

# Commission on Sustainability



## MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, February 9, 2023, 4:30 pm  
City Hall, EOC Room Downstairs

### Minutes

**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

The meeting was called to order at 4:37p.m. by Vice-Chair Andie Jahnz-Davis.

- I Roll Call—Present: Bailey Chavis, Andie Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Faye Moore, Mary Cate Neary, La'Tonya Troutman. Absent and excused: Daisy Lee, Nancy Moldenhauer, Angela Reynolds. Absent: Tim Bauer, Tristan Bogart, Clarence Hulse, Bryant Dabney.
- II Approval of January 12, 2023 Minutes—when a quorum was present, La'Tonya moved and Andie seconded for approval of the January 12 minutes. All voted in favor, none opposed.
- III 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]--tabled until next month
  - B **Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [update on contact with Geisen-Carlisle headquartered in Crown Point via written communication for adding "Plant a Tree" memorial option]--Bailey has written a thank you letter to the participating funeral homes and will send them after getting it approved.
  - C **Waste Reduction/"Garbology"**—Daisy Lee, Tim Bauer, Bailey Chavis, Angela Reynolds, & Mary Cate Neary [Lora Fosberg, Art Manager, has idea of an artist commissioned native fish sculpture to collect recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans at Washington Park Beach being set on wheels for removal from beach during inclement weather which could also be placed in other spaces near the beach during storms and in the park for off season; 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/> ] --Mary Cate reported she has a contact for a hog farmer and will call her this week.
  - 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; Nikki to look into sign to place with Tree City and Bird Habitat signs on 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/> ]

--La'Tonya lead some discussion of what might be the best location for our SolSmart Silver Designation sign. Citizens are invited to weigh in on this issue via our Facebook page. It is expected that when we get gold designation we will get a new sign. Possible locations for our SolSmart logo were suggested such as on our letterhead and by our partner organizations,

- 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*—is now available and can be ordered. Thinking about offering book discussion at public library during Earth Month. 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/> ]
- Faye noted that all the web links are included in our agendas which are published on the Sustainability Commission page on emichigancity.com. Andie plans to contact the library to see if they are interested in a book discussion during Earth Month.
- F **U.S Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)**—Ed Shinn, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Laura Henderson, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Need to schedule a 7<sup>th</sup> meeting as a Task Force with our consultant Scott Belding of NREL; Nancy requested that Scott prepare a summary of various options we've considered from November 2021 to November 2022. 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.*] --no updates
- G **NWI Climate/Resilience Action Planning Work Group**—Nancy Moldenhauer, Laura Henderson, & Andie Jahnz-Davis [No known 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.] --no updates
- H **Soul Power**—Donnita Skully & Faye Moore [NABCEP certification results from the November six-week Solar PV Associate training are 7 of the 9 passed the NABCEP; it may take a while for the two who failed by a couple points to get rescheduled to retake exam; *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> ] --no updates
- I **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**—Faye Moore & Nancy Moldenhauer [Nancy attended Solar Renewable Energy Day (RED) at the Statehouse--organized by Solar United Neighbors Indiana and Earth Charter Indiana and sponsored by Michigan City Sustainability Commission—and met with Representative Pat Boy and Senator Rodney Pol; Dan Robinson is collecting names and contact information of interested persons

for potential Rounds of installation being offered in 2023 at [drobinson@solarunitedneighbors.org](mailto:drobinson@solarunitedneighbors.org) ; Nancy's solar panel installation was finally completed in December as part of Round 1!

[https://public.courts.in.gov/Decisions/api/Document/Opinion?Id=cXVRn9l4RRuao6Alo0z2K0A1N5fw-Ckt\\_Co-Uav-jyv8MF9JXl8sz\\_6h2\\_6XWAIK0](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/>

--La'Tonya offered that Dan Robinson or Zach Schalk, both of SUN, would be willing to talk with us via Zoom about the recent EDG case and other related cases before the Indiana Supreme Court. Perhaps a 15 minute time period at the beginning of the next meeting would be good for this. Faye wondered if one of them might present at our Earth Month Extravaganza instead .

- J **“Caught YOU Being Green” Engagement**—Andie Jahnz-Davis & Tim Bauer [Upcoming social media posts; Update on Earth Month Extravaganza 2023, Saturday, April 29th, time TBD, Krueger Memorial Hall]  
--Andie reports she has posted a couple of small posts about "Caught YOU Being Green" with a couple of larger ones coming. Main focus is on the upcoming Extravaganza. Bailey offered her assistance with fliers for the event.

- IV **VOTE** to support the Michigan City Common Council and Mayor in opposing the proposed NIPSCO rate hike which would increase the average home owner's utility bill by approximately \$20 monthly which would be a hardship for many residents in our community who live at or near the poverty level.--Laura moved and Faye seconded that we support the Common Council and Mayor in opposing the proposed NIPSCO rate hike as stated above. All voted in favor, none opposed.
- V **Commissioner Comments**—La'Tonya spoke in appreciation of the over 100 Indiana residents at Renewable Energy Day (RED) in Indianapolis assembled by Solar United Neighbors and Earth Charter Indiana, and also a large number of youth from a youth climate organization, Confront the Climate Crisis, as well as Hoosier Environmental Council and Sierra Club Hoosier Chapter, who recently at RED talked with state legislators in support of renewable energy in Indiana. Nancy represented MC Sustainability Commission which was also an event sponsor.
- VI **Public Comments**--none
- VII **Announcements**—Faye announced that in observance of Black History Month there will be 2 events at the YMCA: a quiz bowl from 9:30 to 11 a.m., and a health and wellness fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.. Also on February 18, there will be Black Expo at Lighthouse Place Mall, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., free admission, and on February 19, the Joyful Gospel Fest. Further details can be found on the Michigan City Black History Month Committee Facebook page. Faye endorsed La'Tonya's remarks honoring trailblazers including local figures like Mr. Wescott, Mr. Whitlow, and others. La'Tonya mentioned the funeral this Saturday of Rev Anthony Jeter, a local longtime supporter of climate justice.
- VIII **Adjournment**—Laura moved and La'Tonya seconded that we adjourn. All voted in favor, none opposed. The meeting was adjourned by Vice-Chair Andie Jahnz-Davis at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Henderson, Secretary