ends at Mineral Springs Road. Signage has been placed to get across the trail and to the Calumet Trail.

Mark Heintz reported excavation has begun on the trail in Hammond from Little Cal North up Lyman Ave. and is moving along quickly. Mitch noted that is the Monon trail and will eventually connect to Munster.

DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL PRIORITY CORRIDORS MAP AMENDMENTS

Mitch decided to table the discussion until further notice regarding the transportation bill.

PADDLE –

NWI PADDLING ASSOCIATION – UPDATE

NWIPA continues to have regular floats and conservation clean-up projects. The Hobart RFP deadline for a kayak concession located on Lake George was extended and is now July 10th. It is a pilot project for the rest of the summer to see what type of interest exists and then expand on that next year. Kayaks have not been purchased as of yet, but Hobart is working with Dan Plath to ascertain what materials, etc. should be purchased. Purchases will not be made until there is someone to run the concession.

A video was shown on newly installed bike lanes in Indianapolis and highlighted tips on how to do this in individual communities and get elected officials interested.

GRAB BAG

A short discussion was held about how in federal programs cycling and walking are portrayed as wasteful and driving is seen as beyond criticism. The big issue seems to be with people figuring out that bikes and walking are not transportation alternatives or recreation, but are transportation and people should be able to use them as freely and as safely as with any motorized vehicle.

Chairman Dick spoke briefly about the role of Valpo Pathways and indicated the Committee was formed about 15 years ago and was an attempt to put the word pathway out to every government entity in Valparaiso. It has taken years, but department heads are now starting to look at how a pathway can be put into plans. Further discussion was held regarding privately owned parking lots and having it become a part of the complete streets process.

The Whiting and Hammond 25 mile after midnight ride (WHAM) is Saturday 8/4 and will be on the streets of Hammond, including the new Monan.

The Valparaiso night ride is being held August 25 and events begin at 11:00 p.m.

South Shore Trails will be in the main parking lot at Marquette Park close to the Aquatorium with valet and supervised parking for the Gary Air South Shore Air Show and will be doing the same at Pierogi Fest.

THE NEXT 3PC MEETING IS AUGUST 23, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 3:16 p.m.