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CREATING THE PLAN

Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission 6100 Southport Road Portage, Indiana 46368 (219) 763-6060

2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan Steering Committee Meeting NIRPC Auditorium January 28, 2010 Minutes

Members

Don Babcock, Geof Benson, Mitch Bishop, David Blumenthal, Jan Dick, Dale Engquist, Phil Gralik, Jerry Halperin, Richard Herr, Jim Jessup, George Malis, Sergio Mendoza, Richard Morrisroe, Kay Nelson, Bob Nickovich, Sandy O'Brien, Charles Oberlie, Pat Pullara, Mark Reshkin, Jill Ritchie, Daniel Suson, Robert Thompson, Joe Wszolek

Guests

Joe Csikos, Liz Greenwald, Marge Hefner, Bruce Lindner, AJ Monroe, Jim Powers, Jerry Tessarolo, Rich Underkofler

Staff

Gabrielle Biciunas, Bill Brown, Eman Ibrahim, Hubert Morgan, Belinda Petroskey, Lauren Rhein, Stephen Sostaric, Mary Thorne, Tom VanderWoude

Chairman Chuck Oberlie called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with self-introductions. Steve Strains introduced NIRPC's new part-time Public Involvement Coordinator, Hubert Morgan, who was previously at Chicago Metropolitan Area for Planning. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Dale Engquist, the minutes and summary of the November 12 meeting were approved as submitted.

Timeline

Steve Strains reported that we just held the cluster workshops and open houses and we are building the tools we will need to develop scenarios. A regional assembly will be held sometime after July 1, 2010.

Outreach Subcommittee

Sergio Mendoza reported that the committee reviewed the RFQ's for the outreach coordinator and reached a consensus that none of the five scored high enough. A recommendation to the commission was made. Steve Strains added that a new RFQ will be re-formed to insure that we reach deep enough into the community for partnerships with organizations, advocates and organizers. None of the proposals submitted offered that reaching out along with a coordinator. The Outreach Committee will meet with Hubert Morgan shortly to set a new course of action particularly with respect to the environmental justice community.

Open Houses

Gabrielle Biciunas reported on the open houses which took place last week Tuesday, January 19 at IUN in Gary and Wednesday, January 20 at NIRPC. A total of about 25 people participated in both open houses where they viewed a short PowerPoint, viewed the story boards of results from the cluster workshops and commented or consulted with the staff. A worksheet was available for them to comment which will help us gauge the results of the workshops. No clear consensus was visible on the Illiana. There was overall support for the concept of future growth and development as well as redevelopment in existing areas and other information from the workshops. Hubert Morgan added that this work is very important and the window of input will be kept open for more input. NIRPC's engagement design will help advance the work being done. Comments should be directed to Gabrielle either in writing or electronically. Hubert is available to visit with interested parties to discuss the CRP. Continued public participation is important to this process. The worksheet and synthesis report will be made available electronically and Chairman Oberlie encouraged the committee to share the information with their contacts as well. A brief "open house" will be held immediately after the meeting for those committee members who were unable to attend the prior functions.

Goals & Objectives

Mayor Oberlie commented that he instructed NIRPC staff to present the draft goals and objectives information to the committee in order to keep the process on schedule. The committee was provided with the updated draft goals and objectives listed according to the Vision Themes as well as definitions and background information on SAFETEA-LU and the six livability principles of the integration of transportation, affordable housing, economy, etc. as established by the partnership formed between Department of Transportation/Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency. HUD just added \$150 million to their budget to run this partnership program. Tom VanderWoude said there are still some missing goals, particularly one concerning the collaboration or consolidation of local governments. Staff is working on how best to add this goal in a way that will be responsible to the people and not usurp the authority of local governments. Wordsmithing of the goals and objectives will be done at a later date. Mark Reshkin commented that change, whether human or nature induced, is affecting our climate and the plan must include elements necessary to adapt standards of water management. The next steps are to tap into special interest groups to get their input on what is missing. Some of the goals will require more elaboration. It was pointed out that the numbers did not reflect any order of importance in the order of the goals. Goal number 3, Healthy and Clean Air, is mandated by federal regulations. Consolidation of units of government might be a strategy used to achieve a goal. If revitalization is a goal, land use must be complimentary across governmental borders. Also more vertical development might be encouraged. The plan is about getting everybody together for the common good and to agree on things which will benefit the region. One issue is transit-oriented development. Goal 8 should specify the safety and security of *transportation*. Goal 10 should include waterways. It was noted that there are more transportation oriented goals than any other. If environment is consolidated into one goal, transportation should be consolidated into one or two. The connectivity objective under Goal 11 should probably go under Goal 9. Another comment was to add the Airport, the Northwest Indiana Forum, and the Port of Indiana. Economic stability, environmental quality and social equity are the three legs of quality of life. Social equity should inform every other goal, but staff felt social equity should be a specific goal as well.

A call was put out for volunteers to meet in mid-February to help with the goals, objectives and strategies. Work is still continuing by the staff as well. Volunteers from the floor included Don Babcock, Phil Gralik, Sandy O'Brien, and Daniel Suson.

Scenarios

Bill discussed the timeframe for development of scenarios. A draft scope of work with the consultants has been developed. Up to three scenarios will be developed through the use of the *Community Viz* software with assistance from the consultant. Screening and testing scenarios will take place between the May and June meetings. Prior to that time, discussion will take place as to what these scenarios may be. One might be an extrapolation of current trends. A second might be to create a transit-rich scenario. Transportation will be covered using our transportation model and the *Community Viz* tool works with GIS to enter parameters on growth and development. The measures are still in the planning stages. The consultants will be helping us in the coming months. Other scenarios are continuing with sprawl and also through revitalization of the existing infrastructure.

Other Business

Staff Comment: An Environmental Justice workshop will be held in mid-April through Federal Highway Administration as a result of the planning certification review last May to help all those involved in the planning process (staff, stakeholders, committee members) to better understand the social equity goal to identify the burdens and benefits of our policies and project proposals. The first of the two-day workshop will probably be held at IUN in Gary. A workshop planning session is scheduled for Friday or Monday and will be teleconferenced. Contact Hubert Morgan if you would like to be a party. More outreach efforts are being planned to get the message out to the people. The Calumet Summit is coming in April and there's a possibility to bring our plan out to the public at the summit. NIRPC has a relationship with Openlands through trails and other conservations efforts.

Public Comment: Jim Powers from INDOT encouraged the committee to contact the project managers for roads, etc. Mohammed Quadeer is the project manager for Lake County.

The next Steering Committee meeting will be on February 25 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC. Chairman Oberlie adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

Handouts provided:

- Agenda
- November 12 Meeting Minutes
- November 12 Meeting Summary
- Open House Response Results
- Open House Comments
- Open House Worksheet
- Current definitions of Draft Goals and Objectives
- Suggested sample definitions of Goals and Objectives
- Livability principles established by the DOT/HUD/EPA Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities
- Open House Results
- Sub-Regional Cluster Workshops Synthesis Report
- January 2010 Issue of the CRP Newsletter

Audio tapes of this meeting are filed. Contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC should you wish to schedule a time to hear them.