

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

NIRPC - Lake Michigan Room

April 4, 2019

Minutes

Members/Guests: Jan Bapst, Michael Kuss, Reggie Korthals, Maggie Byrne, Lauri Keagle, Jen Birchfield, Deb Backhus, Cathy Martin, George Malis, Kathryn Vallis, Bri Ciara, Geof Benson, Katherine Moore Powell, Jennifer Gadzala, Brenda Scott Henry, Kevin Breitzke, Jeff Loewe, Aaron Corn and George Topoll.

NIRPC Staff: Kathy Luther, Joe Exl, Dominique Edwards and Candice Eklund. 44.

Call to Order

Jan Bapst called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

On motion by Reggie Korthals and second by Lauri Keagle, the February 7, 2019 meeting minutes were approved as presented.

Regional Planning

Final Draft 2050 Plan Overview

Kathy Luther presented the draft NWI 2050 Plan which is out for public comment through April 30, 2019. The Plan examines trends and influences of the future including economy and place, environment, mobility, and people and leaders. It identifies strategies to pursue, investments to make, and progresses to measure to achieve the vision for the region. The Plan not only includes the influences that were federally required but also the needs of NWI. This plan provides sixteen critical paths of action to be prepared for Northwestern Indiana's future. The Plan is online at <https://www.nirpc.org/2040-plan/transportation/2050-plan/>. Information includes the Plan Storybook, the Plan in PDF format, a link for comments and information on the open houses and public hearings, which will be held during the last full week of April.

Some members of the committee thought the online version of the storybook was more user friendly and displayed differently than the mobile application version. Geof Benson stated the link to submit a public comment was not working. Updates were made during the meeting to correct the link issue.

Lauri Keagle said she reviewed the document and liked the new storybook design and format. She asked if a table of contents and a searchable text field could be added to the document for ease of navigation. Trey Wadsworth will investigate Lauri's request.

NOFA Results

Kathy Luther presented the NOFA results stating all projects scored at the EMPC meetings were funded. Of the eight Air Quality projects awarded, the four Air Quality Education projects will be contracted through South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC).

Kathy provided a visual demonstration of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) funding system. All of the federally funded projects through NWI as well as the projects funded through INDOT and NIRPC can be found in the RTIP system.

NIRPC's 2020 Environmental Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Joe Exl presented on the 2020 Environmental UPWP plan and provided explanations for the three projects he will be responsible for in FY 2020.

- Continue working on the Red Flag Investigations (RFI's) which are used to investigate potential environmental impacts that may be associated with a transportation project. Currently the RFI notification is received after the project has already began, resulting in potential added costs and time delays if a modification is needed. Going forward, Joe or the consultant from the project, will send the early coordination letters, or RFI's, at the start of the project to reduce or eliminate these issues.
- Create a Green Streets policy. Joe will assemble case studies from NWI to aid in creating the policy. A task force will be assembled and will consist of Local Public Agency's (LPA's) and MS4 communities. Michael Kuss stated the Michigan City Sanitary District developed a Green Streets program. To help aid in NIRPC's efforts, Michael will send their plan to Candice Eklund for distribution to the Committee.
- The Transportation Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation plan is the third project Joe will be forming. A task force team will be assembled to create and adopt strategies in climate change or severity of weather in transportation planning. The task force team will use the FHWA framework as a guiding document.

Committee Organization

New Proposed Meeting Schedule

Kathy Luther discussed NIRPC's desire to reduce the number of formal committee meetings. In the previous meeting, the Committee voiced their desire to continue meeting monthly, either formally or informally. Kathy met with Bill Emerson and Jan Bapst, who requested reserving the monthly time slot on calendars and schedule workshops and educational programs to maintain the opportunity for collaboration on the months EMPC business meetings aren't scheduled. Various workshops and educational program ideas were discussed at the meeting. Kathy Luther will revise the proposed committee monthly schedule and asked the members to email Candice Eklund for future special meeting topics. Brenda Scott Henry requested each monthly meeting or session, discuss regional concerns and Deb Backhus requested the monthly announcements continue to be sent out.

Voting Membership

Kathy Luther presented the 2019 EMPC membership listing and discussed the need to list the representatives from each municipality and if each one is either a voting or non-voting member. Geof Benson inquired if the EMPC Committee had bylaws stating commissioners are appointed to the committee and if they can send or appoint a representative as a voting member. Kathy Luther will investigate if an existing policy has already been adopted and talk to NIRPC leadership for advisement.

Announcements

The event announcements submitted at the meeting will be distributed in an email to the committee.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Jan Bapst adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m. A special program and workshop with the In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program will be held at the NIRPC offices on May 2, 2019. The special program will be held at 9:00 a.m. and a workshop will begin at 1:00 p.m.

A Digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact Candice Eklund at 219-763-6060 Ext 142 or ceklund@nirpc.org should you wish to receive a copy of it.