



COMMITTEE MEETING ~ NIRPC AUDITORIUM
AUGUST 23, 2012
MINUTES

MEMBERS & GUESTS – Tim Morgan, Blair Milo, Bob Huffman, Chip Sobek, Craig Zandstra, Eric Ehn, Jenny Orsburn, Brian Niksch, Denarie Kane, Jake Dammarell, Chris Nesper, Jerry Rosko, Kevin Crawford, Caitlin Vanlaningham, Craig Hendrix, Nick Minich, A J Bytnar, A J Monroe, Dan Plath, Michele Bollinger, Matt Keiser, Christopher Meyers, Chris Moore, Mark Heintz

STAFF - Mitch Barloga, Bill Brown, Tom VanDerWoude, Stephen Sostaric, Gabrielle Biciunis, Amanda Pollard, Meredith Stilwell

Co-Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. with self-introductions.

PED

SOUTH SHORE TRAILS - UPDATE. Over 100 bicycles were attended to at Periogi Fest. Tail lights for bikes will be passed out at the Valparaiso Night Ride on August 25. SST will also be involved with the Lansing Fall Fest and are not only involved in the bi-state working group trying to preserve the right of way for the Old Plank Road Trail, but also are involved in the coalition to allow full sized bicycles on the South Shore Train system. I was noted that the WHAM ride was very successful with over 700 bicyclists. The next meeting will be held September 3rd in Griffith.

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Fitness Fridays

LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo spoke about the LaPorte Fitness Fridays Program that began in March 2012. Partnering with the YMCA and the IU Health LaPorte Hospital, the City of LaPorte effort which originally began as a take on a 5k Friday idea has expanded to a Fitness Friday program that incorporates running and walking with hopes to eventually expand to include a pedal and possible paddle piece. The program is for all fitness levels and on nice days typically has a turnout of 200-250 people. Different sub-programs have been incorporated within the original Fitness Friday program and allow individuals to work toward achieving goals. The route is all on street and has distances marked to allow people to see how far they are walking/running and allows for each individual to choose the distance they would like to go. In order to develop a routine the program time and route remain consistent, which also enables the city to use on-duty police officers and fireman without having to hire additional man power. When signing up, contact information is obtained so those involved can be informed when or if changes happen. The program not only promotes physical fitness, but also sets a positive tone for the weekend and encourages a positive outlook about the LaPorte community. The 2012 program looks to wrap-up by September 28th, but there is a possibility of extending further into winter on the same route or moving inside. Mayor Milo spoke briefly about the first LaPorte night ride which had around 75 attendees and mentioned the desire to hold a Festival of the Lakes Event in 2013.

PEDAL

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Transportation Alternatives

The new Transportation Bill, MAP-21, was signed into law in June. The once separate funding streams of TE, Safe Routes to Schools and the Recreational Trail Program have all been combined into what is now known as Transportation Alternatives (TA). Environmental and some roadway projects will be included in the TA category as well. There will be less money to work with. TA is comprised of two funding pots, part of which is distributed to the State (INDOT) all the major MPOs (200k or greater in population) in the state of Indiana. INDOT will receive approximately \$22m. The MPOs can continue to spend their portion on traditional TE projects. However, the amount of money they have to program will have decreased from \$1.95m to \$952,000. The State can work with communities on an individual level and pick up the slack with their \$22m allotment but have the ability to opt out without any excuse and can transfer the entire amount to road projects or they can also opt to just spend a portion on trail projects. It is unclear what Indiana will do at this point. To make up the difference extra money will have to be found in the STP and CMAQ Programs which will have more money since there are no earmarks in MAP-21.

The new bill becomes effective 10/1/2012 and 3PC will need to significantly reconfigure the application, policies about funding targets will have to be ironed out and work will need to be done with other funding committees to make up the shortfall. Currently, it is unknown when the funding cycle will commence or if the State will even have a funding cycle. If the States does decide to fund trail projects that will affect decisions as well.

DISCUSSION ON REGIONAL PRIORITY CORRIDORS MAP AMENDMENTS

The Priority Regional Trails and Corridors Maps with potential new corridors and trail name changes were available for review at the meeting. The potential name changes and priority corridor amendments were presented by Mitch. He explained the amendments were first proposed at the February 3PC meeting, but due to concerns as to how the priority of the corridors was determined, were postponed until the methodology could be made more transparent to the Committee. Mitch noted that the ranking methodology was put together around the time the routes were first identified and was qualitative as opposed to quantitative. At that time each corridor was ranked low, medium, or high for the criteria established, some of which included population density, connects to trails, and environmental justice population. The recommended changes were put up against the chart originally established. Mitch stated in order to have full cooperation of the Committee he would like agreement on the methodology within the next month so the map can be revised before the first TA cycle at NIRPC. A question and answer period was held with members present at the original meetings voicing what they could remember of how the rankings were established and confirmation that the current methodology was applied for the recommended amendments. Suggestions were made in regard to establishing a quantitative numerical rolling ranking system and factors not currently being considered. After discussion, the consensus of the group was to create an ad-hoc committee comprised of a cross section of government and non-government and include pedaling and interested non-motorized organizations to create a new ranking system. Mitch will set a date and send out a notice for volunteers to serve on the committee and the process will go from there.

PADDLE –

NWI PADDLING ASSOCIATION – UPDATE

Dan Plath reported upcoming events that include the Lake Michigan Water Trail Marathon from Marquette Park to Washington Park; Saugany Lake Jellyfish Paddle; and LaPorte Chain of Lakes Tour. The NWIPA Park Kids Program in partnership with the National Park Service started in January teaching 20 teenagers basic paddling safety, wet exiting, etc. The last week of June a four day paddling camp was held in Portage and was a successful event. Classes for adults have been held at Wolf Lake and Stone Lake. In spring, 2013 a water safety/surf rescue class will be held in NW Indiana and focus on the dangers of rip currents. NWIPA has been working with Trail Creek Stakeholders to bring Wilderness Inquiry to Northwest Indiana. Wilderness Inquiry is a non-profit based in Minneapolis that will bring large voyager canoes that can take multiple children on the water and they focus on watershed education and local ecology. Michigan Parks and Recreation has been working with NWIPA to establish an ADA accessible kayak launch in Hansen Park. Clean up is continuing on Trail Creek. The National Park Service is working with NWIPA on a study in the Little Calumet East Branch on wooded debris removal and what affect it has on water bodies. LaPorte County is continuing to work toward an overnight camping spot. NWIPA currently has about 450 members and recently welcome Sandy Wheeling from the Dunes Learning Center to their Board. Nicole Barker from Save the Dunes recently left the Board. A DNR coastal grant for purchasing additional kayaks is near completion.

Mitch displayed an interpretive sign that is being placed along the Kankakee River at all launch locations. The sign was put together by the grant received with ArcelorMittal.

GRAB BAG

Chairman Morgan reminded the group to pick up the 2012 trail maps for distribution.

Mitch announced the Valparaiso Night Ride is August 25 and is \$40.00 for 15 miles.

Dan Plath announced the sunset paddle held every Wednesday night at Indiana Dunes State Park. Kayaks can be provided if NWIPA is notified in advance.

Denarie Kane announced the Chicago River Kayak and Canoe Rental Company offered kayaks at the Hobart Lakefront Festival and would like to work with the community at events in the future.

THE NEXT 3PC MEETING IS SEPTEMBER 27, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.