

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC Auditorium, Portage, IN

August 2, 2012

MINUTES

Members/Guests Present

Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Kay Nelson, Mike Molnar, Jenny Orsburn, Lauri Keagle, Amber Winter, Michelle Caldwell, Ashley Snyder, Dorreen Carey, Letty Zepeda, Chandra Viswanathan, Sherryl Doerr, Charlotte Read, Colin Highlands, Mark Reshkin, Leanne Whitesell, Staci Goodwin, Amy Delahunty, Jennifer Gadzala, Nicole Barker, Renetta DuBose, Jim Sweeney, Natalie Johnson, Julien Leclerca, Nick Minich, Deb Backhus, Mardanna Soto, Diego Magalhaed, Meg Kelly, Kenna Mulligan, Paul Kissle, Larry Jensen

NIRPC Staff

Joe Exl, Bill Brown, Steve Strains, Sarah Geinosky, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance.

◆Approval of June 7, 2012 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Charlotte Read and second by Mark Reshkin, the June 7, 2012 EMPC minutes were approved.

Presentations

◆ Green Town – Gary Cuneen, Seven Generations Ahead

Seven Generations Ahead is a ten year old sustainable communities non-profit based in the Chicago area serving the Midwest by working with local communities to develop and implement sustainability plans. They also hold education conferences. Seven Generations Ahead worked with the City of Valparaiso, Valparaiso University, NIRPC, the Valparaiso Economic Development Corporation, Porter County Economic Development Alliance, and Indiana Dunes Tourism to develop a Green Town conference to be held in Valparaiso. From that core team, a broader advisory team has been established to help develop the agenda for the conference. The conference itself is carbon neutral and zero waste. The conference allows stakeholders from the public and private sectors to share agendas, topics, and issues and engage constituents and network with key people. One thing promoted at the conferences is local community sustainability planning and implementation projects and how those projects are making efforts to link up with regional planning and goals. One of the keynote speakers scheduled for the Valparaiso conference is Richard Jackson, a former executive for the Center for Disease Control who promotes healthy communities and how the built environment needs to be designed, and the Mayor of Oklahoma City, Mick Cornett, is close to being confirmed as well. The conference will be held at Valparaiso University on September 27 and 28, 2012. On September 27 there will be pre-conference sessions with a public speaking event in downtown Valparaiso and an evening reception following. The main conference day is September 28 with a wide variety of topics with a handful of sessions by NIRPC. More information can be obtained at www.greentownconference.com. Gary's email address is gary@sevengenerationsahead.org.

◆ Preparing for Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway – Joe Exl, NIRPC Senior Water Resource Planner

As background, Joe noted the presentation was a summary to give an update on NIRPC's continuation of the Watershed Management Framework process which was completed in 2011. In the Framework, The Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway watershed was identified as on one of the priority watersheds. One of the tasks NIRPC was charged with as part of the project was the creation of watershed templates. The templates were meant to be characterization reports to give a greater sense of land use practices, soil and stream conditions, etc. that could be affecting water quality and stream habitat. The Deep River/Portage Burns Waterway watershed is approximately 180 square miles which makes it one of the largest, if not the largest, watershed in the Little Calumet Galien sub-basin. It drains portions of northern Lake and Porter Counties into Lake Michigan through Burns Waterway and Portage Lakefront Park and Riverwalk. Several municipalities are located within the watershed. In order to answer why an existing watershed management plan for this area should be updated, Joe explained that a number of the streams that are located within the watershed are impaired for a number of reasons. Those impairments are included by IDEM on their 2012, 303d list which is still in draft form. Joe noted that when looking at water quality and quantity two critical factors looked at on a landscape scale are soil geology and land use. Topics covered included runoff potential; highly erodible land; land cover information produced by NOAA; land cover trends; development patterns; impervious

cover; wetland loss; cultivated land on poorly drained soils; riparian buffer analysis and changes in stream discharge, all of which are included in the Deep River Watershed template. It was suggested to include a groundwater layer in the template. Paper was provided on which meeting attendees could note their concerns or information they felt should be included in the template. Joe indicated if the group would like to process the information presented before commenting, they could also email or call him. Public participation from homeowners to public officials is extremely important in watershed management planning. Joe has set up meetings in individual communities to discuss the submission of a 319 grant application and to determine their needs and concerns as the process moves forward. The 319 applications are due November 30. At this point money is not being asked for, but in-kind participation will be asked for the 319 grant match. It was suggested to make sure that the proposed closure of the Chicago area waterway system and the barrier locations in the Grand and Little Cal are worked into the report. Joe remarked that protection is no longer enough, restoration needs to be looked at. Chairman Benson noted that the NIRPC request to IDEM for a TMDL is connected, but just a small part. INDOT was suggested as a stakeholder due to the amount of highways that run through the watershed and noted they possibly have in-kind services that could be contributed.

NIRPC BUSINESS

◆ **NIRPC Public Participation Plan**

Chairman Benson announced the presentation was not ready for prime time yet, but the Plan would be available for public comment in September.

Announcements:

LMCP Coastal Advisory Board Meeting

Organization: DNR Coastal

When: Wednesday, August 15, 2012 / 10:00 a.m.

Where: Red Mill County Park

0185 South Holmesville Rd., LaPorte, IN 46350

Contact Info: Mike Molnar mmolnar@dnr.in.gov (317)233-0132

Black Tie & Barefoot Event

Organization: Dunes Learning Center

When: Friday, August 17, 2012 / 6:30 – 10:30 p.m.

Where: Marquette Park Pavilion

1 North Grand Blvd., Gary, IN 46403

For more information: www.duneslearningcenter.org

Jammin for the Dunes

Organization: Save the Dunes

When: Saturday, September 8, 2012 / 4:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Where: Washington Park, Jaycee Stage

Contact Info: Nicole Barker nicole@savedunes.org (219) 879-3937

Save the Dunes 60th Anniversary Gala

Organization: Save the Dunes

When: Saturday, October 27, 2012 / 6:00 p.m.

Where: Sand Creek Country Club

1001 Sand Creek Dr., Chesterton, IN 46304

Contact Info: Nicole Barker nicole@savedunes.org (219)879-3937

Grant Information

Coastal Grant RFP

Contact Info: Maggie Byrne mbyrne@dnr.in.gov (219) 983-9912

Materials may be obtained at: www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich/6044.htm

Chairman Benson announced that Kathy Luther and Kay Nelson will be attending the EPA Lake Michigan Forum in Traverse City Michigan, August 21 – 23.

Kevin Breitzke announced Enbridge has fast forwarded a line replacement project to cross Porter, Lake, and LaPorte counties. Originally, they were coming to Porter County in 2013. A public hearing through DNR is being held at the Valparaiso Public Library Thursday, August 23. He was unsure if that would be the only meeting, but is a good start. Nicole Barker commented that Save the Dunes and DNR triggered the hearing, but it will be limited to only flood control act concerns and is not a broader discussion of the pipeline. Save the Dunes has started a petition and continues to urge the company to have a broader meeting. Originally a meeting was only to be held in LaPorte and

only residents or landowners with a line running through their property were invited. The company answered a lot of questions and although they have continued communication with Save the Dunes it is not felt that the magnitude of the project has been realized. Indiana and Michigan are impacted by line 6B which is a two phase project. The first phase would start in August 2012 and the second phase would follow with a planned completion by year's end. Discussions have been held between Save the Dunes, IDEM, DNR and the Army Corps of Engineers. Nicole noted that Save the Dunes understands the pipeline needs to be replaced and is not attempting to stop the project, but would like there to be a broad forum where the public can hear the Army Corp, IDEM, etc. discuss reviews and due diligence they are doing and understand what is happening. She also remarked that another issue is that in Indiana there are no permits aside from the environmental permits that get triggered. Save the Dunes is urging the Indiana Conservation Alliance to add this to their list to perhaps pass some legislation that would include oversight of hazardous liquid pipelines such as this. The petition for a broader public hearing is available on the Save the Dunes website to be signed by those interested.

The next EMPC meeting will be September 6, 2012.

Meeting adjourned.

Reasonable Accommodations

Requests for alternate format materials or interpreters may be made 48 hours in advance to Kathy Luther:
(219)763-6060, Ext. 127 or e-mail kluther@nirpc.org

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