

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
April 17, 2014
Minutes

Chairman Brian Snedecor called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum of the Commission was noted.

Commissioners present included Nancy Adams, Roosevelt Allen, Jr., John Bayler, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Tom Clouser, Anthony Copeland, Jon Costas, Dave Decker, Jeff Dekker, Stan Dobosz, Bill Emerson, Jr., Don Ensign, Mary Brown, Jeff Freeze, Michael Griffin, Rosalie Jacobs, Richard Ludlow, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Rich Mrozinski, Rich Murphy, Diane Noll, Anthony Pampalone, Lori Reno, Bob Schaefer, Joseph Simonetto, Brian Snedecor, James Snyder, Ed Soliday, Joe Stahura, Greg Stinson, Eldon Strong, Jim Ton and Dave Uran.

Others present included Heather Ennis, Julia Sturber, Robert Alderman, Jim Pinkerton, Cathy Csatari, Ray Dumbrys, Deb Backhus, Val Gomez, Teresa Torres, Rudy Velasco, Patricia Hoesch, Renae Jackson, Carole Carlson, Jeff Huet, Jim Nowacki and Christopher Murphy.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Steve Strains, Mitch Barloga, Belinda Petroskey, Gabrielle Biciunas, Gary Evers, Sarah Geinosky, Kevin Garcia, Angie Hayes, Scott Weber, Kathy Luther, Stephen Sostaric, Mary Thorne and Attorney David Hollenbeck.

Public Comment on Agenda Items: Brian Snedecor announced that the agenda items were considerable and he wanted to move through quickly. He said that of the five people who signed up for public comment, only one had offered to speak on a topic on the agenda. Teresa Torres attempted several times to speak out of order and would not stop when asked, so Brian Snedecor called a brief recess. The meeting resumed at 9:15. Brian Snedecor recognized Jim Nowacki who had signed up to speak on the agenda topic of transportation. Jim Nowacki commented on the reauthorization of the Regional Development Authority and that the RDA includes funding for the West Lake expansion. He said that the NICTD board wants to close stations in Lake County which goes against the NIRPC 2040 Plan and the interests of north Lake County. Jim Nowacki said the NIRPC Commission and residents cannot, at this time, support the reauthorization of the RDA with the present conditions imposed by the State Legislature. Brian Snedecor closed the public comment portion of the agenda.

Introduction of Northwest Indiana Forum President & CEO Heather Ennis. Upon her introduction by Brian Snedecor, Heather Ennis thanked the Commissioners for their service to Northwest Indiana and said she will go out to the communities in the next few months. She added that the Forum staff are all here to help grow Northwest Indiana.

Certificate of Appointment: Ty Warner announced that the Mayor of the City of Gary has appointed Mary Brown of the Gary City Council to the NIRPC Commission.

Presentation: Cathy Csatari, Pollution Prevention and Technical Assistance, presented on the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Highlighted areas included services provided by the Office of Air Quality, the Office of Land Quality, the Office of Water Quality and the Office of Legal Counsel and

Criminal Investigations and several partnerships. The presentation can be found on NIRPC's website under *Meeting Presentations*.

Solar Grant Update: Kathy Luther reported that two stakeholder meetings were held to kick off the US Department of Energy grant for solar energy savings, which is in partnership with the National Association of Regional Councils and others. There will be some training sessions, guidance and model permitting documents and possibly some group purchasing of materials.

Committee on Committees: Blair Milo reported that the first meeting was held with staff to examine the make-up of NIRPC's committees, how the process is working, membership, challenges, etc. Staff is preparing a list of all committees. Recommendations for changes in structure if any will eventually be made to the Commission. She also mentioned that some IUN students are participating in the different committee meetings and working with their professors to report on how committees are informing NIRPC. The next meeting she has with the NIRPC staff is April 23 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC. Commission members have been invited.

Report of the Executive Director: Ty Warner referred to the newsletter which was available in hard copy and on line format. The cover story is that *Creating Livable Communities* (CLC) program, a major 2040 Plan implementation step, received an award from the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association. Seven communities were awardees of the CLC program. With permission from The Times, the newsletter also included an article authored by Ty Warner on the *Five Ideas to Build a Better Northwest Indiana*, as part of the series of columns by The Times. The NIRPC newsletter also featured an article on the SunShot solar ready program; the NIRPC Certification Review; and profiles on Commission member State Rep. Ed Soliday and on NIRPC staff member, Scott Weber. Ty Warner said that he and Steve Strains will be attending the APA national conference at the end of the month. He said INDOT is carefully looking at the quarterly tracking reports. Some communities have not participated in the reporting, and their projects may be at risk. He added that an Executive Session of the Commission will be held on pending litigation immediately following this meeting.

Minutes: The minutes of the March 20, 2014 meeting were approved on a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Kevin Breitzke.

Finance & Personnel Committee: Jim Ton reported that the committee met this morning. There are two action items. The first item is a budget amendment adding \$27,000 in new revenue for contractual expenses for the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) program. Per recommendation of the Finance & Personnel Committee, Jim Ton moved to approve the budget amendment; seconded by Jeff Dekker.

The second item is action on the lease. NIRPC's IT provider attended today's Finance & Personnel meeting, providing counsel and recommendations with regard to internet connectivity issues. On a recommendation from the Finance & Personnel Committee Jim Ton moved to approve the building lease contract; seconded by Jeff Decker. Bob Schaefer commented that the contract states on page 1 and on the signature page that the lease is between Portage and the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission. It should read "Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission". This will be corrected. Tom McDermott asked for clarification on the sharing of the space by NIRPC and the Northwest Indiana Forum. Ty Warner explained the proposed floor plan, which was included in the packet and in color on a display board at the meeting. The Forum will share some of the space currently occupied by NIRPC but will have its own entrance. An executive level board room will be shared by the

two entities. Angie Hayes responded to a question, saying that NIRPC would see a savings of about \$40,000 per year in rental costs. Jim Ton said Comcast was the low bidder for internet services. Ty Warner said there would be a minimum of 20 MB download and 10 MG upload with coaxial cable. Brian Snedecor reminded the commission that a motion and second were on the floor and on a voice vote, the motion carried. Jim Ton added said the next meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee is May 15 at 8 a.m.

Transportation Policy Committee: Stan Dobosz reported that the committee met on April 8 at the NIRPC office. The Committee heard a presentation from the City of Valparaiso on their roundabouts. Six actions that the committee recommended are up for consideration today.

Stan Dobosz said the first action is on Resolution 14-04, Reimbursement of Emergency Expenses for Local Services on the Illiana Expressway. Michael Griffin described the resolution which would support a reimbursement to those local communities that would provide public safety support on the Illiana once it is built. Upon favorable recommendation by the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-04; seconded by Don Ensign. Discussion followed with Eldon Strong, Richard Ludlow and Jim Ton expressing their gratitude and support for this resolution. The Commission approved Resolution 14-04 unanimously.

Stephen Sostaric presented on the public comment report on the proposed amendment to the 2040 Plan to include I-65 Add Lanes and the Cline Avenue Bridge. Two meetings were held, one on February 18 in Merrillville and one February 19 in East Chicago. He also presented on the report for the NICTD Environmental Impact Study and Michigan City "Triangle" request for which four public meetings were held, one at Munster Town Hall on March 22 and three in LaPorte County on March 26 in Michigan City, LaPorte and Purdue North Central.

Mitch Barloga gave an overview of INDOT's request to amend the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan including the Cline Avenue Bridge reconstruction, I-65 lane widening from US 231 to SR 2 and a minor modification for SR 49. Discussion followed. All criteria needed for inclusion in the plan were satisfied. The congestion management process was approved in March; there was no detriment to the environmental justice communities; the public comment periods were held and the projects are all fiscally constrained. Tom McDermott expressed concern over steel workers having to pay a toll to get to and work at the mill and indicated he wanted to vote against the Cline Avenue Bridge project separately. Michael Griffin said that no presentation on any of the projects was put before the *Pathway to 2040* Implementation Committee.

Stan Dobosz said the second action is on Resolution 14-11 making the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the amended 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, and the amended FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Scott Weber presented the Air Quality Conformity Determination for expansion of I-65 between US 231 and SR 2 and the Cline Avenue Bridge replacement, which complies with all federal requirements. All mobile source emissions of VOC and NOx as well as PM2.5 are less than the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets established in the Maintenance Plan included in the US EPA approved State Implementation Plan (SIP) for air quality for Lake and Porter Counties. On a favorable recommendation of the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-11 approving the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the amended 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan, and the amended FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program; seconded by Anthony Copeland; motion carried unanimously.

Stan Dobosz said the third action is on Resolution 14-12 Amendment #4 to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan. Mitch Barloga described the action, which amends the 2040 Plan to include I-65 widening, Cline Avenue Bridge and minor SR 49 lane change. Upon recommendation by the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-12, Amendment #4 to the 2040 CRP; seconded by Joe Simonetto. Discussion followed, with Tom McDermott expressing his opposition to the Cline Avenue Bridge being operated as a toll road. Eldon Strong agreed that it should not be a toll bridge, adding that the original bridge never should have failed. Ed Soliday commented that East Chicago owns the land and has an agreement with a private entity to build the toll bridge. Posed with a question about state funding, he said Lake County is the second highest recipient of state funds and voting against the bridge would have repercussions. He added that he would provide a letter to the editor of the newspaper showing where money has been spent. Anthony Copeland asked for a vote for regionalism and support for the project. Tom McDermott moved to separate the Cline Avenue Bridge project from the rest of the projects; seconded by Eldon Strong. Gary Evers said staff would have to re-prepare all documentation and processes. Brian Snedecor reminded the commission that a motion and second were on the floor. Stan Dobosz and Joe Simonetto refused to withdraw their motions. Jim Ton called for question. On a voice vote, the Commission adopted Resolution 14-12 Amendment #4 to the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan carried with two no votes.

Stan Dobosz said the fourth action is on Resolution 14-13, which is Amendment #11 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary Evers described the three INDOT projects phases for I-65 from US 231 to SR 2. On a recommendation by the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-13, Amendment #11 to the FY 2014-2017 TIP; seconded by Tom McDermott. Motion carried.

Stan Dobosz said the fifth action is on Resolution 14-14, Amendment 16 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Gary Evers described the six air quality exempt INDOT projects. On a favorable recommendation of the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-14, Amendment #16 to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program; seconded by Roosevelt Allen, Jr. The motion carried unanimously.

Stan Dobosz said final action is on Resolution 14-15, Amendment 13 to the Fiscal Year 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Belinda Petroskey described the transit only amendment for the NICTD West Lake Corridor environmental impact study, the LaPorte County "Triangle" connection between Michigan City, the City of LaPorte and Purdue North Central, and the one expansion vehicle. In response to a question, Joe Crnkovich said the study is required to be eligible for federal funds, the cost is \$3 million and would be completed by 2015. On a recommendation of the Transportation Policy Committee, Stan Dobosz moved to approve Resolution 14-15, Amendment 13; seconded by Blair Milo, who added her appreciation for everyone's efforts to make the Triangle project happen. The motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee is May 13 at 9 a.m.

Legislative Committee: Tom McDermott said he will schedule a meeting of the committee for May to begin consideration of issues for the next session of the General Assembly.

Northwestern Indiana Economic Development District (NWIEDD): Roosevelt Allen, Jr. read a letter he received from Jeanette Tamayo of the Chicago regional office of the Economic Development Administration that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) process aligns with the

requirements of the EDA, calling it an innovative and regionally driven CEDS. The NWIEDD is still working to attain district status designation. It has received support resolutions from Lake and La Porte Counties. Porter County will discuss it at their April 29 meeting. The Northwest Indiana Forum is working to secure a letter of support from Governor Pence. The NWIEDD is waiting for a report and evaluation from their attorney on proposed changes to the by-laws as suggested by the EDA. A meeting will then be scheduled with two weeks' notice to the board. An accounting review should be forthcoming within the next 30 days. Anyone wishing to serve on the NWIEDD board should contact Ty Warner.

Indiana Department of Transportation: Bob Alderman reported that a large number of emergency repair contracts is being put together to address some of the damage incurred by the severe winter. The greatest impact was to Lake County, but there was damage in other counties. The costs are being calculated. The Cline Avenue road resurfacing project north of the Borman Expressway has started. More information will be provided at the next NIRPC meeting.

Other Business: Mitch Barloga referred to the small flyer on Cornucopia, the annual state of the trails event, to be held April 24 at the La Porte Civic Auditorium from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Make your reservations this week.

Brian Snedecor reminded the Commissioners that the Executive Session will be held after a short break.

On several motions and seconds, Brian Snedecor adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at mthorne@nirpc.org. Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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