

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
July 20, 2017  
Minutes

**Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. Michael Griffin resumed Chairing the meeting.

Commissioners present included Christopher Anderson, Jeannette Bapst, Geof Benson, Tim Bietry, Jim Biggs, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Bill Emerson, Jr., Don Ensign, Will Farrellbegg, Thomas Fath, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Michael Griffin, Richard Hardaway, Jack Jeralds, Justin Kiel, Cary Kirkham, Andrew Kyres, Nick Meyer, Richard Mrozinski, Diane Noll, Rick Ryfa, Tom Schmitt, Dave Shafer, Ed Soliday, Joe Stahura, Greg Stinson, Mary Tanis, Jim Ton and George Topoll. Lyndsay Quist was present from INDOT.

Guests present included Justin Mount, Matt Deitchley, Julie Ritzler, Lisa Shrader, Mary Enright, Jean Manna, David Wright, Mike Yacullo, Joseph Crnkovich, Beth Jacobson, Sharon King, Jill Murr, Randy Strasser, Ismail Attallah, Susan Weber, Joyce Newland, Antonio Johnson, Christopher Murphy, Denarie Kane and Tim Zorn.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Angie Hayes, Mitch Barloga, Scott Weber, Gary Evers, Eman Ibrahim, James Winters, Gabrielle Biciunas, Sarah Geinosky, Amanda Pollard, Jody Melton and Mary Thorne.

**Minutes**

On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Justin Kiel, the minutes of the June 15 Executive Board meeting were approved by the Commission.

**Public Comment**

David Wright, Gary Public Transportation Corporation, relayed GPTC's request for confirmation from the FTA/FHWA that the NIRPC Board membership satisfies the FAST Act in regards to representation by GPTC and NICTD. He also made an appeal for NIRPC's leadership capacity in supporting public transportation. He indicated that in 2017-2018 GPTC would be rolling out a significant increase in transit on the Broadway corridor, adding service to Merrillville with Merrillville's fiscal involvement, and putting buses in the vicinity of the Purdue Research Center. While 2017 was planned to be a watershed year in transit growth, GPTC has been forced to look at the possibility of reducing transit service in other parts of their service area. The GPTC Board approved the provisional suspension of service to Lake Shore South, which connects downtown Hammond to Munster and Highland. Local match is needed for transit routes in the communities of Hammond, Munster, Highland, and also Whiting. GPTC asked the NIRPC Commission to be active in the conversation to prevent these reductions in service. Commissioners Carnahan and Ton both spoke of support for not reducing service. Commissioner Freeman-Wilson said the opportunity for NIRPC is as a convener and facilitator of this discussion, as there are federal dollars GPTC is unable to spend because of a lack of local funds. Chair Michael Griffin asked the NIRPC Executive Director to assist in bringing these communities and GPTC together to ascertain what the exact "ask" is in needed funding.

**Report of the Chairman**

Michael Griffin said he represented NIRPC on June 22 at a ribbon cutting for the 61<sup>st</sup> Street and Wisconsin Avenue roundabout project in Hobart. Griffin presented lapel pins featuring the NIRPC logo to the Commissioners; gold NIRPC pins were presented to current and former NIRPC Chairs. Griffin relayed that these will identify and communicate pride in NIRPC.

### **Report of the Executive Director**

Ty Warner thanked everyone who attended the Open House on June 15, and he thanked the representatives from FHWA, FTA and INDOT for the last two days spent with them during NIRPC's certification review. Warner also asked all to complete the electronic survey that had been distributed as part of the certification review. The next Board meeting will be on September 21 at 9 a.m. Ty Warner presented staff service awards to Kathy Luther for 10 years, Amanda Pollard for 10 years, and Sarah Geinosky for 5 years of service. He announced Amanda Pollard would be moving on to other work and that this would be Gary Evers' last Commission meeting as he will be taking his retirement.

### **Presentation**

Ratio Architects and Butler, Fairman & Seufert presented the I-65 & US 30 Corridor Safety Plan, an estimated \$40-45 million cyclist and pedestrian-friendly corridor enhancement plan which could include a tunnel, shuttle service and two bridges designed to improve safety, increase access to the area and reduce traffic congestion on US 30.

### **Finance & Personnel Committee**

Karen Freeman-Wilson reported that the State Board of Accounts performed a clean audit. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) will be available electronically. A budget amendment in the amount of \$22,500 was recommended by the Committee that would transfer funds from salaries to contractual for the purchase and implementation of E-TIP software. On a motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Bob Carnahan, the Commission voted to approve the budget amendment.

### **Environmental Management Policy Committee**

Geof Benson said the committee will meet on August 3 at 9 a.m. to hear a presentation from NIPSCO on LED streetlight replacement.

### **Technical Planning Committee**

Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met last Tuesday and heard a presentation on the air, water and land quality goals of the *2040 Comprehensive Regional Plan*. The public comment report on the US 30/I-65 Safety Plan was included in the materials. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Geof Benson, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-16, adopting the US 30/I-65 Safety Plan.

Gary Evers explained the projects in the first amendment to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program. On a motion by Geof Benson and a second by Jim Ton, the Commission voted to adopt Resolution 17-17, Amendment #1 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program.

The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee is scheduled for September 12 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC.

### **Legislative Committee**

Ty Warner said the committee will meet on Monday, July 24 at 1:00 p.m. at NIRPC.

### **Indiana Department of Transportation**

Reporting for Rick Powers, Lyndsay Quist said all construction work is continuing for the betterment of the region.

### **Federal Highway Administration/Federal Highway Administration**

Joyce Newland thanks NIRPC staff for the tour of the region Tuesday which showcased transportation challenges and projects in the region and in the TIP and the implementation of the *2040 Plan*, livable communities, and transit projects. The public comment meeting held last night voiced concerns about

social issues. NIRPC was commended on promoting bike and ped and livable communities initiatives throughout the region. NIRPC's bike/ped efforts are in accordance with the FHWA's goals to reduce deaths to zero. INDOT and all the MPOs in the state are working together on performance measures. One corrective action will be made on the Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan, which was a recommendation in the last certification and review and should be updated. Additional public comment on NIRPC's certification will be taken at 11 a.m. following this meeting in the NIRPC Lake Michigan Room, and in Michigan City at 1:30 p.m.

Michael Griffin indicated that an ad hoc committee will be formed to develop by-laws, which Newland said would also be one of the recommendations.

### **Other Business**

Ed Soliday said the Governor is traveling the state announcing a five-year plan for state roads for the entire state and it is available online. It does not include \$350 million which is also being made available to local government. The entire plan is \$30 billion over 20 years, none of which is debt. Porter County will get about \$40 million and the money needs to be spent on regional road connectivity to offload congestion on roads like US 30.

### **Announcements**

- Bob Carnahan said Lakeshore Public Radio needs to raise \$107,356 to avoid a deficit by September 30, or the station will face loss of programming. He asked Commissioners to make personal donations to the station.
- Bob Carnahan provided a program on the free South Shore Summer Music Festival showing rain locations.
- Geof Benson added that there will also be a concert on August 4 at 7:30 p.m. at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore or Chesterton High School if it rains.
- Ty Warner clarified that the I-65 & US 30 safety study was done only with designated safety money to address safe access to the corridor. NIRPC has done a regional corridor study earlier which identifies road gaps which, when filled, would relieve congestion on major roads like US 30. Karen Freeman-Wilson added that there are people who rely on bicycles to get to work or to shop because they do not have another option.
- Cary Kirkham announced that the LaPorte local rotary club is bringing in the Lake City Skiers on Pine Lake this Saturday night. It is the only competitive water skiing show in Indiana.
- Bill Emerson said the Cline Avenue Bridge is a connector which will relieve congestion on local roads and voiced his desire to see a resolution of support.
- Geof Benson announced a memorial celebration of life will be held for Dale Engquist on August 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dunes Learning Center.

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no other business, Michael Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

*A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Mary Thorne at the phone or email below should you wish to receive a copy of it. DVD recordings will be available once they are received by NIRPC from the videographer.*

For requests for alternate formats, please contact Mary Thorne at NIRPC at (219) 763-6060 extension 131 or at [mthorne@nirpc.org](mailto:mthorne@nirpc.org). Individuals with hearing impairments may contact us through the Indiana Relay 711 service by calling 711 or (800) 743-3333.

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