

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN
August 16, 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.

Commissioners present included Diane Noll, Tom McDermott, Jr., Greg Stinson, Michael Griffin, Kevin Breitzke, Tom Schmitt, Jane Jordan, Jack Jeralds, Jeanette Bapst, Geof Benson, Bill Emerson, Mike Rosenbaum, Sheila Matias, Dave Shaffer, Gene Simmons, Bob Carnahan, Joe Stahura, Sharon Szwedlo, Don Ensign, John Cannon, Mark Krentz, Justin Kiel, George Topoll, and Karen Freeman-Wilson.

Guests present included Rick Powers, Jake Dammarell, Sue Pelfrey, Zully Alvarado, Stephanie Kuziela, Tim Jones, David Wright, and Jerome Powell.

Staff present included Dave Hollenbeck, Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Trey Wadsworth, Charles Bradsky, Mitch Barloga, Peter Kimball, Meredith Stilwell, Gabrielle Biciunas, James Winters, Scott Weber, and Candice Eklund

Public Comment – David Wright introduced Jerome Parker, the new General Manager with the Gary Public Transportation Corp (GPTC). Mr. Parker gave a brief history of his career, stating he has worked in various transportation communities for over 41 years. Mr. Parker is excited to bring his ideas and experiences to Northwest Indiana.

Minutes – The minutes of the May 16, 2019 Executive Board meeting were approved on a motion by Greg Stinson and a second by George Topoll.

Dave Hollenbeck reported there was not a full quorum of commission members but there was a quorum of the executive board. The agenda items for today can all be voted on by the executive board and can proceed pursuant to the agenda.

Report of the Chair – Diane Noll

Diane Noll announced Daria Sztaba was no longer with NIRPC and Talaya Jones is the acting Chief Financial Officer. Diane also introduced Jamie Stewart, NIRPC's new accountant.

Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner

Ty Warner welcomed the Commissioners after a brief summer hiatus and reported that during that time NIRPC staff had been busy following up on the approval of *NWI 2050* from last May by updating the Public Participation Plan, creating a series of weekly newsletters stemming from *NWI 2050*, and focusing on other implementation items from the plan. Ty also invited the Commissions to the August 22 annual luncheon of *Ignite the Region*, spearheaded by the Northwest Indiana Forums. NIRPC's primary involvement in this plan has been in the areas of infrastructure and placemaking.

Mr. Warner congratulated Mayor Tom McDermott and the City of Hammond on their placemaking efforts in their downtown planning, and stated it was exciting to be a part of their efforts by serving on the steering committee.

Mayor Tom McDermott provided an update on the Rail Crossings Task Force (RCTF) project. In the last year, the Indiana Supreme Court prohibited the municipalities' from ticketing trains blocking intersections longer than 10 minutes. NIRPC created the RCTF in hopes of addressing the myriad of safety and other concerns created by this situation. A Bill went before the Indiana State House but a hearing was not granted because it was deemed a federal issue. The RCTF is therefore looking at

federal solutions. Mayor McDermott extended his appreciation to NIRPC for their efforts on this issue. The RCTF meeting on August 27, 2019 will be cancelled and notification will be sent with the rescheduled date. *[Note: the date was subsequently set for October 1.]*

Ty Warner announced Rick Powers, from INDOT, accepted a position as the Public Works Director in Peoria, Illinois. Ty and the Commissioners thanked Mr. Powers for his service to Northwest Indiana.

Finance & Personnel Committee – Justin Kiel

Justin Kiel stated Procurement 19-19 comes with a favorable recommendation from the F & P Committee for the City of Valparaiso, on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) improvements. Kathy Luther presented this procurement stating Valparaiso had an existing grant and is now requesting to use the \$125,000 for ground improvements. On motion by George Topoll and second by Greg Stinson, the Executive Board approved Procurement 19-19 for the City of Valparaiso TOD ground improvements.

Environmental Management Policy Committee – Jan Bapst

Jan Bapst reported the EMPC group partnered with the Indiana Save the Dunes organization to discuss the public trust doctrine and the dynamic and continually changing high water mark on Lake Michigan. This doctrine related to giving access along the lakefront and stated there are no private areas. Sessions were held in Michigan City and NIRPC.

Technical Planning Committee – Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) met on August 13 and heard a staff presentation on Next Level Trails Round 2. The next round is scheduled October 1 – November 1, 2019. See Mitch Barloga for further details. Staff also presented on the working group created by the TPC to review the 2019 NOFA procedures and create the NOFA for 2020. See Charles Bradsky for further details.

There are three actions for consideration. The first is Resolution 19-23, the Designation of Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC). Mr. Breitzke said the Technical Planning Committee recommended adoption of Resolution 19-23. Peter Kimball reported the Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors (CURFCs) are important freight corridors that provide critical connectivity to the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). The state of Indiana has been allotted 97.13 miles of designated Urban Freight Corridor and 194.25 miles of Rural Freight Corridor. On motion by Greg Stinson and second by John Cannon, the Executive Board voted to adopt Resolution 19-23, to adopt Willowcreek Road/Crisman Road from U.S. 20 to the Indiana Toll Road entrance ramp. Ty Warner noted this is the only section in the state of Indiana where the toll road exits onto a local street, making Portage accountable for all of the improvements along the roadway brought by the resulting freight traffic. John Cannon expressed his gratitude to NIRPC staff for their efforts on this opportunity for the City of Portage.

Mr. Breitzke stated the Technical Planning Committee recommended the adoption of Resolution 19-24, the Public Participation Plan (PPP) Update. Trey Wadsworth described the Public comment report and the PPP update. The new PPP was put out for public comment on June 21, 2019 for a 45 day public comment period. Four of the seven public comments received were in support of the PPP, two comments contained ideas and one was for a topic NIRPC does not have involvement in and could not authorize the funding for. None of the comments were deemed significant and did not require a revision to the plan. On motion by Tom McDermott, Jr. and second by Greg Stinson, the Executive Board voted to adopt Resolution 19-24, support for the Public Participation Plan Update.

Mr. Breitzke said the Technical Planning Committee recommended the adoption of Resolution 19-22, the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2018-2021 (Amendment #23) and FY 2020-2024 (Amendment #1). Charles Bradsky noted there were no public comments received during the 30 day public comment period. The FY 2020-2024 TIP has not been approved by INDOT or FHWA yet,

therefore requesting to amend the FY 2018-2021 TIP as well as the future FY 2020-2024 TIP. On motion by Greg Stinson and second by Justin Kiel, the Executive Board voted to adopt Resolution 19-22, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2018-2021 (Amendment #23) and FY 2020-2024 (Amendment #1).

Indiana Department of Transportation – Rick Powers

Rick Powers reported the transportation industries around the state are investigating ways to better communicate and move funding more efficiently. INDOT has several projects on the Borman expressway through 2025 and they will be installing electronic traffic management as an alternative to moving traffic through the expressway. The Kennedy Avenue ramp is closed due to significant erosion under the ramp and is expected to be open in three weeks. There are significant bridge related issues on I-94 and the capacity improvements on I-65 are scheduled to be completed this fall. Mr. Powers also announced he would be leaving INDOT on August 30 and said it was a pleasure to serve with INDOT and the amazing leadership of Northwest Indiana.

Other Business –

- Bob Carnahan said 16 Plus will meet August 23, 2019 at the Schererville Town Hall at 9:00 a.m. State Representative, Lisa Beck, will be speaking on the year end circuit breaker.
- Bob Carnahan reminded the group of the Census starting in March 2020. He encouraged all communities to form a Complete Count Committee to realize the benefits of \$2,710 per person counted.

Adjournment-

Hearing no other business, Diane Noll adjourned the meeting at 9:51 a.m. The Full Commission/Executive Board will meet on September 19, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC.

A digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact nirpc@nirpc.org should you wish to receive a copy of it. Barring technical issues, the livestream video recording of this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/NIRPCPlanning>.