

Environmental Management Policy Committee

NIRPC – Virtual Meeting

September 3, 2020

Minutes

This meeting was convened as an electronic meeting, pursuant to Governor Holcomb's Executive Order 20-04 and 20-09, extended by Executive Order 20-39. All persons were meeting remotely on a Google Meet platform that allowed for real time interaction and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. When the agenda item was provided for public comment, this was supported as well. A roll call was taken to motion and approve the agenda items.

Bill Emerson called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call. In attendance were Geof Benson (Beverly Shores), Bill Emerson (Lake County), Jennifer Gadzala (Chesterton), Brenda Scott-Henry (City of Gary), Tim Kingsland (Hobart), Sarah Nimetz (LaPorte), Wendy Mis (Munster), Kay Nelson (Forum), George Topoll (Union Township), and Lauri Keagle (SSCC).

NIRPC staff present were Kathy Luther, Candice Eklund, Dominique Edwards, Kevin Polette, and Flor Baum.

The meeting minutes of August 6 were approved on motion by Lauri Keagle and second by Tim Kingsland. A roll call was taken, and the committee voted unanimously to approve.

There were no public comments.

Kathy Luther introduced guest speakers who presented on Draft Resolution 20-24 NIRPC Sponsorship of Regional Environmental Resilience Institute Application. Erin Lasher from Indiana University Environmental Resilience Institute presented on the Environmental Resilience Institute (ERI) and Resilience Cohort (RC) Overview. The primary factor of the ERI is in research and communicating the science and implementing solutions by working with local governments across the state of Indiana. The RC is implemented on a two-year cycle. The first year focuses on community-wide greenhouse gas inventory. The second year (currently running) focuses on climate action plan development. Fourteen Indiana communities participated in the 2019 Cohort. The Cohort partnered with the Indiana Sustainability Development Program to send IU student interns to local governments to assist in conducting inventories. The 2021 Cohort will focus on a community-wide greenhouse gas inventory with Northwest Indiana municipalities from April through September 2021. The benefits would include access to Clear Path and ICLEI Online Community. Training and support from ERI and ECLEI would be provided. The option to apply for a 10-week summer extern through partnership with Sustain IU was also another benefit. The cost is based on population and two inventory types. Standard Inventory with a population of 50,000 or less would cost \$200.00 and a population greater than 50,000 would cost \$500.00. Regional Inventory with a population of 50,000 would cost \$200.00. Population of 50,000 would cost \$300.00. There will also be an opportunity to be a part of the local government operations inventory at no additional cost.

Guest speaker Kathy Sipple presented on Northwest Indiana Region Resilience (NIRR). The NIRR covers both Lake and Porter Counties. The City of Gary and Michigan City joined the group. Lake County Council, Lake and La Porte County Commissioners have voted unanimously to be a part of

the NIRR program. The mission is to submit a regional application in December. In the meantime, there will be outreach to Porter County and individual communities. There is fundraising for communities that are interested in the program but cannot afford the cost. The goal is to be able to fund between five and six interns.

Guest speaker Danni Schaust presented on the Indiana Resilience Cohort (IRC) intern experience. Students receive a scholarship for their participation in the program. Undergraduate students receive \$4600.00 and graduate students receive \$6000.00. Though not a requirement, it is asked of the communities to contribute up to \$1500.00 to help support the student scholarship. Intern placement was reduced this year due to the pandemic, and online procedure was set in place. However, in-person placement will require a physical space for the intern. The 2021 program application will be launched in early October and will be open for two months. A draft job description will be needed. The RC has a job description template available as well. The program also partners with community organizations, private businesses, and non-profit groups. Outside of the RC, climate equity is a big focus. The intern program is available to Indiana University Northwest students.

Guest speaker Brenda Scott-Henry from the City of Gary presented on the three-year experience participating in the program. The first year was data collection that involved an inventory of sustainable development activity which was prepared by the extern. This information was pertinent in order to move on to the Greenhouse Gas Inventory. The second year involved drafting fact sheets, identifying each departmental sustainability activities. A draft resolution and Greenhouse Gas Inventory that consisted of the city, local government, and community were completed in the second year. The third year consisted of setting up a marketing strategy as well as continued work on the fact sheets. The resolution was presented to the mayor, department heads, and city council, and it passed. Currently the City of Gary is moving forward on a Climate Action Plan. The pandemic has altered the work environment for the extern. They were not able to get out in the field as in the previous years. However, the extern will be available until October. Municipalities interested in this program are strongly encouraged to have a designated person who will work and be available to the extern in order to maximize productivity. Brenda explained the resolution was to get the city's support in setting up a climate advisory council that will establish climate emission reduction targets for the city and continue completing the Climate Action Plan. The tools to convert carbon dioxide equivalents are provided by the RC for reporting. Vehicle emissions baseline measurements are being captured from INDOT (usually a year out) and regional planning entities. As the community moves forward year by year, by using various data, measurements will change and reflect updated accurate numbers.

Kathy Luther presented on the discussion points and suggested resolution actions of Res. 20-24. It was suggested that four units of government support two interns. Participating units of government commit to paying the ERI directly a \$200.00 ICLEI resource fee (\$300 for populations over 50,000) should the regional NIRPC application be accepted. NIRPC will be in receipt of \$2,760 per intern from participating units of governments or supporting partner organizations before entering into an internship sponsorship agreement with the Environmental Resilience Institute. On motion by Geof Benson and second by George Topoll, the committee authorized staff to draft Resolution 20-24 for The Commission.

Announcements were made by Lauri Keagle for South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC) and from Jenny Orsburn for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Kathy announced the kickoff workshop for Brownfield Grant and Redevelopment is scheduled for September 1 from 1:00 p.m. through 3:00 p.m.

The next EMPC meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in the NIRPC offices. Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:54 a.m.