



## Committee Meeting ~ Portage Lakefront & Riverwalk June 26, 2015 Minutes

**Members & Guests** – Shannon Eason, Chris Moore, Joe Rurode, Mark Schreiber, Chuck Ventura, Steve Antonetti, Alex Brown, Gina Darnell, Don Parker

**Staff** – Mitch Barloga, Stephen Sostaric, Meredith Stilwell

Vice-Chair Shannon Eason called the meeting to order at 1:41 p.m. with self-introductions. The Pedal portion of the agenda featuring a Greenways + Blueways 2020 presentation and workshop was moved to take place at the end of the meeting.

### **Ped**

#### **A. South Shore Trails - Update**

A planning meeting for the second half of 2015 was held on June 25. There will be bicycle parking at the Gary Air Show and Pierogi Fest. They are interested in bike parking at other events and can set up portable racks. Valet service is done when possible, but supervision of racks is not guaranteed unless negotiated in advance. They will have information tables at various night rides where they talk to people about how to get involved and promote non-motorized transportation in their communities and would love to have tables at other community events.

### **Paddle –**

#### **A. South Shore Trails - Update**

Gina Darnell announced that the paperwork for the Kankakee National Water Trail designation has been submitted, but will take a while to get through the national process. A logo has been created and once the designation is finalized, there will be a ceremony held with Illinois. The Trail Creek Fun Float was postponed because of weather and 45 paddlers showed up at the rescheduled event. The dedication of the kayak launch in Michigan City will now take place in September. The launch permit is at DNR engineering waiting to be cleared. Hopefully the installation will take place mid to end of July. Paddling events to be held on Lake George and on the Iroquois River were cancelled due to high water concerns. Shannon Eason announced the Michigan City Economic Development Corp is looking for economy stimulating projects within the region and Michigan City turned in three projects one of which is a camp ground specifically for paddlers at Sprague Point Marina. Mitch announced that the Town of Lowell has reached out to NWIPA to create a route on Cedar Creek. Pipelines are an issue. Access and impassable points were looked at by NWIPA a couple of years ago. Mitch is going to try to get the town and NIWPA together to work on the issues.

### **Grab Bag**

#### **A. Project Updates:**

- Highland: A meeting was held with NIPSCO about their pipeline project coming through Munster and Highland. NIPSCO doesn't want to discuss the bridge project until the pipeline project is complete and where the impacts will be is known, so the project is on hold. The pipeline is due to be completed in 2016. The bike trail along Fisher Street in Munster will probably be inaccessible for most of the summer since that is a huge part of the pipeline project.
- La Porte: Currently engineering is being done on the Chessie trail.
- Burns Harbor: A public meeting is being held July 9 where the master development group will speak on the future vision of the town. A lot of it is intensely tied to the Greenways/Blueways Plan.
- Valparaiso: Events with the Pathways Committee are being worked on.
- Hammond: Work is being done to get the alignment finalized. The property owner signed off on it and coordination with Com Ed is being done because one of their access routes is being relocated.

As soon as they sign off, environmental will be done and then proceed to right-of-way. Letting is set for 2017.

- Michigan City: Singing Sands Phase I has been held up by South Shore Rail for quite some time, but it now seems that a breakthrough has been reached. South Shore Rail wants to require the City to offer a \$10m per occurrence insurance policy. Indiana State Statute is \$3m. Since it is either the City pays for the insurance or the trail is gone, the mayor has agreed to pay \$25k per year for insurance to get the trail moving. Phase II and III have received additional funding and 2017 and 2018 are being looked at to begin all phases. Michigan City has applied for a grant opportunity for a NIPSCO trail. Michigan City has recently adopted the Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy which deals with a lot of different elements on the north end of town, including trails. Phase II will include a cultural trail that will have a lot of design elements, shopping and restaurants.
- Illinois: Leslie from Active Transportation Alliance announced the Burnham Greenway Gap is being up by the South Shore Line, which won't allow the trail to go over their tracks even though it is 100% funded and would be safer than what is currently there. People are currently using it anyway. A petition is on the Active Transportation website. South Shore would prefer a bridge which would be at least \$10m.

#### **B. Miscellaneous Issues, Concerns, Gripes:**

- Two concurrent projects will be going on. Unified signage will be installed along the Erie/Lackawanna and Prairie Duneland Trails. Before doing so, a guide will be put together to guide a unified trail design for all signage funded by NIRPC. Mitch is hoping to have the guide done by fall and the sign installation done by spring 2016. The three major signs are street crossings, trail heads and community identification. Mileage markers may be included if funding is available. There has been a wayfinding guide for blueways for about four or five years. The Greenways/Blueways website or lack thereof was briefly discussed.
- Alex Brown expressed his concern that the Town of Highland was not made aware of the large organized ride, Le Tour de Shore, coming through the town. A drunk driver had gone across the pedestrian bridge and it had to be shut down, resulting in rerouting over 200 riders through town. Mitch and Don Parker noted they would try to contact the organizers to inform them to give a heads up to involved towns as to when the event will be taking place.

#### **C. General Announcements (upcoming rides, events, etc.):**

- The LaPorte night ride is July 24. Registration is at 9:00 pm and the ride begins at 10:00 pm.
- The Hammond WHAM ride is August 8.
- NWIPA is working on kayaking safety. There will be classes for beginning kayakers and rescue classes. NIWPA.org has the information. This was prompted by a man who almost died due to hypothermia. NWIPA is trying to educate and get information out to individuals and also to stores that carry kayaking gear.

#### **D. Next Meeting is Thursday, July 23, 2015**

The meeting was adjourned to begin the Greenways + Blueways 2020 presentation and workshop.