

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

March 21, 2019

Minutes

Call to Order - Chairperson Diane Noll called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

Executive Board Members present included Geof Benson, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Justin Kiel, Tom McDermott, Jr., Diane Noll, James Ton and George Topoll.

Other Commissioners present included Jeannette Bapst, Kevin Breitzke, Charlie Brown, Robert Carnahan, Bill Emerson, Jr., Don Ensign, Will Farrellbegg, Steve Kramer and Tom Schmitt.

Guests present included Justin Mount, Rick Powers, Terry Velligan, Zully Alvarado, John Kruger, Amy Stanley, Lisa Shrader, David Wright, Jake Dammarell, Christopher Murphy, Tim Werner, Tim Zorn and Andrew Steele.

Staff present included Dave Hollenbeck, Ty Warner, Daria Sztaba, Talaya Jones, Mitch Barloga, Lisa Todd, Dominique Edwards, and Mary Thorne.

Public Comments –

There were no comments from the public.

New Appointments – Dave Hollenbeck announced the appointments to the Commission of Blake Jefferson, Councilman from the Town of Kouts and Mayor John Cannon from the City of Portage.

Minutes – The minutes of the February 21, 2019 Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Jim Ton and a second by George Topoll.

Report of the Chair – Diane Noll

Diane. Noll reported that an article in the Times stated that nine Northwest Indiana communities were in the top 20 safest communities in Indiana in a report by SafeWise. St. John was the safest community, Dyer was third, followed by Crown Point at fourth, Chesterton seventh, Munster at ninth, Valparaiso at 14th, Griffith at 15th, Highland at 16th and Hobart at 20th.

Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner

Mr. Warner reported on the second Rail Crossing Task Force meeting. At the meeting, staff presented on their research regarding crossing locations and associated land uses, a third party reported on his own findings at select crossings and Dave Hollenbeck reported on procedural issues for recourse. Tom McDermott added that Sen. Carolyn Jackson's bill didn't even get a hearing. The consensus was that we must lobby Congress to change the laws. Karen Freeman-Wilson indicated that this was an issue being discussed by the League of Cities, and Ty Warner added that The National Association of Regional Councils is also engaged with the issue. The National Association of Railroad Safety Engineers passed a resolution and the issue is also being discussed in Virginia.

Mitch Barloga offered that there was also a discussion of rail issues at a conference he attended last week in Arkansas on collaboration of regional trail initiatives. In response to a suggestion of Charlie Brown, Dave Hollenbeck will look at crafting a resolution for the Commission. The Task Force will meet again on May 29 at 1:30 p.m. at NIRPC.

Ty Warner gave a brief summary of the federal requirements for the plan update process and announced the draft *NWI 2050 Plan* will be going out for public comment from April 1-April 30. He showcased a half-page flyer listing the four Open Houses to be held the last full week in April in Hammond, Gary, Michigan City and Valparaiso. All meetings will begin at 6 p.m. Transit options are also shown on the flyer. Mr. Warner urged those present to attend and to share the half-pager among their own networks in an effort to help get the word out. NIRPC is putting this on all its social media channels as well. In order to meet Federal adoption deadlines, NIRPC anticipates adoption of the plan at the May Full Commission meeting.

Jim Ton commended Mr. Warner for his commentary in the recent *NWI Times Progress Edition* about roots, regionalism, and working together for the good of Northwest Indiana.

Finance & Personnel Committee – Justin Kiel

Justin Kiel said the committee met this morning to review the financial status, reconciliation of expenses, and approve the claims register. There were two actions recommended by the Committee and requested of the Board today.

Daria Sztaba explained Resolution 19-13, Amendment #1B to the FY 19-20 Unified Planning Work Program for the Household Travel Survey in the amount of \$115,252 in PL funds with a 20% match. On a motion by Jim Ton and a second by Tom McDermott, the Executive Board voted to adopt Resolution 19-13, Amendment #1B to the FY 19-20 Unified Planning Work Program as presented.

Lisa Todd explained Procurement #18-26 for a new IT service contract which will bundle IT services, phone services and copier lease and print services in an amount not to exceed \$60,000. On a motion by Justin Kiel and a second by George Topoll, the Executive Board voted to approve Procurement #18-26 for a new IT service contract.

Technical Planning Committee – Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported that the Technical Planning Committee met on March 12 and heard staff presentations on the Performance-based Planning Framework and draft strategies. Both will be included in the draft *NWI 2050 Plan*. Staff also presented on the draft 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The framework, strategies and TIP will go out for public comment on April 1.

There is one action today for the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for the Engineering Services for Mutual Benefit Connected with a Federal and Bike Trail. Mitch Barloga explained the agreement for new signage for the Erie Lackawanna and the Prairie Duneland Trail. On a motion by Tom McDermott and a second by Jim Ton, the Executive Board voted to approve the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for the Engineering Services for Mutual Benefit Connected with a Federal

and Bike Trail. Ty Warner said this action ratifies the 2016 agreement. The next Technical Planning Committee meeting will be on April 9 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.

Outreach Committee - Just Kiel

Justin Kiel said the Committee met on March 16 and worked to update the Public Participation Plan and improved outreach. He also highlighted the open houses for *NWI 2050*. The committee will meet again on May 8 at 10 a.m. at NIRPC.

Legislative Committee – Charlie Brown

Charlie Brown thanked Tom McDermott for nominating him as Chair of the committee. Ty Warner said that the resolutions approved by the Board regarding Senate Bill 83, House Bill 1090, NIRPC's increase in appropriations, and funding for an erosion control were all transmitted to the delegation immediately after the last meeting. Conversations are being held on moving the appropriations request forward. Charlie Brown added that it would be very beneficial for communities on the Commission to contact their legislators as constituents and offering assistance. Bob Carnahan said the Lake County Solid Waste bill had been defeated.

Indiana Department of Transportation - Rick Powers

Rick Powers reported he has no information on the Community Crossings grant results. He asked for patience as construction season is beginning and the barrels are on the way. There is an \$18 million investment in the NIRPC region. He also reminded the Commission of the new mapping tool, www.nextlevelroads.com.

Other Business -

- Tom McDermott said the Erie Lackawanna trail at Calumet in Hammond is shut down until November due to a bridge project.
- Bob Carnahan commented on the importance of participating in the 2020 Census to avoid loss in funding or representation in Congress. There is a presentation at Schererville Town Hall.
- Bill Emerson, Jr. said the Environmental Management Policy Committee will meet on April 4 at 9 a.m. at NIRPC. He is looking to get more industrial partners to attend.

Announcements –

- Bob Carnahan said the Cedar Lake Chamber will hold a business expo on Saturday from 11 am to 3 pm at Hanover School Corp. with a lot of giveaways and vendors.

Adjournment –

Hearing no other business, Diane Noll adjourned the meeting at 9:50 a.m. The Executive Board will meet on April 18, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

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.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, familial status, parental status, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.