



# Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

January 12, 2011 Regular Meeting - 1:00 PM

402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis IN, 46204

Indiana Government Center South, Conference Room 4 & 5

President - John Gettinger Vice-President - Norman Neiburger

Treasurer - Chase Ellis Secretary - Dale Brier

## Meeting minutes

### Voting Members Present:

Adams County - John Friedt  
Allen County - Ron Zartman  
Carroll County - George Mears  
Gibson County - William Knowles  
Huntington County - Dave Hacker  
Knox County - Chase Ellis  
Miami County - Debbie Bowsher (proxy)  
Parke County – Ron James (proxy)  
Posey County - Marianna Weinzapfel (proxy)  
Sullivan County - John J. Gettinger  
Vigo County - Keith Ruble (alt)  
Wabash County - Michael Beauchamp  
DNR - Dale Brier (alt)

### Non-Voting Members Present:

none

### Guests:

none

### Voting Members Absent:

Cass County- Arin Shaver  
Fountain County - Janet Shoaf  
Jay County - Jim Zimmerman  
Tippecanoe Co. - Norman “Lucky” Neiburger  
Vermillion County - Eliza Porter  
Warren County - Louise Jewell  
Wells County – Scott Elzey

### DNR Staff Present:

Leah Kopp – DNR Nature Preserves

### Call to Order, Receipt of Proxies and Introductions:

John Gettinger called the meeting to order at 1:12 PM and asked for introductions. Dale Brier read the proxies; Penny Cox gave her proxy to Ron James, Ralph Weinzapfel gave his proxy to Mariana Weinzapfel, Ken Einselen gave his proxy to Debbie Bowsher, Lucky Neiburger and Eliza Porter gave their votes to John Gettinger.

An item was suggested to be added to the agenda under new business was weather conditions. A measurable amount of snow had fallen, Keith Ruble was inquiring what would need to be done, and who would make the call if the meeting needed to be cancelled. A motion was made to accept the agenda by Keith R. with a second from Chase Ellis. A motion carried.

There were no comments from visitors or guests.

### Elections

Keith R. was in charge of the election committee. John Gettinger is to continue as President, Lucky Neiburger, Vice President and Chase Ellis as Treasurer with no opposition to any of the offices.

Ron J. moved that the nominations be closed, Marianna Weinzapfel seconded. Motion carried.

Ron James moved that the unopposed ballot be accepted, and the candidates elected. Dave Hacker seconded. Motion carried.

## **Presidents Report**

John was very pleased to once again be elected President and takes a good deal of pride in holding the office. He is insulted just a little by the way the State of Indiana ignores the commission and feels the efforts of the WRHCC are not recognized. He also mentioned that he had attended a Banks of the Wabash meeting in Cloverdale. This is a new year and we have new challenges, let us not forget why we are here.

## **Approval of Minutes**

One correction is to be made under the Banks of the Wabash the correction is the spelling of Susan Ulrich's last name. Chase moved to approve the minutes with the correction, Ron J., seconded. Minutes were accepted as corrected.

## **Finance Report**

Dale distributed the finance report (see attached). There was an error on the postage report so the total expenses and fund balance were unavailable at the time of the meeting. Chase mentioned that with the error the balance of the fund still should be around \$200,000, Dale would look into the error and report at the next meeting. Dale then stated that once the Grant staff begins working on the new grant program, their time will be paid from the fund. Dale did write up an estimate last summer of approximately what administration of the Commission and a grant round would cost the fund, if anyone wanted a copy they were to see him during the break or after the meeting. With the known error in the report, Dave Hacker moved to accept receiving the report with Ron's second. Motion carried.

## **Budget**

Chase reported the fund has an annual income of nearly \$150,000.00, and somewhere near \$50,000.00 in operation and administrative costs. The fund should be able to support about \$100,000 a year for grants. Ron J. made the comment that in two meetings we should have something better depending on what Bob Bronson and his group can do.

## **Grants**

Dale mentioned that the grant committee has met and gave the DNR a rough outline for some criteria. Desired projects are (in order):

1. Wabash River campsites
2. Wabash River access points
3. Hiking/Biking trails in the corridor

Ron J. was hoping for a preliminary announcement of the Grant round on Conservation Day, but the Commission was not given any time for making announcements. The Grants Committee will sometime in February to see what projects would qualify for grants. Discussion then followed about issues potential grants would have with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Dale suggested getting Fish and Wildlife involved in the process they do this and are aware of the problems that go along with it. The ideal project would be public access sites with camping, Dale commented.

Chase then went on to suggest that maybe a grant round s be done every two to three years then there could be a possibility of having a \$200,000.00 to \$300,000.00 grant round. Ron J. then said that they do not want to let that money build up too much to where it becomes attractive to take it away and Chase suggested keeping the balance at \$500,000.00 or less and Dale agreed.

Chase said that he would initialize a grant meeting with Bob Bronson and his team so that by the next meeting they will be able to come to the table and give out the information for the grant round. Dale replied that he and Bob discussed a reasonable timeline for the grants; September is an obtainable goal with help from the grant committee.

John G. suggested that the commission needs more recognition as it does work up and down the Wabash River. When the Governor made the land acquisition announcement in Terre Haute last year, he went as the chairman of the WRHCC, when an announcement like that is going to be made we need to be present. John only found out about the announcement from Ralph. John believes the WRHCC chair should have been on the stage, and should have been a part the presentation. How does the Wabash Commission get a larger role? The group discussed different options. Ron J. then made a motion that Keith R. talks to DNR Director, Rob Carter about getting one line in a speech somewhere about the upcoming grant round. Mariana gave the second. Dale suggested that if an official announcement is made then the letter should come from the President of the WRHCC, so it was agreed that Ron J. would write the letter and John would sign it. A majority was in favor, those opposed feel that the commission is not ready yet to make such an announcement without more details. Dale said he would remove the old grant info from the current WRHCF website.

### **Legislative – INDOT**

Nothing to report.

### **Water Trail Committee Report**

Ron James distributed a handout with ideas and comments from the Water Trail Committee. Ron also suggested more involvement from the Commission members to maintain and update the water trail and access sites. Each Commissioner should be responsible for checking local sites a couple times a year, Ron recommended a review form or checklist for doing the site visits. John congratulated Ron for his hard work in preparation of the document. We do have some tools that are available to help with the signs; Ron has a post-driver in his garage. Does everyone understand that what needs to be done? John would like to see things moving forward with this plan in the next 60 days, please help us get everything done!

### **Interpretive Brochure**

No report – Louise Jewell not in attendance.

### **Banks of the Wabash**

Dr. Rae Schnapp is the new president of the Banks of the Wabash (BOW) and their programs are moving along. They have a mini grant program; \$500 grants are available. The BOW still has around \$15,000 earmarked for Wabash Commission projects and the WRHCC can request those funds anytime. The money is proceeds from an art show years ago in the Wabash corridor. It would be nice to sponsor a water trail opening in some county. Dale suggested using the money for administrative needs or projects that would be difficult to use state funds.

### **War of 1812 Bicentennial – 2011, 2012 Events**

Ken could not be present but he sent a report that was distributed. There is still no national commission or bill to recognize the Bicentennial; however, Indiana has passed a bill recognizing the upcoming anniversary as a significant milestone in our history unfortunately there is no funding attached. Groups, individuals and sites are proceeding with plans to commemorate the anniversary. The International 1812 Bicentennial groups is a similar group with no direct funding but rather as sharing of information and plans to keep everyone updated. The International Committee has recognized Indiana's efforts and has officially placed the events here at the front of the Bicentennial celebration, namely the event held in Vincennes on September 23 - 25. It was at this site that Harrison gathered troops and began the march to what would become the Battle of Tippecanoe. Another event will be held at the Tippecanoe Battlefield in Battleground, IN on November 5 – 6 where the battle actually occurred. The state group has established a web site at <http://thefirstvolley.com> and the international group web site is at [www.discover1812.com](http://www.discover1812.com).

Events are listed on the websites.

### **Newport Chemical Depot Land Re-Use**

Keith Ruble reported the Depot area has the largest prairie in Indiana and the local government wants to put it into corn and beans. The argument about crops vs. prairie continues in the area.

### **River Cultural Event**

Louise Jewell was not in attendance so there is nothing to report and there have been no reports for over a year. Chase made the motion to table the issue with a second from Ron Z., motion to table carries.

### **Corridor Citizen Award 2010 Location**

John G. tried getting the award on the agenda for Conservation Day and was unsuccessful. John asked Ron Z. to find a location near Fort Wayne.

### **River Currents**

Next edition articles need to be submitted by March 15 to Susan Ulrich, an article on 2010 Corridor Citizen Award should be included.

### **Indiana Bicentennial in 2016**

Ron J. said that we did not get on the committee. A joint seat was requested that included the Banks of the Wabash and Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission. Someone needs to coordinate with the Banks of the Wabash to see if together they could get on the committee.

### **River Road and Heritage Community Sign Program**

Mike B. has all of his signs put up in Wabash County, about 80 signs. Dale will start rotating names so that Mike's does not always appear on the River Road and Heritage Community Sign programs report.

### **Bridges and Railing**

At the last meeting, the Commission agreed to look into the issue of bridge railings that would allow people to see the river. Keith questioned INDOT about the bridge being replaced over I-70 and found out that it was too late for this bridge, as the planning was already complete. According to INDOT, open barrier bridges are not usually used on long bridges because they do not want drivers to become distracted by looking at the bodies of water. Increased costs for an open barrier system are also a large factor. Keith wondered if anyone from the State Legislature could require INDOT to think about putting a see through barrier on bridge projects. Dale made a suggestion that if the WRHCC wants to proceed, you will need more participation, such as Banks of the Wabash, Hoosier Environmental Council, get river organizations and river groups to support this action. Keith made the motion to move forward with this idea, John F. seconded. Chase amended the motion to approach other groups first, talk to them about it, and get support before approaching the Legislature. Ron J. made the comment that it was too late for anything to happen this legislative session. Dave H. made the comment that this would be a long-term endeavor, most projects like this take at least five years. Keith said to contact all the river organizations in the state of Indiana and ask them to talk to their Legislators. Dale suggested working with INDOT for a solution before going straight to the legislature.

### **New Business**

Dale announced that J. Edward Roush Lake was no longer a state park but is now a Fish & Wildlife property. Most of the recreational facilities are closed, the park was not heavily used and Salamonie has more recreational opportunities nearby.

John asked if we needed a procedure to change or cancel a meeting. The recent snowstorms almost caused us to cancel this meeting and we should be prepared in the future, we need to set a procedure. The group discussed both email and phone calls. The President of the Commission will have the final say. In the event of a cancellation, the Chairman must decide before 7:00 PM the night before and will call the DNR and Dale will send an email out to everyone. Chase E. then made a motion: for winter months if you have any questions call John before 7:30 PM, Dave seconded. Motion carried. John will design a phone tree for contacting members.

Outdoor Indiana had a fantastic article about the Wabash River, but it did not mention the WRHCC at all. John suggested that we have 500 of these article printed and get them out in the hands of the public. Several suggestions were made of things that could be added, but Ron brought up the informational brochure that we have plenty of. John might design an additional page because he has an idea of what he wants on it. Chase suggested a mini grant from the Banks of the Wabash in order to do the printing. 22 pages of color prints could cost about \$1.00 ea. The group discussed the costs, benefits, and real use for the printed article. There is an electronic version that Ron could use to print copies with in his office that belongs to the Commission. Dale said he would print out 15 copies for members that attend the next meeting and work on putting the digital version on the website.

#### **Final Comments by Commission members**

Mike wanted to thank John for the highlights of 2010. Ron Z. appreciated it from a personal standpoint because it was nice to have that positive reminder of what really happened.

#### **Adjournment**

Ron James made the motion to adjourn and Chase seconded. Motion carried at 4:10 PM.

## Brier, Dale

---

**From:** Stum, Robert  
**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2011 1:32 PM  
**To:** Brier, Dale  
**Subject:** RE: WRHCC

WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR			
Beginning Balance, July 1, 2010			115,784.40
	2011	48686	
Revenue			
	431401	AD - Oil and Gas royalty along	90,054.23
Expenses			
	510101	Payroll Salaries & Wages	3,918.06
	515000	Fringe	1,357.30
	581160	Event Sponsorship	500.00
	595110	InState Travel - Mileage	2,015.20
	659410	Postage	28,245.37
		Total Expenses	36,035.93
		as of January 10, 2011	Balance in fund
			169,802.70