

Commission on Sustainability



MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, April 13, 2023, 4:30 pm
City Hall, EOC Room Downstairs
Minutes

Chair Nancy Moldenhauer called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

Michigan City Sustainability Commissioners: Tim Bauer, Laura Henderson (Secretary), Clarence Hulse, Andie Jahnz-Davis (Assistant Chair), Daisy Lee (Treasurer), Nancy Moldenhauer (Chair), Faye Moore, La'Tonya Troutman

Student Commissioners: Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Mary Cate Neary, Angela Reynolds

City Council Liaison: Bryant Dabney

- I Roll Call—Present: Tim Bauer, Tristan Bogart, Andie Jahnz-Davis, Daisy Lee, Nancy Moldenhauer, Faye Moore, Mary Cate Neary, Angela Reynolds. Absent: Clarence Hulse. Absent and excused: Bailey Chavis, Laura Henderson, La'Tonya Troutman, Bryant Dabney.
- II Approval of March 9, 2023 Minutes—Andie moved and Tim seconded approval of the minutes as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved.
- III Reappointment of Laura Henderson and Daisy Lee to Sustainability Commission for two-year term until 2025.--Tim moved and Faye seconded for the reappointment of Laura Henderson and Daisy Lee to the Sustainability Commission for 2-year terms ending in 2025. There were no other applicants. The motion passed unanimously. Nancy generously acknowledged their contributions to the Commission's work.
- IV Project Teams
 - A **Solar Power Options for City Government**—Tristan Bogart [solar panel array plan update for installation of solar panels at remaining city buildings]--no update this month, one expected in May.
 - B **Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [update on thank you letters to homes with "Plant a Tree" option; result of contact with Geisen-Carlisle headquartered in Crown Point via written communication for adding "Plant a Tree" memorial option; article for Facebook]--tabled due to Bailey's absence.
 - C **Waste Reduction/"Garbology"**—Daisy Lee, Tim Bauer, Bailey Chavis, Angela Reynolds, & Mary Cate Neary [explore preparation and timeline for next round of IDEM grant for recycling projects up to \$100,000; collaborative effort with Sacha Gee Burn of LaPorte County Solid Waste District, Shannon Eason of MC Parks & Rec Dept, and Robin Kohn of MC. Public Art Committee; contact within NIPSCO for potential funding will be approached when plan available; *Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for carbon footprint reduction indicates Michigan City and NWI are extremely high for sending trash to landfills instead of practicing reduction and recycling* <https://www.in.gov/idem/recycle/resources/indiana-community-recycling-grant-program/>]--Daisy reports they are still looking for hog farmers interested in partnering with Barker Middle School and Marquette High School. The schools would provide for free the leftover food from the cafeterias while the schools would vastly reduce what they send to the landfill. Faye asked how local they needed to be; Daisy answered that if they are willing to come to get the food there is no limit. Nancy suggested that, if hog farmer partners are not found by July, the county fair might be a good place to find partners.

- D Continue Promoting SolSmart Silver Designation with Partner Indiana University Resilience Cohort—** Laura Henderson, Tristan Bogart, Angie Reynolds, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Desire this year to begin slow review of programs we may not have acquired points to apply for Gold Designation in 2024; La'Tonya to look into sign availability to put on poles with Tree City and Bird Habitat signs already placed by streets; what could we do to continue leveraging SolSmart Silver Designation besides getting logo posted on Michigan City Government website?; keep sharing our link "Getting Started with Solar" found on Sustainability Commission Michigan City Government website page: <https://www.emichigancity.com/1214/Sustainability-Commission> ; <https://solsmart.org/news/soul-power-equitable-solar-workforce-development-in-michigan-city-indiana/>]--In addition to the above, Nancy and Andie have presented to the City Council and Andie to the LaPorte County League of Women Voters regarding our SolSmart Silver designation. The Commission will have a table at the Extravaganza on April 29 highlighting SolSmart Silver Designation, with the plaque as well as slides from the recent presentations by Nancy and Andie.
- E Carbon Neutral Indiana (CNI)—**Andie Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Daisy Lee & Nancy Moldenhauer [Carbon Neutral Indiana's innovative book--entitled *Carbon Neutral Indiana: A Practical Guide to Climate Solutions*—can be ordered on line. Exploring possibility of offering book discussion at Northwest Indiana Green Drinks. Who needs to schedule an assessment, get an update for their home to become carbon neutral, or set up a monthly contribution with Daniel Poynter, Executive Director and Founder of CNI? About: <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/book> ; Order: <https://store.carbonneutralindiana.org/>]--Andie discussed having a virtual book club meeting, due to the ability to reach a wider audience than having a physical meeting at the library as per an earlier plan. She will check on Daniel Poynter's ability to facilitate the meeting.
- F U.S Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)—**Ed Shinn, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Laura Henderson, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Scott prepared a summary of various options we've considered from November 2021 to November 2022 which will be forwarded to Commissioners; after discussion, need to schedule a 7th meeting as a Task Force with our consultant Scott Belding of NREL. We will continue to pursue solar array powered electric-vehicle charging stations in the planned newly reconfigured rectangular parking lot directly across from the zoo. The zoo will pursue possibility of installing solar panels on the south-facing side of their buildings while it will be determined if any power from a solar panel array parking lot installation would potentially be shared with the zoo or other structures in Washington Park. *We are receiving FREE consulting, engineering, planning services for solar array installation, electric vehicle charging stations, and electronic device chargers for workstations at Washington Park, Beach, and Zoo. When completed, we will have choices to create a plan to submit for an extremely promising future with potential green energy funds provided by the Federal Government.*]--Also being considered are phone/computer charging work stations, powered by the solar array over some of the parking lot.
- G NWI Climate/Resilience Action Planning Work Group—**Nancy Moldenhauer, Laura Henderson, & Andie Jahnz-Davis [Have not heard anything about any scheduled meetings at this time, yet it looked promising that NIRPC would get another intern from Indiana University. Best practices and model programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a draft format were created.]--Awaiting scheduling of meeting.
- H Soul Power—**Donnita Scully, Faye Moore, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Level 1 & 2: OSHA 10 Safety Certification by U.S. Government and Solar Panel Installer Assistants certified by North American Board of Certified Energy Professionals (NABCEP)—23 successfully completed; Level 3: Solar Panel Installers NABCEP Certified—7 successfully completed with 2 to re-test; grant being written for Level 4: Professional Installers with required service hours, can do survey and design work, could start own company; grant will also be written to install solar panels on roof of Hope Community Center; Millennium Solar Electric of Chicago has been providing the training, yet an Indiana company may need to be found for in-person training in state. As with the first grant, Nancy will provide consultation services to strengthen submissions. *Job training and*

certification program for solar panel installation in partnership with NAACP LaPorte County, IBEW-531, Ivy Tech Valparaiso, WorkOne, Just Transition NWI, and MC Sustainability Commission; interested individuals can sign up here for future offerings: <https://www.laportecountynaacp3061.org/soul-power-project>]-- Nancy provided some clarification she received from meeting with Donnita Scully: Level one is the first training which includes OSHA 10 certification for safety, and certifies those who complete the course and test with solar panel installer assistant certification. Level two is the next training which certifies for solar panel installers. Donnita is currently working on a grant for level three training, which empowers those who complete it to design layout of solar panel arrays and to open their own businesses. She is also working on a grant to help provide solar panels at the Hope Community Center on the west side of Michigan City.

- I **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**—Faye Moore & Nancy Moldenhauer [Dan Robinson is collecting names and contact information of interested persons for potential Round 3 of installation being offered possibly Fall 2023 at drobinson@solarunitedneighbors.org ; https://public.courts.in.gov/Decisions/api/Document/Opinion?Id=cXVRn9l4RRuao6Alo0z2K0A1N5fw-Ckt_Co-Uav-jyv8MF9JXl8sz_6h2_6XWAIK0 <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/> ; <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/go-solar> Dan Robinson will be tabling for SUN at the upcoming Earth Month Extravaganza.
- J **“Caught YOU Being Green” Engagement**—Andie Jahnz-Davis & Tim Bauer [Upcoming social media posts and press release; Update on Earth Month Extravaganza 2023, Saturday, April 29th, 12 noon - 4 pm, Krueger Memorial Hall]-- Andie reports a Facebook post on a local clean-up with Just Transitions and Unsalted No Sharks. Upcoming Extravaganza is Saturday April 29 12-4 p.m. at Krueger Memorial Hall, with many local environmental groups and many intriguing activities. Press release will be out next week. We are encouraged to distribute fliers. Faye described another example of people being green in Michigan City: Dominique Edwards and Belle Lee of Walker Street Gardens had an event at the library involving free seeds, a talk about composting, and children’s activities. Nancy mentioned Kathy Sipple’s move to encourage pollinator habitats in NW Indiana.
- V **Commissioner Comments**—Nancy and Andie are working on the ordinance. They plan to move from 4 to 6 student commissioners and to resume with the middle schools. Tristan is soliciting ideas for amenities to go with the solar charging stations being planned for Washington Park. Mary Cate suggested foot washers. Tristan asked that additional ideas be emailed to him. Daisy mentioned that her 7th and 8th grade students at Barker Middle School picked up over 2,000 pieces of trash and 20 to 25 large tires, and Solid Waste District came to pick up the tires.
- VI **Public Comments**--none
- VII **Announcements**—Andie mentioned the Northwest Indiana Earth Day Celebration on Saturday April 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Porter County Expo Center. This event will include vendors and food. Nancy mentioned another event later that day from 4 to 6 p.m., Towards Sustainability: a Celebration of Earth Day along Lake Michigan, involving presentations and a discussion, past House of Tomorrow; Sustainable Design Today. The event is sponsored by Indiana Landmarks, Indiana Humanities, and Lubeznik Center. Nancy will be on the panel, along with a couple of architects and Dan Robinson of SUN. This event will be at the Lubeznik Center. Nancy encouraged people to register due to great interest in the event. Also on Earth Day, the Indiana Dunes National Park is reopening the Douglas Center in Miller IN, from 12 noon to 3 p.m.
- VIII **Adjournment**—There being no further business before the commission, Daisy moved and Tim seconded for adjournment. Nancy adjourned the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura Henderson, Secretary