

# Commission on Sustainability



## MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, August 12, 2021, 5:30 pm  
City Hall, EOC Room (downstairs across from Council Chambers)

### Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Moldenhauer at 5:32 p.m.

- I Roll Call—Present: Tim Bauer, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Bryant Dabney, Laura Henderson, Andie Jahns-Davis, Phillip Kohler, Nancy Moldenhauer, Faye Moore, Angela Reynolds, La'Tonya Troutman, Bryant Dabney (Council Liaison); Absent: Clarence Hulse; Excused: Daisy Lee
- II Approval of Minutes, July 8, 2021, and All Votes Taken During Zoom Pandemic Meetings—the minutes were amended to include the language of the Coal Ash Petition which was approved at the July meeting. Faye Moore moved and Laura Henderson seconded that the minutes be approved as amended. All voted in favor. The matter of approving Zoom meeting motions was tabled to give Commissioners enough time to review them.
- III Welcome New Liaison City Councilman Bryant Dabney—Chair Nancy Moldenhauer and the Commission in general welcomed Councilman Bryant Dabney.
- IV Project Teams
  - A **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**—Presentation by Dan Robinson, Northern Indiana Field Organizer. We are scheduled to launch Round 2 in September and October. Kindly help spread the word and let your family, friends, neighbors, and community know about this opportunity for FREE cooperative membership with discounted equipment and coordinated installation.--Dan Robinson reviewed the SUN program, with emphasis on the fact that the 26% tax break will end this year, decreasing to about 23% next year; and that those who install solar before next June will have net metering for 10 years, whereas after that the level of reimbursement from utilities for excess electricity fed back to the grid will be much less. Therefore, it is financially beneficial to get solar this year or at least early next year. Educating the public about the benefits of solar and how to get it is part of the SUN mission. On line education events from SUN occur monthly. There will be an in-person education event on October 21, 6:30 p.m., location to be determined. Fliers and doorhangers will be available soon for distribution. He can be reached at [drobinson@solarunitedneighbors.org](mailto:drobinson@solarunitedneighbors.org) or 219-209-3670. In September will be an event to celebrate the wrap-up of the 1<sup>st</sup> coop round in this area and to kick off the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. He asked if anyone would be willing to store information materials in their home for quicker local access, to please let him know, as he does not live very close.
  - B **"Caught You Being Green"**—Andie Jahns-Davis [feature article, social media posts, explore First Friday art or music (?) event, Earth Day Extravaganza 2022]--Andie reported that Nikki Schultz, Nora Schultz's daughter, shared a large amount of information with her that Andie will go through to write a feature on Nora for the Facebook page. She recognized the Michigan City Parks and Recreation Department for picking up trash at Gardena Park, and she will do a mini feature on them. She continues talking to people about next year's Earth Day Extravaganza. Faye Moore thanked Andie for her work at the Walker Street Community Garden. Nancy thanked her for her plastic-free July posts last month.
  - C **Biking, Hiking, and Walking Culture**—Phillip Kohler & Tim Bauer [bicycle repair and ride along the new Singing Sands Trail needs to be rescheduled due to nobody in City government being available to assist the day of big boat races]--no news at this time.
  - D **Carbon Neutral Indiana (CNI)**—Nancy Moldenhauer, Andie Jahns-Davis, Laura Henderson, & Daisy Lee [Nancy met with Daniel Poynter and Steve Perkins to plan "friendly competition" between Tryon Farms, Shoreland Hills, and other

neighborhood associations this fall for subscribers; who needs to reschedule assessment with Daniel Poynter, Founder of CNI] <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/carbonneutralindiana> –Nancy reported that Daniel had recently presented (via Zoom) to the Michigan City Planning Commission at the invitation of previous Sustainability Commissioner Larry Zimmerman, and may be back at the August 24 meeting. We are encouraged to attend that meeting.

- E Soul Power Project**—La'Tonya (Niki) Troutman, NAACP LaPorte County Unit 6031 [classes to begin this summer]-- La'Tonya read the resolution that the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee of LaPorte County NAACP Unit 3061 will present to the Michigan City Common Council (attached) which had also been shared with Sustainability Commissioners via email prior to this meeting and asked for a motion in support of this Resolution being passed by the City Council. Laura moved to support the Michigan City Council supporting the Resolution and Andie seconded the motion. All voted in favor; the motion passed unanimously.
- F Solar Power Options**—Tristan Bogart [requesting ideas for name of this project, solar panel array fields/farms update; to introduce plan for city buildings as part of American Rescue Act Funding granted to municipal government]--Tristan is planning a meeting with an architect regarding natural ways of conserving energy through building designs.
- G Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [research and promotion]--Bailey reported that Ott-Haverstock and Coleman-Hicks of Michigan City, Lakeview of LaPorte, and Emmanuel of Westville all offer a tree planting option in place of cut flowers, at a price of \$39.95 except for Emmanuel which is subsidizing the option bringing their price to \$29.95. Nancy suggested contacting those businesses not offering this option and encouraging them to do so. Bailey will share the information with Andie for use on social media.
- H Indiana University Resilience Cohort for SolSmart Designation & Electric Vehicle Charging Station Plan**—Laura Henderson, Tristan Bogart, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Update on Silver Designation & Electric Vehicle Charging Station Plan]--Our focus now will be on SolSmart designation. Documentation needs to be gathered and submitted. Plan is to have it turned in by next meeting.
- I Clean Removal of Coal Ash from NIPSCO Michigan City Generating Plant**—[Michigan City Common Council unanimously passed a resolution 9 to 0 for a total coal ash clean up; continue to sign and recruit others to sign the Just Transition NWI petition to reach at least 1,000 signatures at [https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protect-lake-michigan-communities-from-toxic-coal-ash?clear\\_id=true&fbclid=IwAR1yJAGdSR68llwftC4-eT77JVMqGLrrLboEdi2ER9p6xbDUmlOuc15mgOg](https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/protect-lake-michigan-communities-from-toxic-coal-ash?clear_id=true&fbclid=IwAR1yJAGdSR68llwftC4-eT77JVMqGLrrLboEdi2ER9p6xbDUmlOuc15mgOg) ]-- Councilman Bryant Dabney and Councilman Michael Mack cosponsored the resolution authored by Councilwoman Dalia Zygas supporting removal of all coal ash from the NIPSCO plant area.

V Board Comments—Andie showed the Nora's Trash Tribe t-shirts which she has for those who did not already get one last month. Nancy reported on the South Shore Clean Cities (SSCC) conference she attended where she spoke with the Executive Director about a closer collaboration between them and this Commission. SSCC helped us get the Indiana Volkswagen Mitigation Trust Funds for the electric vehicle charging stations. Faye thanked the fire department for having solar panels on Cleveland Avenue. La'Tonya shared that August is Black Business Month which is an especially good time to shop at Black-owned businesses, such as Perfect PR, Stop 34B, and another new black-owned business in Lighthouse Mall. (Note that the Sustainability Commission is not endorsing any of these businesses and were personal suggestions made by La'Tonya.) Nancy attended the Black Expo luncheon and noted they have a list of local black businesses.

VI Public Comments--none

VII Announcements—Andie announced the LaPorte County Hazardous Waste 7-in-1 Event will be Saturday September 18 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at LaPorte County fairgrounds. Nancy announced the next NWI Green Drinks, which will feature Save the Dunes Victoria Wittig talking about planning and planting pollinator gardens, on Thursday, September 2, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

VIII Adjournment—Laura moved and Tim seconded for adjournment. The motion was approved unanimously. Chair Nancy Moldenhauer adjourned the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Henderson, Secretary

