

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

April 20, 2023 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Richard Hardaway called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

New Appointments to the Commission

Dave Hollenbeck announced the appointment to the Commission of Mayor Peter Land (Crown Point). Richard Hardaway welcomed Tim Clayton (Winfield) to his first Commission meeting.

Roll call - Taken by Candice Eklund.

Present

The 35 Commissioners present at the meeting included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), Duane Arndt (Kingsford Heights), Thomas Black (Highland), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Bob Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Tim Clayton (Winfield), Don Craft (Porter), Joshleen Denham (Trail Creek), Tom Dermody (La Porte), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Robert Forster (Kouts), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Ellen Hundt (Beverly Shores), Jack Jeralds (Schneider), Jane Jordan (Burns Harbor), Justin Kiel (LaPorte County Council), Peter Land (Crown Point), Sue Lynch (Portage), Lori Mercer (Westville), Wendy Mis (Munster), Edward Morales (Porter Township), Barb Regnitz (Porter County Commissioner), Lisa Rosenkranz (LaCrosse), Regina Ruddell (Pottawattomie Park), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Brian Snedecor (Hobart), Red Stone (Porter County Council), Gerald Swets (St. John), Mary Tanis (Dyer), Jim Ton (Chesterton), and George Topoll (Union Township). Also present was Adam Parkhouse representing INDOT.

Absent

The 16 Commissioners absent included Jeannette Bapst (Dune Acres), Anthony Copeland (East Chicago), Connie Gramarossa (LaPorte County Commissioner), Tony Hendricks (LaPorte County Surveyor), Scott Kingan (Ogden Dunes), Robert LeMay (Long Beach), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), Randall Niemeyer (Lake County Council), Duane Parry (Michigan City), David Peeler (Hebron), Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee), Jerome Prince (Gary), Steve Spebar (Whiting), Sharon Szwedo (New Chicago), and John Yelkich (Lowell).

Kingsbury and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Talaya Jones, Charles Bradsky, Scott Weber, Eman Ibrahim, Stephen Hughes, Kevin Polette, Grace Benninger, Candice Eklund, and attorney Dave Hollenbeck.

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 16, 2023 Executive Board meeting were approved on motion by Bob Carnahan and seconded by Kyle Allen.

Report of the Chair – Richard Hardaway

Richard Hardaway had no updates to report.

Report of the Executive Director – Ty Warner

Ty Warner commented that the two items on the day's agenda both represent the important regional planning work that NIRPC undertakes that have involved many stakeholders. The Marquette Greenway Project Management and Project Development Draft Contract is on today's agenda for a vote to finish the Marquette Greenway trail project from Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan. Warner also shared that staff would provide an overview of NIRPC's federally-mandated but regionally-developed long range plan, *NWI 2050+*. Ty Warner introduced NIRPC's newest staff members Grace Benninger, Spatial Analyst and Stephen Hughes, Public Transit & Engagement Planner.

Finance & Personnel Committee (F&P) – Wendy Mis

Wendy Mis reported the F&P Committee met this morning to review and approve the financial reports and bank reconciliations for February and March 2023, and the claims registers for March. The F&P Committee requested approval to enter into a contract with Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc. (BFS) for the Marquette Greenway Project,

with a contingent revision from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). An updated Appendix D document was distributed at the meeting reflecting a reduction in the contract from \$810,000 to \$600,000, which is the maximum funding limit. BFS was cooperative with this modification. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Barb Regnitz, the Full Commission approved the Contract with BFS with the revised Appendix D and contingent upon FHWA review. The next F&P meeting is scheduled for May 18, 2023.

Technical Planning Committee (TPC) – Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported the TPC met on April 11, 2023. NIRPC staff gave a brief presentation on the seven components of the draft *NWI 2050+* (below) to the Commissioners this morning. This is an update to *NWI 2050* that was adopted in 2019 and will continue the four main focus areas of Connected, Renewed, United, and Vibrant. The differences between *NWI 2050* and *NWI 2050+* is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and the new emphasis in Resiliency, Housing, Carbon Reduction, and Freight. Staff were available after the meeting in the lobby for further discussions amid board set up for each of these plan elements.

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| 1. Introduction – Scott Weber | 5. Land Use and Housing – Eman Ibrahim |
| 2. Active Transportation – Stephen Hughes | 6. Roadways – Scott Weber |
| 3. Climate and the Environment – Kathy Luther | 7. Transit – Kevin Polette |
| 4. Freight – Scott Weber | |

To take a deeper dive into the chapters of *NWI 2050+* and view the video created for the Open Houses NIRPC hosted this month, visit <https://nirpc.org/nwi-2050/>.

The plan is out for public comment until May 5. Once the air quality conformity determination is resolved, it is anticipated *NWI 2050+* will be voted on for approval at the July Full Commission meeting. The next TPC meeting is scheduled for May 9, 2023.

INDOT – Adam Parkhouse

Adam Parkhouse reported the Community Crossings awards were announced last week and the NIRPC region was awarded just under \$13 million. The next call for applications will begin July 5. With this being National Work Zone Awareness Week, INDOT is promoting their efforts through social media platforms at <https://www.nwzaw.org/>. Construction on I-94 between Cline Avenue and I-65 will continue through November and patching work on interstate ramps will run August through November.

Other Business

Jim Ton requested additional information on the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program. Ty Warner offered to send the information to the Commissioners after the meeting.

Dave Hollenbeck remembered Dennis Rittenmeyer who passed away this week. Dave said Dennis was a leader in what it meant to be in-tune to regional solutions and problems, and we owe a debt of gratitude for his leadership. Warner added that Dennis helped him better understand the challenges this region faces when Warner came on board.

Announcements

Mary Tanis, Kevin Breitzke, and Bob Carnahan relayed announcements of various events in Dyer, Porter County, and Cedar Lake, respectively.

Reggie Korthals, Executive Director of MS4 Partnership, announced the annual MS4 meeting will take place on May 18. They are partnering with IDEM to discuss the new stormwater weather permits that will require interaction with communities.

Hearing no other business, Richard Hardaway adjourned the meeting at 9:59 a.m. The next meeting on May 18 will be an Executive Board meeting.

The livestream recording for this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at [Full Commission Meeting 4-20-23 - YouTube](#)