

# Commission on Sustainability



## MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, February 11, 2021 at 5:30 pm  
Zoom Meeting  
Minutes

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

- I. **Roll Call: Present**—Nancy Moldenhauer, Andie Jahnz-Davis, Tim Bauer, Philip Kohler, Daisy Lee, Laura Henderson, Bailey Chavis, Faye Moore, Tristan Bogart
- II. **Excused**—Dominique Edwards, Bryant Dabney  
**Absent**—Clarence Hulse
- III. **Approval of Minutes, January 14, 2021:** Tim moved and Daisy seconded a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.
- IV. **Proposed Meeting Day:** Nancy has selected a meeting day and will email it to members after today's meeting.
- V. **Changes:** Congratulate Michael Mack as New President of City Council and welcome New Liaison City Councilman Bryant Dabney—Michael Mack has been chosen president of the City Council this year. He is replaced as our council Liaison by Bryant Dabney who represents the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward. He is excused due to a special meeting of the City Council.
- VI. **Project Teams:**
  - A. **“Caught You Being Green”:** —Andie Jahnz-Davis [article, campaigns, and Earth Month]: Andie has published on our Facebook page her article about Faye Moore and her new solar panel installation. Tristan will be her next interview. She has a few mini stories in the wings. Regarding Earth Month (April), she explained her idea of asking people to provide a brief statement with a few photos on how they observe Earth Month, with a prize basket awarded for the winning entry. The basket will be sponsored by YachtBrite and about a \$50 value. Daisy offered some additional basket items. We may be able to offer first, second, and third place baskets. Nancy asked for a motion approving the plan to have a contest for Earth Month with prize basket(s). Laura made the motion and Faye seconded it. It was unanimously approved.
  - B. **Indiana University Resilience Cohort for SolSmart Designation:** —Laura, Tristan, & Nancy [Accepted into Round Three and waiting for approval from our Mayor; Laura and Nancy attended IU Resilience Cohort Kick-Off Webinar on Monday.]: Nancy shared that Michigan City's 2040 plan was held up as a very forward-looking plan environmentally at the ERI state meeting. Laura outlined what was presented by Andrea at the Resilience cohort meeting—the first module runs from February through June and focuses on SolSmart designation; the second module runs from April through September and focuses on electric vehicle charging (EVC) stations and the third module runs from August through December and focuses on energy conservation in water and waste water treatment.

Module 1: SolSmart has 2 aspects--(1) awarding designations (bronze, silver, or gold) to municipalities or regions to celebrate their commitment to easing the way for solar projects, and (2) technical assistance toward getting a designation, and we are looking to achieve bronze designation for Michigan City. More detailed timeline for the first module: February—get familiar with the designations, sign the solar statement, schedule a consultation call with SolSmart; March—consultation call, finalize a workplan for achieving the designation; April—workplan; May—finish workplan; June—submit application for designation, give feedback on the module. We are awaiting the mayor signing off on our participation. If it is approved, this will be our main focus with the Resilience Cohort.

Module 2: Nancy noted that we are ahead of the curve for Module 2 due to the inventory that she, Dominique Edwards, and Don Przybylinski took of electric vehicle charging stations around the city, and the Indiana Volkswagen Mitigation grant for two EVC stations that was secured for Michigan City.

Module 3: Due to the great work of Mike Kuss with Sanitation we may have nothing to do for Module 3. Laura noted it might be interesting for the Commission to tour the water treatment plant with Mike Kuss when that is safer later this year.

- C. **Solar United Neighbors (SUN):** —Nancy shared the following information with the Commission: [Zack Schalk, Indiana Program Director, stated enrollment will remain open through March and SUN is hiring a Field Organizer for Northern Indiana; be sure to share with your neighbors and our community this opportunity which offers discounted solar equipment and lower installation costs to coop members.]

Check out archived NWI Green Drinks Solar 101 Presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bSyJX42Qbs>

Sign up to become a (1) national member of Solar United Neighbors AND (2) our local cooperative for free:

(1) <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/become-a-member-today/?fbclid=IwAR0kiW0XZvG4Nuc49vYyD0qPIKYMYaQHSEYilpQKAyfs2-FWUr062E7wJI4>

(2) <https://coops.solarunitedneighbors.org/coops/nw-indiana-solar-and-ev-co-op/?fbclid=IwAR2VPuptYXmofa18HryxpabMULdR1nAqaB6w-kwDrl0fYGQYSw02hWLcpQo>

Learn more:

<https://www.facebook.com/solarunitedneighbors> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SolarUnitedNeighborsofIndiana>

- D. **Carbon Neutral Indiana (CNI):** —Andie Jahnz-Davis, Nancy Moldenhauer, & Laura Henderson—Nancy shared the following information with the Commission: [Daisy Lee has rescheduled while Steve Perkins of Tryon Farms in Michigan City has become carbon neutral and an advisor to Daniel Poynter, Founder of CNI] <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/> ; <https://www.facebook.com/carbonneutralindiana>. Nancy encouraged us to spread the word and get others to sign up, as well as complete our assessments if we scheduled from last year.
- E. **Biking & Hiking:** —Phillip Kohler [Brief report from Strong Towns’ webinar about establishing a biking culture]: Highlights from the webinar was to create a culture of biking, one by one, especially with people who use bikes for transportation, and to get them mobilized to talk to the city planner about their needs and wants. Philip notes that many bike riders use Franklin St. Another point was to focus on those places where bike

travel is most dangerous and/or difficult. Also, a quick easy way to make a bike lane is to focus on streets that are already wide enough that only painting a lane and signage is needed. Philip also passed on information about an organization called People for Bikes which offers grants for creating bike lanes which he'll look into. Nancy also attended a Strong Towns zoom today, one of the lessons she learned was doing a pilot program by using inexpensive temporary items such as cones, tape, hay bales, and such to see if a proposed bike lane would be utilized enough to justify a more permanent setup. South Shore Trails which has a Facebook page is another good organization in this area. Nancy also noted that our Singing Sands trail was appreciated and is being used.

- F. **Solar Panel Fields:** —Tristan Bogart: Tristan reports all the land he and Clarence Hulse are looking at for solar panels for the city are owned by the city, although they still need to investigate which city departments are involved. He has spoken with Zach, regarding what would be the best placement for batteries. Zach advises that batteries only be placed on critical government buildings for now. Nancy clarified that the current concentration is on Michigan City government, not citywide.
- VII. **Board Comments:** Nancy spoke with Ed Shinn regarding the tiny house project proposed for Bismark Hill. The Park Department has asked the company to gather input from the community regarding the proposed project. People are encouraged to make comments by emailing Ed Shinn at [eshinn@emichigancity.com](mailto:eshinn@emichigancity.com). This matter will be on our agenda for next month's meeting. Nancy announced that student members Bailey Chavis and Angela Reynolds are joining the Waste Reduction/Garbology team with Daisy Lee and Tim Bauer.
- VIII. **Public Comments:** none
- IX. **Announcements:** Andie announced a seed swap Facebook event Saturday February 20 at 9 am on the Walker Street Park Community Garden Facebook page. Nancy announced SB 389, which has passed the state Senate and is now in the state House, would remove protection from 80% of Indiana's wetlands. We are encouraged to visit Hoosier Environmental Council Facebook page or website for assistance in contacting our elected officials. She noted that our elected officials Rep. Pat Boy and Senator Karen Tallian, have often taken action in support of the environment and thank yous to them would be appreciated. Nancy also announced that Northwest Indiana Green Drinks will present on Great Lakes Day and host Natalie Johnson of Save the Dunes on March 4 at 6:30 pm via Zoom.
- X. **Adjournment:** Laura moved and Philip seconded that we adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:25.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Henderson, Secretary