

**Ped, Pedal & Paddle Committee Meeting**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**March 4, 2021**  
**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 20-52. 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.

George Topoll called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance and a roll call. In attendance were George Topoll (Union Township), Dalia Zygus, Shannon Eason (Michigan City Parks), Robert Boklund, Bryan Blazak, David Park, Stoten Stofko, Katie Vallis (IDNR), Don Parker (SST), Erik Sprenne, Jen Orsburn, Andrew Kyres, Donna Catalano (Legacy Foundation), and Charles Gleason.

NIRPC staff present were Meredith Stilwell, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, Mitch Barloga, and Flor Baum.

There were no public comments.

The minutes of the January 7, 2021 meeting were approved on motion by Shannon Eason and second by Don Parker.

**NIRPC Business**

Mitch Barloga presented on the trail map and mobile app updates. The trail maps have been printed and are available at the NIRPC office. Mitch asked for committee members to assist in map distribution within their municipality. NIRPC staff will distribute the map to local libraries. A mobile app will be rolling out in early summer that will cover southland territory from Joliet, IL to Michigan City, IN. There has also been discussion of other entities partaking in the mobile app. Due to the pandemic, it is advised to call ahead of time.

**Ped**

Don Parker reported on South Shore Trails (SST). SST is in the process of revisioning how they can best serve non-motorized community for this new decade. More information will roll out as the weather warms up.

Mitch presented on DNR Next Level Trails (NLT) Program; Round two awardees. NLT is the biggest statewide infusion of state money for trails in Indiana's history. 18 trail projects were funded out of 93 received applications. \$29.6M of available money was combined with \$21.9M in local match. There are three NIRPC area projects:

- Crown Point - Penny Greenway & the Veterans Trail Connection. The 2.84 mi. hybrid project is connecting existing trails together. The project was awarded \$2.98M.
- Portage - Marquette Greenway. The .88 mi. project is a National Lakeshore Connection. The project was awarded \$2.5M because it includes a bridge over Salt Creek.
- Valparaiso - Vale Park West. The 1.45 mi. project will connect the existing trail on Val Park Rd. The project was awarded \$364K.

The final round will be \$35M. Final submissions are scheduled for November 1. Please work with NIRPC staff before submitting your Next Level Trails application to DNR. Contact Mitch directly at [mbarloga@nirpc.org](mailto:mbarloga@nirpc.org) or (219) 763-6060.

### **Pedal**

Mitch gave an update on trail-counters and signage. NIRPC is in the process of working with many communities on installing new trail counters (approximately 90) throughout Northwest Indiana. The current counters are outdated and require staff to travel to its location to retrieve the data. However, the replacement trail counters are GPS based that allow NIRPC to collect real-time data daily that would be made available to our stakeholders. NIRPC is working through the financials that will include a 20% local match from the entities on installing the trail counters.

Mitch reported that NIRPC a funding entity is looking to work with Lake County entities on expanding some of NIRPC signage that was recently installed on the Erie Lackawanna and the Prairie Dunes Trails.

### **Paddle**

Erik Sprenne reported on the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association (NWIPA). Due to the pandemic, NWIPA has cancelled most of their events. NWIPA will plan to add events in the later half of summer, depending on CDC updates. During the downtime NWIPA has been updating their website. Erik encourages all to visit [www.nwipa.org](http://www.nwipa.org).

### **Announcements**

Mitch informed the committee that there will be an adjustment in the NOFA projects for review and approval, possibly at the next Technical Planning Committee meeting. The Crown Point and possibly the Portage project will have to be removed from the TIP, allowing for extra funding to be available.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lake Michigan Room at NIRPC.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.