

NIRPC Executive Board Meeting

6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN

September 21, 2023 Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Richard Hardaway called the meeting to order at 9:00 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 Robert Starkey (Dyer), replacing former Commissioner Mary Tanis.

Roll call - Taken by Candice Eklund.

Present

The 8 Executive Board members present at the meeting included Kevin Breitzke (Porter County Surveyor), Tom Dermody (La Porte), Bill Emerson (Lake County Surveyor), Richard Hardaway (Merrillville), Justin Kiel (LaPorte County Council), Sue Lynch (Portage), Wendy Mis (Munster), and Jim Ton (Chesterton).

The 11 other Commissioners present at the meeting included Robert Carnahan (Cedar Lake), Don Craft (Porter), Daina Dumbrys (Michiana Shores), Robert Forster (Kouts), Ellen Hundt (Beverly Shores), Jane Jordan (Burns Harbor), Randall Niemeyer (Lake County Council), Tom Schmitt (Schererville), Gerald Swets (St. John), Sharon Szwedo (New Chicago), and George Topoll (Union Township). Also present was Adam Parkhouse representing INDOT.

Absent

The 2 Executive Board members absent from the meeting included Kyle Allen (Lake County Commissioner) and Jim Pressel (Governor Appointee).

Kingsbury and The Pines have appointed no representatives to NIRPC.

Staff present included Ty Warner, Tom Vander Woude, Mitch Barloga, Grace Benninger, Kevin Polette, and Candice Eklund.

Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 20, 2023, Full Commission meeting were approved on motion by Sue Lynch and seconded by Tom Dermody.

Report of the Chair – Richard Hardaway

Richard Hardaway had no updates to report.

Report of the Executive Director - Ty Warner

Ty Warner announced an EV (Electric Vehicle) Bootcamp will be held at NIRPC on October 5, 2023. This is the third in the EV Bootcamp series being held in partnership with Drive Clean Indiana.

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

Wendy Mis reported the F&P Committee met this morning to review financial reports, bank reconciliations, and claim registers for July and August 2023. The F&P Committee brought the action item below to the Executive Board for consideration and approval. The next F&P meeting is scheduled for October 19 at 8:00 a.m.

- Marquette Greenway Trail Interlocal Agreements for Michigan City and the City of Gary: Mitch Barloga presented stating the two local agreements are to secure local match obligations with the City of Gary and the City of Michigan City for the Marquette Greenway project. The 60-mile trail project that extends from Chicago to New Buffalo, Michigan was approved for \$18 million in federal funding in 2021 through a RAISE grant but was \$5 million short of the \$23 million applied for. Efforts to reduce the local match obligations have been ongoing since 2021. The four communities involved in these efforts are the City of Portage and New Buffalo, Michigan, who each have signed an interlocal agreement by executive action, and the City of Gary and the City of Michigan City who each requested their interlocal agreement be approved by NIRPC's Commission. On motion by Jim Ton and seconded

by Tom Dermody, the Executive Board approved the Marquette Greenway Trail Interlocal Agreements for the City of Gary and the City of Michigan City.

Technical Planning Committee (TPC) - Kevin Breitzke

Kevin Breitzke reported the TPC met on September 12, 2023. The TPC brought the action item below to the Executive Board for consideration with a favorable recommendation. The next TPC meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2023.

- Resolution #23-12: Amendment #1 of the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Tom Vander Woude presented stating this is a minor amendment to the UPWP, which is a list of activities that NIRPC undertakes during a fiscal year, along with the financial resources that are devoted to those activities. Tom discussed the summary of the amendment and provided a brief explanation of the four actions. On motion by Wendy Mis and seconded by Bill Emerson, the Executive Board approved Resolution #23-12.

Grace Benninger provided an update on the Urban Area Boundaries (UAB). Every 10 years the U.S. Census Bureau delineates Urban Areas by using a list of objective criteria. The map adjustment process in 2010 designated two urbanized areas, Chicago, and Michigan City. The 2020 census urban area added the creation of a third large, urbanized area for Valparaiso/Shorewood Forest. States and metropolitan planning areas in coordination with local officials may adjust the census designated to create an Adjusted Census Urban Boundary (ACUB). The adjustment can only expand an urban area and not shrink it. The overall goal of the ACUB is to prevent switching back and forth between rural and urban areas, which determine funding eligibility and continuity of transportation funding. In July this year, NIRPC staff met with the communities located on the edge of a boundary and presented them with a draft adjustment. The TPC will vote to recommend the final UAB at the Commission meeting on October 19, 2023 for approval. INDOT will review all state adjusted urban area boundaries and submit to FHWA for approval by December 29, 2023.

INDOT – Adam Parkhouse

Adam Parkhouse reported INDOT is preparing for winter by completing truck inspections and filling salt reserves. Adam noted the ramp connecting I-65 North to I-94 West has been closed for ramp repair for over two weeks and will reopen next week.

Bill Emerson said he has received reported issues regarding INDOT bridges and bridge approaches regarding trucking communities tending to have more issues with damage to their axis in Indiana compared to other states. Randall Niemeyer added he feels it's an engineering issue in Indiana and agreed other trucks have traveled surrounding states with no issues. Adam Parkhouse stated INDOT is aware of the issues and is looking into it, but in the meantime suggested they contact him or call customer support (855-INDOT4U) to report specific issues.

Other Business

No other business was reported.

Announcements

Bob Carnahan relayed announcements of various events in Cedar Lake.

Adjournment

Hearing no other business, Richard Hardaway adjourned the meeting at 9:37 a.m. The next meeting on October 19, 2023, will be an Executive Board meeting.

The livestream video recording of this meeting is available on NIRPC's YouTube Channel at [Commission Meeting 9-21-23 - YouTube](#)