

NIRPC Full Commission/ Executive Board Meeting  
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN  
May 21, 2015

Minutes

Chairwoman Blair Milo called the meeting of the Full Commission to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a brief stretch session.

Executive Board Members present included Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Anthony Copeland, Don Ensign, Michael Griffin, Blair Milo, Rich Murphy, Bob Schaefer, Greg Stinson and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present included Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Tom Clouser, Jon Costas, Bill Emerson, Jr., Karen Freeman-Wilson, Richard Hardaway, Richard Ludlow, Roger Miller, Jim Murphy, Diane Noll, Jean Poulard, Lori Reno, Jeremy Rivas, Chris Salatas, Tom Schmitt, Joe Simonetto, Joe Stahura, Ron Stallings, George Topoll, Jamal Washington.

Others present included Rick Powers, Justin Mount, Fred Larmore, Libby Roberts, Tim Sullivan, Tom Pappas, Jim Nowacki, Ed Peralta, Ray Dumbrys, Deb Backhus, Joseph Crnkovich, Christopher Murphy, Rebecca Holwerda, Josie Collins, Ruben Mendez, Tayler Wegrzyn, Renae Jackson, Monica Conrad, David Wright, Robert Alderman and Val Gomez. Joyce Newland participated via conference phone.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Angie Hayes, Steve Strains, Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Gary Evers, Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, Belinda Petroskey, Sarah Geinosky, Scott Weber, Allen Hammond, Gabrielle Biciunas, Stephen Sostaric and Mary Thorne.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the April 16, 2015 meeting were approved on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Rich Murphy.

**Report of the Chair:**

- Blair Milo reported on the committee structure and graphic. The process would not change; however, a more specific definition of the committees and the participation on these committees would be made. The handout provided to the Commission identifies NIRPC as both a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and a Council of Governments (COG). It identifies the various committees, their purpose and makeup. The graphic shows how projects submitted by stakeholders would advance through the various Topical Committees, then to the Technical Planning Committee and ultimately going to the Commission for final adoption. Geof Benson motioned to approve the committee structure as presented by Blair Milo; Jean Poulard seconded; motion carried.

- Blair Milo reported that she received a letter from a Lake Station resident regarding a proposed roundabout in Lake Station. She referred to a fact sheet prepared by staff which provided the background of the proposed project, scopes of work, revenue information, the financial impact on the residents, and information on local responsibility. Contact Christopher Murphy, American Structurepoint, with any questions.

#### **Report of the Executive Director:**

- Ty Warner reported that HB 1164 has passed, changing the wording of the NIRPC legislation regarding the use of census figures for weighted voting to the “last decennial census” effective July 1st. He thanked Bill Fine, Ed Soliday, Jim Arnold, Rick Niemeyer and Lonnie Randolph for their work in getting this bill signed.
- On Tuesday, Congress passed an extension of the “highway bill” to maintain funding for transportation projects for another two months, with long-term funding to be worked out.
- Several staff members attended the American Planning Association conference in Seattle, and NIRPC’s Executive Director participated in a pre-conference panel to outline NIRPC’s *Creating Livable Communities* program.
- The build-out of the NIRPC offices are now underway and construction will take place over the next three months. Meeting locations will be announced as they are scheduled.
- Geof Benson was presented with a *Leaders as Heroes* award from the South Shore Leadership Center.
- Ty Warner presented Watershed Planner, Joe Exl, with an award for completing five years of service at NIRPC.

#### **Transportation Policy Committee:**

- Joe Simonetto reported that the committee met on May 12 and heard several updates from staff. Stephen Sostaric referenced the Public Comment Report adding that there were no modifications needed.
- Resolution 15-11, the Air Quality Conformity Determination, was summarized by Scott Weber, who said the Transportation Policy Committee voted to recommend the Air Quality Conformity Determination to the full Commission for adoption. All VOC and NOx emissions were less than the Motor Vehicle Emission Budgets established in the State Implementation Plan for Lake and Porter Counties. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 15-11, the Air Quality Conformity Determination between the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan* as updated, the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program and the Indiana State Implementation Plan for Air Quality.
- Resolution 15-12, the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion was described by Mitch Barloga. He read a memorandum from the *Pathway to 2040* Committee that provides the bulleted highlights of the plan update. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Michael Griffin, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 15-12, the 2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Update Companion.
- Resolution 15-13, the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program highway projects were described by Gary Evers and the transit projects were described by Belinda Petroskey. Gary Evers noted that the total project investment exceeded \$1 billion, a first for NIRPC. There were a number of capacity expansion products included in the TIP, including a new

interchange in La Porte County at US 20 and SR 2. Total local funds is about \$208 million. New local projects will be added in later this year from the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Belinda Petroskey said an administrative modification was made to amend in the FY 2015 projects. It is not yet known as to whether or not the transit operators will get 100% of their apportionment. Grants have not yet been applied for. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by George Topoll, the Commission voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 15-13, the FY 2016-2019 Transportation Improvement Program.

- The next meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee will be announced.

**Indiana Department of Transportation:** Rick Powers reported that pothole repairs have reduced I-94 eastbound to one lane. Pavement preservation will take place in July and August. Mowing is underway. There are some safety issues on US Highway 20 going into Chesterton. Jim Ton said SR 49 between I-94 and I-90 is in rough shape. People are driving out of lanes to avoid the potholes and is causing hazardous driving conditions. Jon Costas made a plea for infrastructure investment. Cities need the tools from the county to deal with their own roads. Tom Schmitt said the intersection of US 41 and US 30 is in bad shape. Lack of pavement striping is also an issue. Karen Freeman-Wilson urged the Commission to contact their legislators. Blair Milo said 60 Minutes did a report on crumbling infrastructure in the US.

Blair Milo had to leave the meeting; she passed the gavel to Vice Chair Jim Ton.

**Finance & Personnel Committee:** Committee Chair Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the committee met this morning. Two items are being recommended for action.

- Procurement recommendations for a feasibility study for Portage and Hobart Transit to be paid at an 80/20 match with Federal Transit Authority Funds and the two agencies in an amount not to exceed \$150,000. On a motion by Joe Simonetto and a second by Jon Costas, the Commission adopted Procurement #15-14.
- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. described proposed budget amendments to add \$10,000 to the 2014 budget for data collection counters to be added to the Blueways & Greenways 2020 Plan. The second amendment is to add \$12,000 for signage standards development and trail identification markers. The budget amendment was approved by the Executive Board on a motion by Michael Griffin and a second by Bob Schaefer.
- Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that he had an entrance conference with the State Board of Accounts. They will conduct an audit of our transit, highway planning and MPO program and the projected completion date is June 30.

**Northwest Indiana Economic Development District (NWIEDD):**

Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that Matt Reuff is in the process of updating the CEDS working go get district designation from the EDA.

**Other Business:** No other business was brought forward.

**Public Comment on Agenda Items:**

- Tim Sullivan said all of his questions were addressed by Chairwoman Milo in the fact sheet on the Lake Station roundabout that was handed out.
- Josie Collins said all of her questions were addressed by Chairwoman Milo in the fact sheet on the Lake Station roundabout.
- Ruben Mendez of Lake Station said research showed that 8.3 crashes per year would be averted; however, there is a barrier and therefore, no accidents could take place. He also said that there are many areas that children frequent near the site and their safety would be jeopardized if the roundabout was built. He asked that this issue be tabled and put on a referendum in November.
- Jim Nowacki, Gary, commented on the US 12/20 improvements in Gary and asked that comments and complaints by residents be taken under advisement.
- Ed Paralta, Lake Station, commented that the roundabout should be tabled to a November referendum. Jim Ton responded that NIRPC has no legal authority to place items on the ballot.

**Announcements:**

- Diane Noll said Wanatah is celebrating their sesquicentennial next month and there are some brochures available.

Hearing no other business, on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Jim Ton adjourned the meeting at 10:30 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](mailto: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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