

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

January 16, 2020 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairperson, Diane Noll, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

Roll call was taken by Candice Eklund.

Present

The 33 Commissioners present included Janet Beck (Pottawattomie Park), Geof Benson (Beverly Shores), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Charlie Brown (Lake County Council), Mary Brown (Gary), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Anthony Copeland (East Chicago), Joshleen Denham (Trail Creek), Tom Dermody (La Porte), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Will Farrellbegg (Lowell), Michael Griffin (Highland), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Eric Hull (Burns Harbor), Jack Jeralds (Schneider), Tim Jones (Kouts), Justin Kiel (La Crosse), Sue Lynch (Portage), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Lori Mercer (Westville), Wendy Mis (Munster), Edward Morales (Porter Township Trust), Diane Noll (Wanatah), David Peeler (Hebron), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Brian Snedecor (Hobart), Greg Stinson (Porter), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szwedo (New Chicago), Mary Tanis (Dyer), Jim Ton (Chesterton), and George Topoll (Union Township). Also present was Matt Deitchley representing INDOT.

Absent

The 18 Commissioners absent included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), David Anderson (Winfield), Jeanette Bapst (Dune Acres), Jim Biggs (Porter County Commissioner), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Tony Hendricks (LaPorte County Surveyor), Andrew Kyles (Crown Point), Jeff Larson (Porter County Council), Sheila Matias (LaPorte County Commissioner), Robert Lemay (Long Beach), Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), Mark Ritter (Kingsbury), Michael Rosenbaum (LaPorte County Council), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Carolyn Saxton (Ogden Dunes), Gene Simmons (Michigan City), Ed Soliday (Governor Appointee), and Joe Stahura (Whiting).

Kingsford Heights and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Guests in Attendance

Guests present included Chris Salatas (Senator Todd Young), Bryan Blazak, Adam Parkhouse, Lauri Keagle (South Shore Clean Cities), Ray Dumbrys, Deb Backhus, Adrian Vera, and Christopher Murphy.

Staff in Attendance

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Charles Bradsky, Scott Weber, Eman Ibrahim, Mitch Barloga, Peter Kimball, Kevin Polette, Lisa Todd, Talaya Jones, Flor Baum, Candice Eklund and attorney Dave Hollenbeck.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

New appointments

Dave Hollenbeck announced the appointments to the Commission of Councilwoman Janet Beck (Pottawattomie Park), Mayor Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Mayor Tom Dermody (City of LaPorte),

Councilwoman Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Councilman Eric Hull (Burns Harbor), Mayor Sue Lynch (Portage), Councilman David Peeler (Hebron), and Councilwoman Mary Tanis (Dyer). Self-introductions were made by the Commissioners and NIRPC staff.

Diane Noll thanked the Commissioners for their help and support while she served as Chair of the Commission this past year.

Presentation of Norman E. Tufford Award - Ty Warner

Ty Warner presented the Norman Tufford Award “for exceptional dedication and service to NIRPC” to Geof Benson, Town Councilman from Beverly Shores. Benson has served as a NIRPC Commissioner since 2008, and served as President of the National Association of Regional Councils, where he is extremely active on the national level. Geof thanked the committee and said the award meant a lot to him.

2019 NIRPC Annual Report – Ty Warner

Ty Warner presented NIRPC’s 2019 Annual Report in a new, graphically-designed format, and thanked NIRPC staff for their contributions. The report, highlighting NIRPC’s activities over the past year, is available online at www.nirpc.org.

2019 Commissioners with Perfect Attendance - Ty Warner

Mr. Warner presented perfect attendance awards to Geof Benson, George Topoll, and Justin Kiel for attending all Full Commission and Executive Board meetings in 2019. With the appointment of several new commissioners, Ty also discussed the difference in meeting formats for an Executive Board and the Full Commission.

Minutes

The minutes of the December 12, 2019 Full Commission meeting were approved on a motion by Greg Stinson and second by Robert Carnahan.

Officers & Executive Board for 2020 - Diane Noll

Diane Noll said the nominating committee met to develop the slate for the 2020 officers and Executive Board, and presented that slate to the Commission.

Elected as Chair for 2020 was Michael Griffin, Town of Highland. George Topoll, Union Township Trustee was elected Vice-Chair. Justin Kiel, Town Council President of La Crosse, was elected as Secretary, and Richard Hardaway, Councilman from Merrillville, was elected Treasurer.

Members elected to the Executive Board included Councilman Will Farrellbegg (Lowell) and Mayor Tom McDermott (Hammond), representing Lake County; County Commissioner Sheila Matias and Mayor Tom Dermody (LaPorte), representing LaPorte County; and Councilman James Ton (Chesterton) and Councilman Greg Stinson (Porter), representing Porter County.

With no further indication otherwise, State Representative Ed Soliday (Indiana House of Representatives, 4th District) continues as the Governor’s Appointee to the Commission. Diane Noll, Clerk-Treasurer of Wanatah, now serves as Immediate Past President. On motion by Geof Benson and a second by George Topoll, the Commission voted to adopt the 2020 slate as presented.

Diane Noll turned the gavel over to newly-elected Chairman, Michael Griffin, Clerk-Treasurer of the Town of Highland. Mr. Griffin previously served in this capacity in 2017. Ty Warner presented the

gavel Plaque to Diane Noll for past chairmanship and expressed his appreciation for her dedication last year.

Finance & Personnel Committee – Justin Kiel

Justin Kiel reported the Finance & Personnel (F & P) Committee met this morning to review the reconciliation of the claims register and stated there were three actions for consideration today.

Justin Kiel said the Executive Director Contract amendment comes with a favorable recommendation from the F & P Committee. On motion by Geof Benson and a second by Jim Ton, the Full Commission voted to adopt the Executive Director Contract - 2020 Addendum.

Justin Kiel said the budget amendment was recommended by the F & P Committee. On motion by Tom McDermott and a second by Greg Stinson, the Full Commission voted to approve the Budget Amendment for 2020 Budget.

Justin Kiel said the FTA Procurement Manual Update comes with a favorable recommendation from the F & P Committee. Ty Warner added this update brings the FTA manual, previously adopted in 2012, to reflect the NIRPC policy previously adopted and meets other new requirements. On motion by Kevin Breitzke and a second by Bob Carnahan, the Full Commission voted to approve the FTA Procurement Manual Update, NIRPC Resolution #20-01.

Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) - Kathy Luther

EMPC Chair Bill Emerson was not present due to a conflict with the Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission meeting. Kathy Luther reported EMPC met on January 9, 2020. The Environmental Protection Agency presented on their sub-area environmental response plan due to spills that occurred in Lake Michigan recently. The next stakeholders meeting for emergency responders is scheduled on February 4, 2020 in Michigan City at City Hall.

At the end of last year, the EMPC was charged with investigating issues for vehicle emissions testing. A working group was established and the first event scheduled by the working group is an education event scheduled on February 7, 2020 at NIRPC.

CommuniTree applications are due February 21. Applications are available on NIRPC's website.

Mayor Tom McDermott inquired if the EMPC Committee has been discussing the jeopardy of high water levels on Lake Michigan in their meetings. Geof Benson noted a letter had been submitted to Indiana's Governor requesting aid for this issue. A response was received from FEMA on January 15, stating it was a local issue that would need to be resolved by each community. Ty Warner added a resolution had been passed by this Commission early last year in support of funding for an erosion study.

Michael Griffin stated there is a force when NIRPC acts as the Body of Northwest Indiana as they are tasked by state laws to be engaged in Transportation, Environment, and Economic Development as a Council of Governments. Charlie Brown informed the Commissioners that the legislative body in Indianapolis is taking action on this matter now and this needs an immediate response from NIRPC.

On a motion by Charlie Brown and second by Kevin Breitzke, the Full Commission authorized a task force group to be formed to compose a Sense of the Commission letter, to be sent on behalf of the Commission, in an effort to address the emergency status of the shoreline and erosion issues.

The Commissioner's assigned to the task force were Michael Griffin, Geof Benson, Sue Lynch, Tom McDermott, and Greg Stinson. Mr. Griffin will draft the letter and send it to Ty Warner to forward to the task force for comment.

Technical Planning Committee - Kevin Breitzke

The Technical Planning Committee (TPC) met on January 4, 2020. Kevin Breitzke stated there were three actions for consideration today.

Scott Weber presented on Resolution 20-03. The resolution is requesting a vote for NIRPC to amend the *NWI 2050 Plan* as a technical amendment. On motion by Jim Ton and a second by George Topoll, the Full Commission voted to approve Resolution 20-03 - *NWI 2050 Plan Technical Amendment #1*.

Scott Weber also presented on Resolution 20-04, a technical amendment to update the federally required safety performance measure targets in the FY 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). On motion by Geof Benson and a second by Will Farrellbegg, the Full Commission voted to approve Resolution 20-04 - Transportation Improvement Program Technical Amendment #1.

Charles Bradsky presented on the one Public Comment received during the public comment period for the draft changes to the 2020-2024 TIP. The comment was a request to increase the capacity of the roadways for two state roads. The comment was responded to and forwarded to INDOT. Charles presented on Resolution 20-02, Amendment #3 to the FY 2020-2024 TIP for 29 added projects in the region. On motion by George Topoll and a second by Brian Snedecor, the Full Commission voted to approve Resolution 20-02, FY 2020-2024 Transportation Improvement Program, Amendment #3.

Charles Bradsky briefed the Commission on the emergency amendment that was approved by Ty Warner between January 6-9, 2020. The five projects in question were already in the TIP, but the design phases had not been included. The inter-agency consultation group consisting of INDOT, FHWA, EPA, IDEM, and FTA approved the emergency amendment.

INDOT – Matt Deitchley

Matt Deitchley introduced himself to the newly appointed Commissioners and said he is available after the meeting to discuss any questions or concerns they may have. Matt introduced Adam Parkhouse, newly appointed Media Relations Director with the LaPorte District, as an additional contact within INDOT. There will be significant construction on I-94, I-65 and State Route 2 highways in the near future.

Announcements

Geof Benson noted for the newly appointed Commissioners that they should be receiving an email from Michael Griffin regarding the committees they want to serve on at NIRPC.

Robert Carnahan distributed a listing showing population by county from the 2010 census. Robert provided a brief video on the United States 2020 Census and reminded the Commissioners of the census beginning April 1, 2020.

Geof Benson introduced Chris Salatas, District Representative for Senator Todd Young, stating he may be a helpful resource in discussing the emergency response needed in NWI.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Diane Noll adjourned the meeting at 10:21 a.m.

The Executive Board will meet on March 19, 2020 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>.