

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting  
6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN  
October 17, 2019  
Meeting Notes

**Call to Order -**

Acting Chairperson Karen Freeman-Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

**Roll call of the Executive Board** was taken by Meredith Stilwell. A full quorum of the Executive Board was not reached.

Executive Board members present: Karen Freeman-Wilson, Geof Benson (non-voting), Justin Kiel, Mark Krentz, Greg Stinson, and George Topoll.

Executive Board members absent: Anthony Copeland, Tom McDermott, Diane Noll, Ed Soliday, and Jim Ton.

Other Commissioners present: Kevin Breitzke, Charlie Brown, Bob Carnahan, Will Farrellbegg, Richard Hardaway, and Gene Simmons.

Guests present included Randy Strasser, Lauri Keagle, Lauren Varga, Jessica Miller, David Wright, and Ismail Attallah

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Trey Wadsworth, Meredith Stilwell, Charles Bradsky, Lisa Todd, Kevin Polette, James Winters, and James Gross.

**New Appointments -**

Attorney David Hollenbeck announced the reappointment of Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson (City of Gary).

**Report of the Chair - Karen Freeman-Wilson**

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson shared she had the honor of testifying before the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on October 16, 2019. There were discussions on the safety associated with accessibility for citizens with disabilities, availability, and the increased options with ride-sharing companies in our communities. Congress is considering new legislative regulations for these companies.

**Report of the Executive Director - Ty Warner**

Ty Warner referenced the corrective action NIRPC received during its certification review as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) last year. NIRPC had objected to the corrective action as a misreading of its Public Participation Plan, but as a continued commitment to NIRPC's public engagement, NIRPC nevertheless developed an action plan that included the adoption of a new Public Participation Plan following *NWI 2050*. After the Commission adopted *Engage NWI* in August, the corrective action was removed and NIRPC is fully certified by USDOT with no further action to be completed. NIRPC subsequently received the award for Outstanding Public Involvement at the Indiana MPO conference in Fort Wayne in September for its outreach activities related to *NWI 2050* and for *Engage NWI*. Warner thanked Dominique Edwards, NIRPC's Public Participation Planner, Trey Wadsworth, Director of Transportation, and all staff who contributed to help make NIRPC's outreach efforts one of vigorous participation.

Mr. Warner announced that three NIRPC staff members are currently on local public radio this week. Eman Ibrahim discusses E-Commerce and its effects on NWI on the Green Fleets radio program from NIRPC's partners at South Shore Clean Cities; Mitch Barloga is on the Regionally Speaking program discussing the upcoming Trail Towns workshop on October 31; and Ty Warner is covering a range of planning issues, including *NWI 2050*, on the new Building Northwest Indiana program, a new podcast from the Construction Advancement Foundation. All of these are available on demand on the Lakeshore Public Radio website.

Information was also distributed for the Purdue University Extension's Planning Commissioner training offered biannually. NIRPC is also planning to offer localized training for Planning Commissioners in 2020 as part of the services it offers to its member communities.

Mr. Warner announced Trey Wadsworth's resignation to join the team at Ford Mobility in Detroit, and thanked him for the impact he made as Director of Transportation, achieving the revamping of all of NIRPC's Federally-required MPO work products during his relatively short tenure and ensuring that NIRPC was on top of all of its MPO-related obligations.

#### **Finance & Personnel Committee - Justin Kiel**

Justin Kiel stated the Finance and Personnel (F & P) Committee met before the Executive Board meeting. There were four motions to vote on for the F & P Committee, but due to the absence of a quorum, Mr. Kiel will present the motions at the Full Commission meeting on November 21, 2019.

#### **Environmental Policy Committee - Kathy Luther**

Kathy Luther said the EMPC group met with NIRPC's federal partner, Urban Waters, to present the Living Streets Policy. LaPorte County presented the Septic Point of Sale Ordinance and how it will benefit water quality. The Environmental Protection Agency will present on their sub area regional planning for emergency responses in NWI at a workshop in January.

#### **Technical Planning Committee - Kevin Breitzke**

Kevin Breitzke said the TPC met on October 8 and staff presented the Living Streets policy. The working group meeting for this policy will meet on November 13, 2019 at 1:30 p.m. The TIP continuous working group created a survey and encouraged the recipients to complete it for continued improvement of the NOFA process. The one action from TPC that was on the agenda for today will be postponed until the Full Commission meeting on November 21, 2019. Mr. Breitzke also expressed his gratitude to Trey Wadsworth for all of the contributions he made to NIRPC.

#### **Indiana Department of Transportation - Jessica Miller**

Jessica Miller reported that INDOT is in the process of getting the La Porte District Deputy Commissioner position filled. She congratulated the communities who received Community Crossing funding and noted the next round will be in January 2020. Federal aid, Group 3 and 4 funds, will have a call opening November 1st.

#### **Other Business -**

Mr. Warner thanked the members of the Executive Board and other Commissioners for their attendance today, and conveyed that the responses of Executive Board members prior to today's meeting had indicated that a quorum would be achieved. To aid in the assessment of a quorum for future Commission meetings, Candice Eklund has constructed an RSVP option through Constant Contact notifications as a further attempt to simplify replying to the Full Commission/Executive Board meetings. By simply clicking on the Yes or No button, it will inform NIRPC in advance if a quorum will be met. The notification sent for the meeting in November will include the RSVP option.

#### **Adjournment**

Having had no business that could be conducted without a quorum, Karen Freeman-Wilson adjourned the meeting at 9:34 a.m. The Full Commission will meet on November 21, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at NIRPC with action items scheduled for today's meeting carried over to the November Full Commission agenda.

*A digital MP3 of this meeting is filed. Contact [nirpc@nirpc.org](mailto: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>.*