

Commission on Sustainability



MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, March 10, 2022, 5:30 pm

City Hall

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Moldenhauer at 5:35 p.m.

- I Roll Call—Present: Nancy Moldenhauer, Laura Henderson, Daisy Lee, Faye Moore, Phil Kohler, Tim Bauer, Tristan Bogart, Angela Reynolds, Bailey Chavis. A quorum was present.
Excused: Andie Jahnz-Davis, Mary Cate Neary, La'Tonya Troutman
Absent: Bryant Dabney (Council Liaison)
- II Approval of February 10, 2022 Minutes—Tim Bauer moved and Faye Moore seconded for approval of the minutes; all voted in favor, none opposed.
- III Project Teams
 - A **Solar Power Options for City Government**—Tristan Bogart [solar panel array update; to introduce plan for city buildings as part of American Rescue Act Funding granted to municipal government; Nancy obtained contact within Planning & Inspection Dept. for assistance in identifying department ownership of properties] --Nancy Moldenhauer will share an email she just received from Planning with Tristan Bogart.
 - B **Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [list and enrollment] --Bailey Chavis reports nothing new; she has not had success reaching the funeral home that is missing from her list. Nancy Moldenhauer mentioned that the headquarters are located in Crown Point. Bailey will try again with this new information, with the goal of getting a completed list published so Michigan City residents can easily see their options.
 - C **Biking, Hiking, and Walking Culture**—Phillip Kohler & Tim Bauer [bicycle repair and ride along the new Singing Sands Trail to be rescheduled in the spring with MC Park & Recreation Department partnership; announce date] --Phillip Kohler reports they are planning a bike ride on May 6, starting from City Hall and heading west on Singing Sands Trail to its western end and back. Time to be determined, probably 5:30 or 6:00 p.m.
 - D **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**— [Sign up for Round Two of cooperative membership ended on February 28th. Had 53 interested individuals signed up in the FREE cooperative. Fifteen (15) are in Michigan City. Satellite review and solar energy systems installer visit completed on 27. Site visit scheduled for 1. Proposal submitted to 10. Five (5) disqualified by installer. Opportunity lost on 6. Signed contract with 4. One more grandfathered in from Round One and contract signed. <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/> ; <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/go-solar/> --Nancy Moldenhauer reports that she received a new report from Dan Robertson this afternoon without time to update these statistics but they are substantially the same. The number of signed contracts is expected to increase as some proposals were just recently sent out.

- E Indiana University Resilience Cohort for SolSmart Designation & Electric Vehicle Charging Station Plan**—Laura Henderson, Tristan Bogart, & Nancy Moldenhauer [All requirements for SolSmart Silver Designation have been met; Consultant submitted application to U.S. Department of Energy last week with 15 days to receive results. Check out our new link "Getting Started with Solar" on Sustainability Commission website page. <https://www.emichigan.city.com/1214/Sustainability-Commission> –Our final application for SolSmart Silver Designation was submitted to the Department of Energy about a week ago and we hope to hear in about another week. According to our consultants, we have enough points for Silver. We do not have to reapply each year to maintain our designation. At this time, the city government does not have the capacity to meet requirements for three-day turn-around of building and electrical inspections for Gold Designation.
- F U.S. Department of Energy National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)**—Ed Shinn, Tristan Bogart, Daisy Lee & Nancy Moldenhauer [We are receiving FREE consulting, engineering, and planning services for solar array installation, electric vehicle charging stations, and electronic device chargers at Washington Park, Beach, and Zoo. We've had our second exploratory meeting on February 23rd. When completed, we will have a plan to submit for an extremely promising future with potential green energy funding to be provided by the Federal Government.] --Tristan Bogart, Nancy Moldenhauer, and Ed Shinn of the Parks Department met with Scott of the National Renewable Energy Labs. They discussed the possibility of turning the triangular parking lot at Washington Park into a rectangular space with overhead solar arrays which will power EV charging stations and device charging points. There may also be an opportunity for native plantings and a social media publicity campaign per Tristan. Daisy Lee and Laura Henderson are joining this team.
- G Carbon Neutral Indiana (CNI)**—Andie Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Daisy Lee & Nancy Moldenhauer [Daniel Poynter, Executive Director, will be announcing a fun activity to attract household subscribers with a culmination on Earth Day, April 22nd. Daniel is looking for someone to person CNI's table at our Earth Day Extravaganza. Who needs to schedule an assessment or get an update with Daniel, Executive Director and Founder of CNI?] <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/carbonneutralindiana> --Daniel Poynter would love for CNI to be represented at our Earth Month Extravaganza, but he is not able to come up here to staff the table. Daisy Lee will consider staffing the table; or there will be a table for literature from interested groups who cannot be there personally.
- H Opportunity to Set Sustainable/Resilience Goals and Actions**—Nancy Moldenhauer & Laura Henderson [Based on our Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory of 2019, we would work collaboratively with NWI Region Resilience--from which Kathy Sipple coordinated the completion of Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories for 9 municipalities and three counties in Northwest Indiana--in partnership with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC). It will be a lot less expensive working cooperatively than working individually with the Indiana University Resilience Cohort plus it would be regionally focused. We're behind proposed schedule on this due to staffing changes at I.U. Nancy on NIRPC Committee with Kathy Sipple, yet have not heard anything regarding starting date.] --No news at this point; other commissioners are invited to join this team.
- I "Caught You Being Green"**—Andie Jahnz-Davis [Earth Day Extravaganza, April 23, 2022, 12 – 3 pm, Michigan City Public Library, requesting nomination submissions for Nora L. Schultz Tribute Sustainability Award in July.] --Tim Bauer reported for Andie Jahnz-Davis. He read the impressive long list of participants. There was discussion about publicizing the event at school and about creating a flier. Tim may assist Andie with a flier.
- J URGENT ACTION ALERT:** Two really harmful Bills need to be vetoed by Governor Holcomb. The IN Legislature passed Bills approving small nuclear reactors and carbon sequestration underground. First one SB 271, an expensive antiquated technology that utility users will have to pay for even if never used; the second HB 1209, an unproven and potentially dangerous technology with no corporate accountability! Why not focus on preventing pollution in the first place and turn to renewable clean energies instead? <https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubhoosierchapter>;

<https://www.hecweb.org/bill-watch-2022/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/hecweb> ; --Nancy Moldenhauer reports that this information is already out of date and the current status is not known at this moment. One victory, however, is HOA restrictions that forbid rooftop solar panels are no longer allowed.

- IV Commission Comments —Phillip Kohler asked about any updates on the NIPSCO property. None known, but Just Transition NWI website is a good place to check. Faye Moore reports that LaPorte County NAACP has completed training for solar panel installation, and 2 graduates have gotten jobs. A new round of training will begin probably in April or May. These graduates have OSHA certification, IBEW union jobs and a pathway to get their journeyman cards. This SoulPower project is a collaboration among our local NAACP, IBEW, Ivy Tech, and WorkOne. Nancy Moldenhauer reported that we now have a link on our webpage, “Getting Started with Solar” which includes a listing for SoulPower.
- V Public Comments —Our visitor mentioned about ash clean-up in the Pines, and that our City Council is trying to get NIPSCO to clean up the coal plant area in its entirety, not leaving parts of the coal ash behind the deteriorating barriers to Lake Michigan. Nancy Moldenhauer elaborated that there is a decree requiring NIPSCO to pay \$21 million for Pines cleanup.
- VI Announcements —Daisy Lee announced that Barker Middle School is still collecting bottles (plastic 1 and 2) and aluminum cans (non-alcoholic) for the Pepsico Recycle Rally, by which they generate funds for the school. She also offers a recycling package to small businesses which includes bins, staff professional development, clear recycling bags, and connection with LaPorte County Solid Waste District. Materials can be brought to Barker Middle School front office, Mon-Fri, 7:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., ending in May.
- VII Adjournment —There being no further business before the Commission, Daisy Lee moved and Faye Moore seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was unanimously approved. Chair Nancy Moldenhauer adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Henderson, Secretary