

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

September 15, 2022 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Justin Kiel, called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Kiel welcomed Don Craft, Town of Porter, to his first Commission meeting. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

New Appointments to the Commission

Dave Hollenbeck announced there were no new appointments to the Commission.

Roll call - Taken by Candice Eklund.

Present

The 6 Executive Board members present at the meeting included Tom Dermody (La Porte), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Justin Kiel (La Crosse), Wendy Mis (Munster), Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee), and Jim Ton (Chesterton).

The 5 Commissioners present at the meeting included Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Don Craft (Porter), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Brian Snedecor (Hobart), and George Topoll (Union Township). Also present was Adam Parkhouse representing INDOT.

Absent

The 4 Executive Board members absent at the meeting included Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Sue Lynch (Portage), Sheila Matias (LaPorte County Commissioner), and Lori Mercer (Westville).

The 35 Commissioners not present included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner), Duane Arndt (Kingsford Heights), Jeanette Bapst (Dune Acres), Janet Beck (Pottawattomie Park), Geof Benson (Beverly Shores), Jim Biggs (Porter County Commissioner), Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Charlie Brown (Lake County Council), Bill Carroll (Lake Station), Anthony Copeland (East Chicago), Joshleen Denham (Trail Creek), Jon Derwinski (Winfield), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Denise Ebert (Wanatah), Robert Forster (Kouts), Tony Hendricks (LaPorte County Surveyor), Jack Jeralds (Schneider), Mike Jessen (Porter County Council), Scott Kingan (Ogden Dunes), Andrew Kyres (Crown Point), Robert Lemay (Long Beach), Tom McDermott (Hammond), Mike Mollenhauer (La Porte County Council), Edward Morales (Porter Township), Matt Murphy (Valparaiso), Duane Parry (Michigan City), David Peeler (Hebron), Jerome Prince (Gary), Rick Ryfa (Griffith), Angie Scott (Burns Harbor), Steve Spebar (Whiting), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szwedo (New Chicago), Mary Tanis (Dyer), and John Yelkich (Lowell).

Highland, Kingsbury, and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Kathy Luther, Jen Birchfield, Lisa Todd, Scott Weber, Charles Bradsky, Denarie Kane, Kevin Polette, Candice Eklund, and attorney Dave Hollenbeck.

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 21, 2022, Executive Board meeting minutes were approved on motion by Tom Dermody and seconded by Richard Hardaway.

Report of the Chair – Justin Kiel

Justin Kiel had no updates to report.

Report of the Executive Director - Ty Warner

Mr. Warner provided the following updates for funding and program planning in his report.

1. As an Economic Development District (EDD) that is the recipient of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds, some of the funding NIRPC received was allocated to create the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan for Northwest Indiana (NWI). This is a pandemic focused

response and a continuation of the *Ignite the Region* plan that was spearheaded by the NWI Forum. NIRPC has received the final version of the plan and once reviewed, will be distributed.

2. The Affordable Connectivity Program is a federal program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service. Denarie Kane encouraged the residents who meet the income criteria to apply. NIRPC staff has been discussing this program during their public outreach initiatives.
3. NIRPC is currently working with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Lake Michigan Coastal Program, to develop a natural hazard resiliency needs assessment survey, to create a tool that evaluates vulnerability. Kathy Luther added NIRPC is contracted by the DNR to assist in this effort. Jen Birchfield noted this survey could also be a step in helping to prepare applications for future additional funding opportunities. Full details can be found on NIRPC's website at <https://nirpc.org/natural-hazards-resiliency-needs-assessment/>.

Environmental Management Policy Committee (EMPC) – Kathy Luther

Kathy Luther reported the EMPC did not meet this month but did hold a workshop on the Coastal Watershed Hazards Resiliency Needs Assessment on September 1.

Finance & Personnel Committee (F & P) – Thomas Dermody

Thomas Dermody reported the F&P Committee met this morning to review the financial reports, bank reconciliations and claims registers for July and August 2022. The F&P Committee brought the action item below to the Executive Board for consideration and approval.

- Resolution #22-18: Approval of a Comprehensive Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy, presented by Lisa Todd. NIRPC requested approval to use the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant funding they were awarded, so the connectivity along the Marquette Greenway Trail project could be completed. A project management consulting firm will need to be hired to assist NIRPC staff in meeting with the local communities to acquire the necessary land. To accomplish this task, the contract must include this COI Policy. On motion by Richard Hardaway and seconded by Jim Ton, the Executive Board approved Resolution #22-18.

Technical Planning Committee (TPC) – Jim Ton

Jim Ton reported the TPC met on August 30, 2022, where they received a status update on the 'Finding Meaning' phase 1 reports of the *NWI 2050+ Plan*. Reports are being generated by consulting firms assigned to study transit, freight, land use, and active transportation networks in the NIRPC region. The TPC brought the action item below to the Executive Board for consideration and approval. The next TPC meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

- Resolution #22-17: Setting Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Traffic Congestion Performance Measure Targets. Scott Weber reported this resolution is to set the CMAQ traffic congestion performance measure targets, which is a federal requirement. The report will be submitted to INDOT by October 1, 2022. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded by Richard Hardaway, the Executive Board approved Resolution #22-17.

INDOT – Adam Parkhouse

Adam Parkhouse presented for Matt Deitchley. Adam reported there will be a public hearing on September 27 at Ivy Tech in East Chicago to discuss a large contract to replace the Michigan Avenue bridge and add a roundabout. A construction update was provided for the Borman Expressway, stating one phase of the project may continue into next year and the two-year project on I-65 is on target. The second call for the Community Crossings program ended on August 31 and the awards will be announced early November.

Other Business

No other business was reported.

Announcements

Bob Carnahan announced Schilling Development attended Cedar Lake's Planning Commission meeting last week where they received approval to build 200 houses across from Lemon Lake Park. Schilling has since presented a concept plan to build an additional 596 homes within the next 10 years. The old South Shore golf

course and property off 149th Avenue has been purchased, which will also create additional development. This development will all be on the east side of the lake in Cedar Lake.

Ty Warner announced the Commission meeting on October 8 will be an Executive Board meeting and the Full Commission will meet on December 8. The Full Commission has 53 board members and meets four times a year, with the Executive Board meeting in between those meetings. All Commissioners are welcome and encouraged to attend all meetings.

Brian Snedecor opened a dialogue regarding the Community Crossings (CC) program. Mr. Snedecor understands how this program has been a huge benefit to the communities, but also understands that the cost of road construction has greatly increased and asked if there were considerations to increasing the \$1 million maximum grant award. Adam Parkhouse noted INDOT is aware of the issues of escalated construction costs, but is not privy to discussions of increasing the award cap. Jim Pressel offered some insight and invited the Commissioners to the Summer Study Committee meeting on September 28 in Indianapolis. The focus of the meeting will be on how much inflation has driven up costs, and the CC program is likely to be discussed. Jim said this is on his radar and cost increases will be talked about extensively at the September 28 meeting. Jim Ton thanked Mr. Pressel for his insight and for providing some hope of possible actions and next steps on this concern.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Justin Kiel adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m. The next meeting on October 20 will be an Executive Board meeting.

The livestream video recording of this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1x5txp4FgM>