

Land Use Committee Meeting
January 16, 2013
NIRPC Auditorium

Members & Visitors: George Malis, Sergio Mendoza, Greg Stinson, Craig Phillips, Sandy O'Brian, Nathan Pavlovic, Tyler Kent

NIRPC Staff: Steve Strains, Eman Ibrahim, Sarah Geinosky, Bill Brown, Meredith Stilwell, Jack Eskin

Steve Strains called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Upon motion by Craig Phillips and second by George Malis the minutes of the September 19, 2012 Land Use Committee meeting were approved.

Three items not on the agenda were presented: The new NIRPC website was displayed, Steve Strains announced the 2040 CRP was awarded the Daniel Burnham best Comprehensive Plan in the Country Award from the American Planning Association and the newly produced 2040 CRP video was played for the Committee.

Regional Land Use Planning

a. Update on Livable Centers Project

Eman refreshed the group on the basic elements of livable centers as described in the 2040 CRP. Community center types were determined based on the 2010 population for each community with populations of 70,000 and greater classified as metro, 20k-70k large, 7k-20k medium, and <7k small. First steps of the project scope include using GIS analysis to identify preliminary livable centers, analyzing plans and codes to identify planned livable centers, and gathering data and completing a livability checklist for preliminary livable centers. A map of the preliminary analysis of livable centers in northwest Indiana was shown. Communities are being met with to determine exact livable center area boundaries. Examples of successful livable centers in Palm Beach and San Francisco were shown by Eman. A livability checklist and design parameters for urban thoroughfares handout was provided to the Committee. Once all the steps are complete, a report will be provided to the communities detailing parameters and what is missing which will aid in the future for planning purposes and applying for funding.

b. Creating Livable Communities Funding Program

The purpose of the program is to support community based transportation/land use projects that bring vitality to downtown areas, neighborhoods, station areas, commercial cores, and transit corridors. NIRPC will establish a Livable Centers Advisory Committee (LCAC) that encompasses local experts in the fields of planning, transportation, urban design, and economic development to help evaluate project proposals. All projects should be identified in two emphasis areas: the livable centers map or transit corridor area map and projects identified in the emphasis areas have to meet the minimum requirements of the Livable Centers goals. Applicants also must show that the proposed projects will be possible under existing codes/ordinances of the local government to be eligible for funding. Eligible recipients include local governments, transportation agencies and community-based nonprofit organizations. A non-governmental organization must partner with a local government agency. There are two types of planning grant categories which include: CLC Planning to fund planning projects (pre-development plan) and CLC Capital Projects which will provide funding for basic public infrastructure and site assembly to support development. More details will follow as the Program develops.

Local Communities Update

a. Presentation on Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategies – Craig Phillips

Efforts have been made to look at and implement plans for downtown Michigan City. Examples of areas with existence of a harbor, industrial heritage, and successful revitalization/development were looked for and Kenosha and Racine Wisconsin were found as such case studies. Steps are being taken to implement common plan elements. In 2012 a group of 25 officials from various organizations and groups were taken on a bus tour sponsored by NIPSCO of Kenosha and Racine. Craig presented information on Kenosha featuring details on their streetcar/trolley system, recent industrial and business park growth, HarborPark Condominiums, as well as other Lakefront features and attractions. Before and after pictures of Kenosha's revitalization were presented. Information on Racine was also presented featuring details on their

significant corporate and industrial presence. Pictures of the current state after the revitalization including a mixed used district in downtown Racine were shown. From these examples Michigan City learned to focus on its assets, revitalize the core, connect the downtown to the lakefront and celebrate the lakefront. The implementation strategy, north end redevelopment, Washington Park Master Plan, and work with former Kenosha Mayor as a consultant are all next steps or possible next steps. The Lake Michigan Gateway Implementation Strategy is a land use strategy that includes connecting uptown and the lakefront, signage, pedestrian improvements and connectivity, public artwork, streetscape improvements, traffic flow analysis and improvements, identification and maximization of vistas/views of the lakefront, bridge enhancements, best management practices and sustainability, and alternate access to/from Washington Park.

b. Suburbia Retrofit (US 30 & I-65 Area) Project – Steve Strains

The retrofit project grant applied for was not awarded, but there seemed to be an opportunity to collect data and get ideas from Ball State students as a school project. Eman and Steve, along with representatives from Hobart and Merrillville, met with a professor about working with a class of about 19 students this semester. However, the issue of providing funding to get the students to this area three times during the semester has arisen and NIRPC was not prepared to fund that cost. Perhaps there is some foundation funding that can be found, but it is unclear if this student project can happen this semester or will happen in the near future.

c. Current or Proposed Studies, Plans and Projects

Greg Stinson announced the Porter Downtown Master Plan draft is basically complete with all public meetings held and all public input added. He also discussed the recently created riverfront district that encompasses the old Spa which will be reopening. There is PUD zoning and hopefully there will be some development using the businesses that already exist to anchor the area.

Sandy O'Brien announced the Hobart Marsh Plan is moving along with only a few minor corrections needed.

Jack Eskin announced he is in the process of having at grade crossing study meetings with stakeholders and he is exploring the political, structural and financial aspects. He should be done by the end of January or beginning of February and his findings will be delivered to Committee members at the Rail Committee Meeting on February 8th.

Sergio Mendoza announced the Lake Michigan Coastal Program is excited to be working with two communities for the 2013 grant cycle. The first is with the City East Chicago; the goal is for them to utilize unallocated coastal funds for a shoreline modification and modeling study at Jeorse Park. This shoreline enhancement project is identified in the city's comprehensive plan within the north harbor neighborhood plan. The second project is with the County of LaPorte. This project is a complement to the previously coastal funded LaPorte County Joint Comprehensive and Zoning Ordinance. One of the goals of this project is to assess the fiscal benefits of implementing BMP's and LID's already identified in their zoning ordinance

Announcements

- a. Pathway to 2040 Implementation Committee 9:00 a.m. Thursday, April 11, 2013
- b. Next Land Use Committee Meeting – March 20, 2013, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned.