

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
August 16, 2018  
Minutes

Call to Order - Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube and filmed for local public access. Chairman Benson announced a change in the order of the agenda, with the appeal by the City of Gary coming after the approval of minutes. The agenda was updated to reflect the action by the Technical Planning Committee on Tuesday.

Commissioners present included Geof Benson, Kyle Allen, Jr, Tim Bietry, Kevin Breitzke, Robert Carnahan, Christine Cid, Lori Colmar, Don Ensign, Will Farrellbegg, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Michael Griffin, Richard Hardaway, Jane Jordan, Justin Kiel, Cary Kirkham, Mark Krentz, Andrew Kyres, Jeff Larson, Tom McDermott, Jr., Matt Murphy, Diane Noll, Tom Schmitt, Brian Snedecor, Joe Stahura, Greg Stinson, Mary Tanis, Jim Ton and George Topoll.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Justin Mount, Matt Deitchley, Zully Alvarado, Heather Ennis, Terry Velligan, Jeff Huet, Jake Dammarell, Jim Nowacki, Dean Button, Jill Murr, Christopher Murphy, David Wright and Tim Zorn. Joyce Newland participated via conference phone.

Staff present included Dave Hollenbeck, Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Daria Sztaba, Trey Wadsworth, Talaya Jones, Dominique Edwards, Charles Bradsky, Mitch Barloga, Eman Ibrahim, Meredith Stilwell, Candi Eklund, Lisa Todd, Gabrielle Biciunas, James Winters, Peter Kimball, Scott Weber, Glen Wells and Mary Thorne.

Public Comment – Zully Alvarado, Gary resident, commented on maintenance needs on the Broadway corridor. Jim Nowacki, Gary resident, commented on flooding issues still occurring at 6<sup>th</sup> and Broadway.

Minutes – On a motion by Michael Griffin and a second by Robert Carnahan, the minutes of the July 19, 2018 Executive Board meeting were approved as presented.

A change in the order of the agenda was brought at the request of Karen Freeman-Wilson. The City of Gary brought before the Commission an appeal of the decision of the Transportation Resource & Oversight Committee (TROC) on project scope changes. At the request of the Technical Planning Committee at their meeting on Tuesday, NIRPC staff provided a presentation to the Commission on the history of the project under Gary's appeal. Charles Bradsky outlined the background of the project, the appeal by the City of Gary, the TROC Lake/Porter County-approved Project and Scope Change Policy, and the project proposal. The policy was endorsed by the Lake/Porter TROC but not the LaPorte TROC but it had not been approved by the Commission. The City of Gary was following this policy in making their request; the policy had not previously been tested. The actions requested of the Commission were to (1) review and either adopt or reject the Scope Change Policy proposal, and (2) either sustain or reverse the decision of the Lake/Porter TROC and the TPC. Sustaining the decision of TROC and TPC would mean keeping the \$5 million with the Ridge Road project; reversing the decision per the City's request would split the \$5 million over the desired two new projects of Airport Road Phase 2 and the East Lakefront Complete Streets project as described in the presentation. The Ridge Road project would come off the books under the City's request, in favor of the two new projects. Karen Freeman-Wilson stated the case for the split in that there is new economic development, and leveraged funds with RDA, state, local and private investment. She also indicated that the new projects scored even higher than the original project.

Discussion in favor of both the Ridge Road and the Airport Road and East Lakefront options took place. Tom McDermott, Jr. expressed his support for the City of Gary. The Technical Planning Committee had some questions regarding the scope change policy. Michael Griffin said while NIRPC authorized its committees to perform the work tasked to them, committees do not have the authority to set policy and

must take their draft policies to the Commission for its approval. The Commission can decide on the policy once it has had time to deliberate on it. The appeal can be voted upon today; if the Commission is not prepared to vote on the policy, it must come back to the Commission another time for a vote. Charles Bradsky said there were 23 projects older than 5 years: 13 between 5 and 9 years, 5 between 10 and 14 years, 4 between 15 and 19 years and 1 over 20 years, which explains the need for the policy. Robert Carnahan requested a list of all projects older than five years.

Karen Freeman-Wilson moved to accept the changes in projects as outlined; seconded by Matt Murphy. Brief discussion followed. On a call to question by Jim Ton, Karen Freeman-Wilson requested a weighted vote be performed; with a second by Michael Griffin. The result of the weighted vote was 26 to 1 in favor, at 69.06% in favor with 1.69% against.

Heather Ennis and TIP Strategies (“Theory in Practice”) gave a presentation on the Northwest Indiana Regional Economic Development Plan, highlighting the draft vision and goals for a dynamic economic environment for Northwest Indiana. Warner indicated NIRPC had been brought in early into this process so that these efforts would sync with the development of NIRPC’s 2050 Plan and the NWI Economic Development District.

Due to the amount of time spent on the Gary appeal, the presenters of the Cline Avenue Bridge update offered to delay their presentation until the next meeting.

Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner introduced Candi Eklund, NIRPC’s newest Administrative Assistant.

Finance & Personnel Committee – George Topoll said the committee met this morning to review the financial status, reconciliation of expenses, and approve the claims register.

Environmental Management Policy Committee – Kathy Luther reported that the committee did not meet in July or August. Letters on the US Steel chromium spill were passed along and the EPA is looking at creating a Northwest Indiana specific plan for environmental instances for a future EMPC meeting presentation.

Technical Planning Committee – Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on Tuesday and heard several staff updates on the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan and outreach, 2050 Plan outreach, a TIP amendment and the City of Gary’s appeal.

Charles Bradsky summarized the 30-day public comment period on amendment 16 to the FY 2018-2021 Transportation Improvement Program. There were technical comments from INDOT and FHWA. He gave a brief overview of Resolution 18-13, amendment 16 for INDOT and local projects. On a motion by George Topoll and a second by Greg Stinson, the Commission approved amendment 16. The next meeting of the Technical Planning Committee is scheduled for September 11, 2018 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC.

Dominique Edwards reported on 2050 Plan pop up events. 409 responses were received to date. Mitch Barloga will be sending information on the Complete Streets Workshop to be held in the fall.

Legislative Committee – Mary Tanis requested Ty Warner to arrange for a meeting of the committee to meet within the next two months.

Local Government Assistance Committee – Will Farrellbegg said the next meeting will be held on August 30 at 1:30 p.m. at NIRPC. [Note: this meeting was subsequently canceled to a scheduling change of the main speaker for the meeting.]

Indiana Department of Transportation – Rick Powers said the call for Community Crossings projects will close on September 28, with one award per year. The Local TRAX application program closes August 31 with awards in September. Construction is moving along. Jessica Miller is the replacement for Lyndsay Quist, who moved to the Central Office. The SR 8 project into LaCrosse will be completed by the end of September.

#### Announcements

- Bob Carnahan said the 16 Plus meeting next Friday will feature prosecuting attorney, Bernie Carter. Police chiefs are invited to attend.
- Don Ensign thanked INDOT for the work at SR 2 and US 231.
- Warner said the data center groundbreaking was held in Hammond yesterday and that an announcement of an industry investment would be made in Gary today, with the Governor present at both events.

Adjournment – Hearing no other business, on a motion by George Topoll and several seconds, Geof Benson 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.

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