

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Construction Advancement Foundation

January 7, 2016

Members/Guests: Geof Benson, Dorreen Carey, Maggie Byrne, Andrew Pelloso, Nicole Barker, Catherine Yoder, Kay Nelson, Deb Backhus, Mike Molnar, Steve Barker, Andrew Pelloso, Paul Labus, Chandra Viswanathan, Natalie Johnson, Peg Donnelly, Lynda Lancaster, Leslie Dorworth, Paul Leffler, Richard Morrisroe, Kris Krouse, Drew Hart

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Meredith Stilwell

Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Approval of December 3, 2015 EMPC Minutes

On motion by Nicole Barker and second by Doreen Carey, the December 3, 2015 EMPC meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Presentations:

a. **NIPSCO Pipeline Upgrade Projects in NWI – Steve Barker, NIPSCO – Natural Resource Permitting Coordinator**

It is NIPSCO's responsibility to make sure you always have electricity and natural gas there when you need it, but will ensure that the service is provided in an environmentally responsible way. NIPSCO and other utilities across the country are dealing with aging infrastructure and system failures. In-line inspections for pipelines use a device known as a pig which is sent down the pipelines to check for anomalies such as wall thickness, erosion and corrosion. Long-term operation and management is being set in place now for the future.

The NIPSCO Infrastructure Modernization Plan will include new or replacement electric/gas transmission and distribution projects for purposes of safety, reliability, system modernization, or economic development. Examples of gas modernization projects through 2020 include increasing in-line inspection capabilities; upgrading low-pressure systems; extending rural gas to underserved areas; adding additional control valves; and replacement of priority pipeline, including bare steel. Modernizing the gas and electric system benefits businesses and residents with a continued safe, reliable system for the future; reduced outages caused by aging system failure; as well as support of local jobs and future economic growth.

The Modernization Program kicked off in 2014 with \$100m spent. 2015 increased even more and will continue to rise through 2020, after which another plan will be developed. As the Natural Resource Permitting Coordinator, Steve works closely with agencies to try to avoid or minimize impacts to wetland resources and sensitive sites and once all permit conditions are met for each project, work will be done to ensure the projects are in full compliance. Internal stakeholders within NIPSCO include environmental, real estate, integrity corrosion, engineering, communications and public affairs. Further, outreach is done to stakeholders that might be affected by these projects. Four projects were highlighted and included:

- Gary Natural Gas Line Upgrade: Phased program in which all the existing bare steel is being replaced within the city of Gary. Phase I is approximately 10 miles of new lines placed along roadway, near sidewalks and alley. All impacts were avoided and a sediment erosion control plan in place. Work will continue for a number of years.

- State Line to Highland Natural Gas Line Upgrade: Construction will occur along Fisher Street from state line to the Indianapolis Boulevard/Ridge Road intersection and will replace 3.5 miles of 22 inch and 36 inch underground lines. The application is currently being finalized. There are minimal impacts for this project and work is being done with the DNR for mitigation. If permits are in place, work should be in spring of 2016 with completion hopefully by fall of 2016. The rest of the line is to be determined.
- Aetna to Tassinong Gas Transmission Project: Preliminary surveying and engineering work will begin this year to embark on a project to replace and upgrade roughly 22 miles of underground 16-inch natural gas lines. This existing pipe runs through the Hobart Marsh complex. It is proposed to reroute around the complex to avoid impacts and this will be a challenging project. Preliminary design engineering has been completed. With other projects going into construction this year, design engineering and permitting will continue later this year.
- La Porte to Gary Aetna Natural Gas Line Upgrade Project: Involves two phases to replace 29.5 miles of existing 22-inch lines with 24-inch lines sited as close as possible to existing NIPSCO easements. Burns and MacDonnell are currently working with NIPSCO for permitting support. Construction will begin on the La Porte side of route and move west toward Gary. A lot of resources are in the area making this project challenging. A permit application for the first seven mile phase will take the project to US 421 in Michigan City will be sent in shortly. Potential route modifications may occur to avoid impacts. Coordination is occurring with Porter County regarding the route along the Calumet Trail. The current intent is to place the pipeline under the trail before it is constructed, but could change once all variables and opportunities are assessed. Approximately 30% of the project is wetlands so there is a high water table which is a constructability issue. The target date for beginning the project is April with the first seven miles completed by September. There will be some issues with federal and state listed species. Phase II will involve a lot of impacts with most of them temporary, but coordination with the Army Corps will have to occur on mitigation. A conservation strategy is being developed and will tie into how mitigation will be done. The desire is to work within existing frameworks and with partners. Potentially Phase II will also involve tree clearing. Native seed mixes are being customized for this project and all wetland areas will be getting a diverse mix. Any naturalized upland areas will be going native and all pollinator species will be tied in as well. The outreach plan for this project will include an open house and extensive coordination and active work with affected property owners. Property owners affected by Phase I were all met with independently.

With all the projects there has been extensive coordination with local towns and counties and safety is a big consideration. It was suggested to present this information to the NIRPC Board.

b. Urban Waters Five Star Program Grants – *Natalie Johnson - Urban Waters*

The 2016 Five Star and Urban Waters Grant Program is open until February 3rd and offers funding from multiple sources, including the US EPA and US Forest Service. It is a nationwide grant program to support on-the-ground, community-based conservation, outreach and education/training that fosters connections/improvements to water resources. The goal is getting partnerships to work to do something on the ground that is water related. The average grant is \$30,000 with award amounts ranging from \$20k to \$50k. Projects should be completed in 1-2 years and be able to start in summer 2016. Each project must have on-the-ground restoration and planning; partnerships; environmental outreach, education and training; measurable results; and sustainability. Over \$2m is available and applicants submit one proposal for all sources of funding. Preference will be given in the evaluation process to projects in Urban Waters Federal Partnership locations and/or source water protection areas. (Northwest Indiana is located in both).

Eligible applicants include non-profit 501 (c) organizations; state government agencies; local governments; municipal governments; Indian tribes and education institutions. Individuals, Federal agencies and for-profit corporations make great partners but should not be applicants. Community partnership must involve five or more diverse partners, including the applicant, and must demonstrate that the project will advance existing local planning and development for resilient communities and/or propose to foster new collaboration to coordinate a diverse stakeholder partnership that develops new plan. Match is a minimum 1:1 non-federal match of cash or in-kind goods and services is required and match can be backdated up to one year. (July 2015 on). Meaningful outreach, education and training must be integrated into the proposed on-the-ground activities and measurable results identified. On the ground restoration examples and example metrics were provided. A few examples of funded projects were also given.

Tips were given regarding the use of the Easygrants system, partnerships and being creative with outreach activities. It was noted that it is easy to take an Urban Waters small grant proposal and apply for this grant. In addition, an applicant is not ineligible if money has been granted from other sources, but can't be funded at the same time for the same project.

Public Comment: None

Announcements: Announcements were made for upcoming meetings.

Kay Nelson gave a legislative update on environmental related bills. She noted the current session is considered a short session for Indiana and does not involve the budget. Also noted was that the Senate Environmental Committee Chaired by Ed Charbonneau has two, three-day holidays that will interfere with his ability to have Committee meetings since he has the Monday morning slot time. His first Committee meeting will be January 11 and the second will be January 25. The 28th of January is when committee reports must be submitted, leaving him only those two dates for committee hearings for Senate environmental bills unless he calls an emergency Committee.

Meeting adjourned.