

## Minutes of the March 15, 2012, NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Self-introductions followed.

Commissioners present were Nancy Adams, George Adey, Roosevelt Allen, Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Bob Carnahan, Tom Clouser, Anthony Copeland, Jeff Dekker, Chet Dobis, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Ken Layton, Tom McDermott, Philip Mores, Rich Murphy, Bob Schaefer, Dave Shafer, Jim Snyder, Jim Ton, David Uran, and George Van Til.

Staff present included John Swanson, David Hollenbeck, Belinda Petroskey, Bill Brown, Angie Hayes, Steve Strains, Stephen Sostaric, Matt Hay, Allen Hammond, Gabrielle Biciunas, Kathy Luther, Gary Evers, Tom Vander Woude, Eman Ibrahim, Kelly Wenger, and Kathy Dubie.

David Hollenbeck reviewed the Letter of Appointment from the Town of the Pines. He indicated that the documentation was in order and George Adey was welcomed as a member of the Commission.

Chairman Benson appointed Mr. Adey to the Environmental Management Policy Committee, the Local Government Assistance Advisory Committee, and the Towns and Smaller Cities Council. He also appointed Carl Lisek to the Transportation Policy Committee, Mike Kuss to the Environmental Management Policy Committee, and Eric Kurtz to the Local Government Assistance Advisory Committee.

Mr. Benson announced that there will be a meeting at NIRPC on March 23 regarding the traffic back-up which often occurs at the east entrance of the ArcelorMittal steel plant along U.S. 12 in Burns Harbor.

Vicky Kitchin, Build Indiana Council, and Laurie Maudlin provided information on "Understanding the Gas Tax." Indiana's state gas tax is 18 cents per gallon. Every dollar collected is placed into a highway account in Washington D.C. Unfortunately, Indiana receives only 92 cents of every dollar while some states receive two to three times more than they contribute. Q & A followed.

On a motion by Jim Ton, second by Tom McDermott, the February minutes were approved as submitted.

Environmental Management Policy Committee: Geof Benson moved that Resolution 12-07 be adopted. The motion was seconded by Ken Layton and passed. This updates the Northwest Indiana Watershed Management Framework. John Swanson said this is a rather substantial change. NIRPC has received a sizeable amount of money. Kathy Luther added NIRPC is able to provide technical support for individual communities. This is an on-going service that will continue. Kevin Breitzke added that this enhances what was done in 2005.

Finance and Personnel Committee: Dave Shafer said the committee has recommended that the contract between NIRPC and the Kankakee River Basin Commission be approved. On a motion by Ken Layton, second by Tom McDermott, the contract was approved.

Transportation Policy Committee: Jim Ton reported on committee activities and called upon Gary Evers to explain Resolution 12-08. Mr. Evers highlighted several items in the proposed amendment, which is amendment #11 to the 2012-15 Transportation Improvement Program. On a motion by Jim Ton, second by Roosevelt Allen, the resolution passed.

Legislative Committee: Dave Shafer provided updates on several issues at both the state and federal level. The right to work legislation, which NIRPC opposed, was signed into law. Other bills passed and awaiting the governor's signature are financial disclosures for local elected officials and funding for the Little Calumet River Flood Control Project. NIRPC supported passage of these two bills. Close monitoring of pending federal legislation will continue.

Towns and Small Cities Council: Jody Melton called attention to the location and 9:00 a.m. meeting time. The meeting will be held at the Lowell Town Hall on March 29.

INDOT: Bob Alderman, Acting La Porte District Director, discussed his role with INDOT and said he will be dealing with many outstanding issues.

Other Business: Bob Schaefer said many citizens in the town of Long Beach are concerned with beach rights. It was recommended that he attend future Environmental Management Policy Committee meetings to network at the local, state, and federal level.

Report of the Executive Director: In addition to his written report, Mr. Swanson announced that staff member Matt Hay has resigned. Also, he announced that he would be retiring from NIRPC at the end of 2012.

Geof Benson appointed Ken Layton to chair the Executive Director Search Committee. Mr. Benson also appointed committee members Karen Freeman-Wilson, Roosevelt Allen, Jim Ton, Bob Schaefer, Kevin Breitzke, and David Shafer. The committee was charged with carrying out a recruitment, evaluation and selection process leading up to a recommendation to the full commission for the appointment of NIRPC's next Executive Director.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.