

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority
Meeting Minutes of January 4, 2006
Purdue University Calumet

1. Call to Order. The RDA meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm with J. Clark convening and stating that this afternoon was spent by the RDA with three consultant firm presentations.

J. Clark welcomed having Attorney General, Steve Carter, with us at today's meeting together with Gordon White, Deputy Attorney General.

2. Roll Call. Present: John Clark, Howard Cohen, Bill Joiner, Lou Martinez, Gus Olympidis, Ned Ruff, Tim Sanders, Harley Snyder.

3. Approval of Minutes. J. Clark requested approval of the minutes from the previous meeting; adoption of the minutes was deferred to next month's meeting.

4. Report of the Chair. As chair, J. Clark said there are many new items to cover. The short session of the general assembly has begun and the RDA will be discussed with part of the debate being dedication of money raised from the Indiana Toll Road. All needs approval of the general assembly.

5. Report of the Executive Director. Tim Sanders thanked G. Olympidis for donation of RDA description cards which outline the mission of the RDA.

Transportation Planner, Bill Strains said the RFP for the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) has planned on a \$75,000 contract to adopt an RFP. Final consultants were American Consulting, B. Analytics, and Strategic Development Group. NIRPC staff are reviewing proposals. The scope of work that will be planned is a blueprint of what NIRPC is to be doing with economic development in Lake, Porter and Portage counties, and to work with the public in these areas.

T. Sanders stated the next meeting of the RDA will be held 10:00 a.m. to Noon, February 7, 2006 and will be held with federal engineers, federal transit groups, individual federal agencies, and Congressman Visclosky with the legislative timeline being provided.

The RDA Board of Directors meeting will be held at 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., February 7, 2006, East Chicago Council Chambers, open to public and press. J. Clark said Congressman Visclosky will discuss various projects of importance to the RDA and that it will be important not to squander the opportunity to leverage the amount of dollars that we may bring to economic development in northwest Indiana. This will be an important meeting.

T. Sanders said there is an important item in the packet, LSA Document # 05-123(F), rules regulating the registration of executive branch lobbyists, for our background knowledge and includes 6 pages labeled "Executive Branch Lobbyists." RDA groups are required to become registered as lobbyists.

T. Sanders provided his Blackberry # - 219-869-3859

6. Report of the Banking Working Group and Action on Document 01-06. Bill Joiner's long experience and expertise has led this effort for the RDA. H. Snyder reiterated that without Joiner's guidance the process would not be efficient.

B. Joiner stated the committee worked through the holidays with an attempt of fairness throughout in review of the bank proposals submitted. See handout attached of the Bank Working Group and evaluation scale that includes categories and responses. The RFD document was approximately 11 pages, going to 24 banks with about 50% response. The Banking Working Group met several times to review, calculate, etc., and recommends to the RDA Board the following: "Mercantile Bank serve as lead bank with Horizon and JP Morgan Chase providing investment services." The document runs for 2 years for bid and is extended to re-bid.

N. Ruff questioned whether funds received from other than the state were considered by the Group. B. Joiner responded that funds may be received from foundations that would not be covered by public funds regulations. Liquidity may be afforded; e.g., to enter funds for a longer term of investment. Some of the 70/30 would be invested for a longer range not knowing what percentage will be needed now, what percentage to be invested. B. Joiner said the RDA funds are under public fund guidance. All voted in favor of the Bank Working Group's recommendation.

J. Clark proposed the RDA establish an accounting group, who can determine/write procedure for disbursements, investments. J. Clark mentioned that State agencies require banking contracts to be run past the State Treasurer's Office. N. Ruff brought about the issue of the executive lobbying rule and stated that he is not in any way waiving his position or conceding that we are a state agency.

7. Discussion of the RDA Application Form and Action on Approval. T. Sanders distributed the RDA Application for Financial Support, General Instructions, document (attached) for approval, and opened discussion. He said the last sentence under supporting materials states, "...guidelines have been approved by the Indiana State Ethics Commission." How does the RDA wish to handle this statement? B. Joiner motioned that the last sentence be struck. N. Ruff seconded the motion. H. Snyder offered an amendment to strike only the second clause of the last bullet point. B. Joiner accepted the amendment. The Chairman stated understanding the motion and that the RDA needs to reflect on how important our position is in the work we do and the parties with whom we work. H. Cohen stated that he thought it wise not to have our application form obligate the State Ethics Commission to review these documents. J. Clark said we always have the option to seek the opinion of the State Ethics Commission. J. Clark asked for a voice of all in favor of the Application as amended – all RDA members approved it as amended.

J. Clark mentioned another change – "Indiana" is misspelled in title of Application document.

H. Cohen stated the amended and corrected copy should be distributed to agencies and municipalities that may be interested in applying for funds and to be sure that anyone has the opportunity to have this statement, that it is included on the website and available to download.

J. Clark stated that this has been a good opportunity - to make the best of these first four months of the RDA and to accomplish all these results prior to the receipt of funding.

8. Discussion of Presentations of Consulting Groups. J. Clark requested T. Sanders to review the presentations by each consulting group. T. Sanders provided an overview of each consultant group and their presentation. They are as follows.

1. Johnson Consulting, Chicago – around the world experience, real estate consulting
2. Parsons-Brinckerhoff – engineering firm, engaged in much transportation planning, around the world
3. Pittsburgh-Gateways – experience with areas similar to NWI and PA, employment, steel industry, re-inventing; develops a strong core of business and attracting entrepreneurs

T. Sanders said the consultants did not charge a fee for their initial presentations. The consultants' efforts are very helpful. J. Clark said they were very useful presentations, a good start for a long-term business development plan and the RDA vision. Breadth and diversity of the three groups may work well with the RDA concept. RDA should be thinking of the next steps and have more working groups. H. Cohen said the consultants' range of knowledge and skills are all very different, and confirmed the value of using consultants rather than staff. J. Clark mentioned T. Sanders pulling these groups together being of value to the RDA. Comments from the board members follow.

H. Snyder – believes focus needs to be on our strengths, not our weaknesses.

L. Martinez – Consultants mentioned the good size of the RDA group.

N. Ruff – mentioned be proactive – these plans don't need to be the final plan – but we need to move forward – approach the three groups and develop a working plan to combine elements and approach – develop a plan or template to move forward.

J. Clark – would like to keep the momentum going forward – is not sure of specifications that would be the RFQ or RFP – not clear on how to accomplish – or have a working group with recommendations.

H. Snyder – invite today's consultants to our February meeting so that they may get a sense of what is presently taking place with the RDA.

J. Clark – certainly reach out to them and others that did not have the opportunity to present to RDA.

H. Cohen – is not sure we are ready to present an RFP plan to an external group; doesn't think we understand our questions to write the RFP. We need to write the report more precisely related to what we want, rather than what consultants propose.

J. Clark – perhaps draft a request for qualifications; when we have completed our internal work we will have a better idea to whom it should be sent; likes the notion of a working group to outline the plan.

G. Olympidis – Ned and he were charged with a preliminary plan – whoever works with them will need to apprise themselves of the various data, available studies and reports completed on northwest Indiana. N. Ruff has extensive list of studies of northwest Indiana shared with Director (attachment).

J. Clark – possibly ask T. Sanders to pull the work together and see both G. Olympidis and N. Ruff continue to help T. Sanders move to the next stage – issue a comprehensive plan and an RFQ. Welcome any who may be interested in assisting (mailing list) – H. Cohen volunteered to assist.

J. Clark - would like to begin the accounting, responsible stewardship of the funds. T. Sanders was requested to do and agreed.

J. Clark – would like to point out that the Attorney General has responded to our request for a client list and Hollenbeck's list of clients has been provided.

9. Public Comment. J. Clark offered to receive comments and questions from the public attending the meeting.

Tom Drake, Munster. At he Valparaiso meeting, the wording used was “racial/social equity as a value.” What does that mean....what's involved? The RDA board is mindful of people that have been disenfranchised; there is opportunity for all, without particular concentration on one or more groups. J. Clark explained that the RDA is a special entity that was created to do economic development work in NWI, develop special transportation issues upon which to focus, working alongside many other agencies and organizations. RDA did not want to muddy our charter – charter is meant to be as inclusive as possible. H. Cohen would refer to philosopher John Rawls' concept of taking actions that do not worsen the position of the least well off.

George Janik, Hammond. The stakeholders (Lake & Porter counties) – is there any definition or boundaries for the RDA effort? J. Clark said the creation or expansion of the RDA would be accomplished by the General Assembly who would also set terms and conditions, and this is not for us to resolve. G. Janik – there is much exposure of St. Joseph county as an extension of NWI and Chicago. N. Ruff's list of available studies and reports of N was provided to G. Janik.

Paul Lewis, Hammond. Will the RDA be sensitive to particular disadvantaged groups; e.g., buses are an inclusive part of economic growth. J. Clark said the RDA will be as inclusive as they possibly can.

Karen Krozek, Munster. When RDA develops its plan, be cautious to develop its expertise, be self-sustainable, and have ability to handle approaches ourselves. Suggesting the expertise be developed locally.

Mary Hoggs – Regional Transportation District. Introduced RTA new manager, Daryl Lamb. RTA has submitted a plan to include the RTA bill – mentions all modes of transportation but the “bus.” An Invitation was extended to the board to attend a “thank you” luncheon on March 4 at the Genesis Center to honor those that have been instrumental in empowering the RTA bill.

Jim Presenski, Hammond. When RDA does its review it needs to consider empty buses.

Wes Miller, Team Hammond, grass roots agency. Would like to include taxpayers and their concern of tax increases in these efforts. At Lake County Council hearing – 3.5 M was requested for busing system – suggest tying Gary bus system together with Hammond, East Chicago, to accomplish needs before more \$ are allocated and more burdens for taxpayers. Sometimes common sense suggestions make the most sense.

Respectfully submitted
Lori Durham
January 5, 2006