

NIRPC Full Commission Meeting
NIRPC/Forum Building, Portage, IN
July 19, 2012
Minutes

Chairman Geof Benson called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and self-introductions.

Commissioners present included Roosevelt Allen, Jr., Geof Benson, Kevin Breitzke, Bob Carnahan, Christine Cid, Tom Clouser, Jon Costas, Jeff Dekker, Chet Dobis, Stan Dobosz, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Rosalie Jacobs, Ken Layton, Tom McDermott, Blair Milo, Diane Noll, Shawn Pettit, Pamela Richard, Dave Shafer, James Simmons, Brian Snedecor, James Snyder, Keith Soderquist, Greg Stinson, James Ton, David Uran and George VanTil.

Others present included Dave Murtaugh, Jim Pinkerton, Bob Wolkman, Amy Delahunty, Andrew Blackburn, Rebecca Williams, Joe Simonetto, Dwayne Williams, Angie Fegares, A.J. Monroe, Jim Nowacki, Shawna Schwegman, Donche Andonov, David Wright, Rebecca Williams, Carole Carlson, and Keith Benman.

Staff present included John Swanson, David Hollenbeck, Steve Strains, Angie Hayes, Eman Ibrahim, Kathy Luther, Kevin Garcia, Amanda Pollard, Mitch Barloga, Gabrielle Biciunas, Sarah Geinosky, Stephen Sostaric, Bill Brown, Tom VanderWoude, Kelly Wenger, and Mary Thorne.

Dave Hollenbeck received a new Certification of Appointment for Pamela Richard, appointed by the Town of New Chicago.

Report of the Chair: Chairman Benson participated in several meetings for the Lake Michigan Shoreline Development Commission in May, which was decommissioned and replaced by the Lake Michigan Marina and Shoreline Development Commission through legislation introduced by Karen Tallian. Officers are Mike Kuss, Chair; Geof Benson, Vice Chair; and Karen Freeman-Wilson, Treasurer. The commission received a report on shoreline investment from Bill Hanna last month. Future meetings will include reports on the status of the Gary and Portage Marinas, update of the Marquette Plan, and Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program. The commission will meet immediately after the commission meeting. The quarterly meeting of the Chicago Wilderness Executive Council was hosted by NIRPC yesterday. The members received an update on some of the important environmental restoration work in the region, including a tour of the Portage Lakefront and River Walk and presentations by Shirley Heinze Land Trust, National Park Service and the City of Portage.

John Swanson introduced Shawna Schwegman, new Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Regional Councils and works with the Indiana Association of Counties.

Presentation: Paul Leffler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented "Call Before You Fill", reminding land owners that Clean Water Act permits are required if wetlands and/or streams may be impacted during a project. Indiana lost 87% of its wetlands, which are important for water storage, water filtration, biological productivity and flood control. Discussion followed. Contact Paul by calling 312-846-5529 or at Paul.m.leffler@usace.army.mil.

The minutes of June 21st meeting were approved on a motion by Shawn Pettit and a second by Dave Shafer.

Dave Shafer reported for the Legislative Committee on the federal transportation authorization. Concerns about the proposed House and Senate versions were identified and modifications to the bill were accomplished through the work of NARC, IARC, and IMPO. During the last week of June, Congress passed a new transportation bill, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century*, or Map-21 and President Obama signed it into law on July 6. Mr. Shafer overviewed the authorization, which will take effect on October 21, 2012 and expire September 20, 2014. No change has been made to the motor fuel tax rate. Funding levels will be based on FY2009 apportionments. By FY2014, 95% of the motor fuel tax monies sent by the state will come back to Indiana. The population thresholds for populations will not be raised, which would have eliminated 1/3 of the nation's MPOs and 1/2 of Indiana's. Transportation Enhancement and Safe Routes to Schools programs will consolidate into a new Transportation Alternatives program with funding of only 2% and each state will have the authority to exclude recreational trails from their apportionment. Transit programs will continue to be funded from the motor fuel tax.

Ken Layton reported on the Executive Director search. The Mercer Group have received suggestions for 22 candidates, identified criteria for the selection process and created a position profile for an advertising brochure which may be viewed at <http://www.mercergroupinc.com/pdf/nirpc.pdf>. They are contacting the prospective leads for interviews and are on track to make a final presentation to the Full Commission/Executive Board in October.

Brian Snedecor reported on the five budget amendments adding new grants for Delta Institute, Marquette, Triple A Express, a new CRP video, and a public communication and outreach and one \$100,000 contractual agreement with South Shore Clean Cities for CMAQ projects for consideration as presented by the Finance & Personnel Committee. All budget amendments and the contractual agreement were approved on a motion by Bob Shafer and a second by Tom McDermott.

Stan Dobosz reported on the Transportation Policy Committee's meeting at East Chicago Marina and the 2013-2014 Unified Planning Work Program. Gary Evers described Amendment #16 to the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Dobosz asked for support for Resolution 12-17 amending the TIP. Discussion followed on trails funding. The commission approved Resolution 12-17 on a motion by Stan Dobosz and a second by Shawn Pettit. Staff is reviewing the draft Illiana Environmental Impact Statement. Comments are expected to be ready for the next TPC meeting on August 14.

Eman Ibrahim reported on the *Pathway to 2040* including the implementation matrix and NIRPC's activities which can be found on NIRPC's website. Tom VanderWoude reported on the Priority Report and the Urban Core sub-committee which will provide input to the *Pathway to 2040* committee. Eman described the Livable Centers Initiative and Creating Livable Centers programs.

Roosevelt Allen, Jr. reported that the Economic Development Administration's Midwest District 5 has changed administration and at their request we have resubmitted the required by-law changes, submitted information on compensation arrangements for staff and contractors, submitted a conflict of interest policy, proposed RFQs for web design, legal and contractual services. The EDA has approved our documentation and extended our planning grant for an additional six months. The committee will meet tomorrow at 9 a.m.

Bob Alderman of INDOT gave an update on road projects around the region for Valparaiso, Whiting, U.S. 30 signage in Hobart , LaPorte, a study on flooding in Crown Point, Gary's 12/20 projects and Portage at US Highway 20 and SR 249 and changed the signal timing at US Highway 12 and the Arcelor-Mittal east entrance.

Other Business:

- The July 26 meeting of the local Government Assistance Advisory Committee has been cancelled; the next meeting is September 27.
- The City of LaPorte is hosting a world convention of the International Pyrotechnics Guild from August 11-17.
- The Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra will perform in Cedar Lake this Saturday.
- The City of Valparaiso and Valparaiso University are co-hosting the Greentown Conference in September.
- Enbridge Pipeline is performing a total replacement of the pipeline throughout the three county area.
- Hammond and Whiting are having an all-night bike ride on August 4.
- The Festival of the Lakes opened in Hammond.

Report of the Executive Director: John Swanson gave an update on the efforts by the RDA, East Chicago Transit, Gary Public Transportation Corp, North Township and Triple A Express to provide paratransit service. He reported on media coverage relative to the RBA shutdown and the National Association of Regional Councils meeting. Swanson briefed the commission on meetings including one with the new Director of the Port of Indiana – Burns Harbor. He reported on the positive comments received from the Chicago Wilderness at their Executive Council meeting and tour of the Portage Lakefront and Riverwalk on July 18.

Both Amanda Pollard and Kathy Luther received five-year service awards.

Mitch Barloga commented on trails and the transportation bill.

There was brief discussion regarding the RBA shutdown, vehicle disposition requirements, records housing and staff. The Executive Director and Program Director have contracts for 60 days. The RBA will exist as an entity until the state of Indiana dissolves it by law.

On a motion by Shawn Pettit and a second by Stan Dobosz, Chairman Benson adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.