

# JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE – URBAN WATERS PARTNERSHIP MEETING

Construction Advancement Foundation

November 3, 2016

**Members/Guests:** Geof Benson, Deb Backhus, Cathy Martin, Beth Jacobson, Milo Milatovic, Lauri Keagle, Kaitlyn McClain, George Topoll, Kevin Breitzke, Sylvia Graham, James Micheals, Lynda Lancaster, Sharon Partridge, Paul M. Buszka, Abu Moulta Ali, Susan MiHalo, Natalie Johnson, Gina Darnell, Cherie Fisher, Lynne Westphal, Sheela Johnson, Ellen Kapitan, Dan Plath, Chelsea Cottingham, Maggie Byrne, Sherryl Doerr, Brenda Scott Henry, Kelli Baxstrom

**NIRPC Staff:** Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Meredith Stilwell

## **Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order at with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

## **Approval of October 6, 2016 EMPC Minutes**

On motion by Sylvia Graham and second by Susan MiHalo, the October 6, 2016 EMPC meeting minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

## **NIRPC Business:**

### **a. Greenways + Blueways 2020 Update – Kathy Luther, NIRPC**

The Greenways + Blueways 2020 Plan draft is out for public comment until November 21<sup>st</sup>. The conservation chapter and implementation portion of the plan dealing with conservation, green infrastructure and ecological sensitive transportation areas were made available to guests. Kathy reviewed maps from the conservation and recreation chapters and conservation goals from the implementation chapter with meeting attendees and asked those in attendance to comment on the draft plan. Comments from the meeting were recording for the public comment report.

## **Urban Waters Business:**

### **a. Partnership Update – Natalie Johnson, Urban Waters Coordinator**

Natalie gave background information on how and why Urban Waters came to be. She then announced that after being the Urban Waters Coordinator for 4½ years, she will be the new Executive Director of Save the Dunes beginning January 2017.

### **b. Regional Urban Forestry Initiative Update – Joe Exl, NIRPC & Drew Hart, US Forest Service**

Joe announced that NIRPC was awarded a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant from US Forest Service to plant trees in the area, specifically to mitigate emerald ash borer. The target is to plant approximately 700 trees with a minimum caliper of 1". NIPSCO will be providing help with a marketing and outreach strategy, and also help with a yard for tree storage. The RFP will hopefully be out by the end of November. Any community or not for profit can apply for trees to be planted on public land. Using the same RFP, the state nursery will have 5,000 trees grown to a minimum of at least a 1" caliper available to communities. There is no financial match, but communities have to show they will be watering the tree for three years.

## **Presentations:**

b. **Early Detection Invasive Plants in Our Watersheds: What you Need to Know and How you Can Help** – *Susan MiHalo, The Nature Conservancy*

The purpose of the Great Lakes Early Detection Network project is to further efforts, develop a network of people willing to help, educate the public about invasive species and gather data needed for natural resource managers to take action. Susan informed the group on the impacts of invasive plants and some early detection species to watch for. Accomplishments to date were noted as well as how to use the EDDMapS website and smart phone app.

**Pertinent Partner Updates:**

- Partners announced new projects, gave updates on existing projects, asked for assistance and new partners introduced themselves to the group.

Meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.