

# Commission on Sustainability



## MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, March 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

Vice-Chair Andie Jahnz-Davis called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m.

- I Roll Call—Present: Tristan Bogart, Andie Jahnz-Davis, Daisy Lee, Faye Moore, Angie Reynolds, La'Tonya "Nikki" Troutman, Tim Bauer; Absent: Bailey Chavis (excused), Laura Henderson (excused), Clarence Hulse, Nancy Moldenhauer (excused), Mary Cate Neary (excused), Bryant Dabney
- II Approval of February 9, 2023 Minutes—La'Tonya moved and Daisy seconded approval of the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.
- 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] . Two new electric vehicle chargers at AMC theater.
  - 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 will update us next meeting on letter of thanks to funeral homes with "Plant a Tree" offering.
  - 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 reported a challenge finding hog farmers interested to participate in receiving school cafeteria waste for feed, so far four or five have turned her down. She'll ask for more names. Plan on two pilot projects at Barker Middle School and Marquette High School.
  - 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://www.emichigancity.com/1214/Sustainability-Commission_) ; <https://solsmart.org/news/soul-power-equitable-solar-workforce-development-in-michigan-city-indiana/> ] Nikki has not looked into availability of signs from SolSmart to be placed below signs for Tree City and Bird Habitat which are already on poles along city limit roads with space available below for this sign. Instead, Nikki plans a Facebook poll to see where respondees would like the SolSmart signs to be placed.

- 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/> ] **Plan is to consider a Book Club in May instead of April since we have so many activities with our Earth Month Extravaganza. Daniel Poynter will supply us with some handouts for Earth Month Extravaganza which we will have at our table.**
- 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.*] **Scott replied that he would pull together a report of all options proposed so far for consideration. No further 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.] **We missed a meeting on Friday, March 3rd, since we received notification only two hours before beginning. No further 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> ] **Donnita and Nancy are to meet to get caught up and solidify partnership. Faye reports that two graduates have informed NAACP that they have obtained jobs due to this training.**
- 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!] **Dan met with Andie while**

Nancy was in DC lobbying at Great Lakes Days for Save the Dunes with the Healing Our Waters Coalition. Dan in person provided some updates: New law in Indiana allows utilities to reimburse customers who feed excess solar energy back into the grid at a much lower rate than retail, which has affected how SUN will proceed. At present there is no specific plan for another coop in NW Indiana. People who are interested can sign up to be notified of the next area coop (on the website: <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/>), or contact the national help desk where one can schedule a free 15 minute session to help sort through 3 received quotes for a solar installation (after you obtain the quotes). For those who want to advocate in Indiana for more solar-friendly legislation, email Dan (email above) or La'Tonya ( [ltroutman@solarunitedneighbors.org](mailto:ltroutman@solarunitedneighbors.org) ) to join the statewide action team which meets monthly via Zoom.

[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/>

- 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 that Dan Robinson of SUN will have a table at Earth Month Extravaganza. Facebook event post coming soon with all confirmed participants in Earth Month Extravaganza. Sustainability Commission table with Daisy and students will feature swash ball dissection! Andie can be reached through the Sustainability Commission Facebook page. Andie will contact the press and City Council for further publicizing of this event.
- IV **VOTE** to sign the EarthJustice letter which requests that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expand Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR) regulations to coal ash legacy sites which would require the newer clean-up standards be applied to the NIPSCO Coal Burning Power Plant in Michigan City and other older plants countrywide. Faye moved to sign the EarthJustice letter, and Tim seconded. All voted in favor; none opposed.
- V **Commissioner Comments** La'Tonya suggested a Caught YOU being Green Facebook post re St. Patrick's Day, inviting people to share how they are BEING green, not just wearing green, for St. Patrick's Day.
- VI **Public Comments** none
- VII **Announcements** Andie announced Porter County's Earth Day Celebration on Saturday April 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Porter County Expo Center, 215 E Division Rd, Valparaiso IN. She also told about World Water Day beach clean-up sponsored by Just Transitions NWI, Great Michigan City Green Clean, and Monday Evening Beach Clean-up, Sunday March 26 at 1 p.m. at Washington Park beach. Gloves, grabbers, and buckets will be available for use during the event. Tristan reported that Unsalted No Sharks is also doing a beach clean-up on March 18 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., with coffee, donuts, and t-shirts provided. La'Tonya shared that Solar United Neighbors will present an online seminar, Adding Battery Storage to Your Home, on March 23, at 7 p.m. Central Time (8 p.m. Eastern Time), details available on the SUN website under events.
- VIII **Adjournment** There being no further business at this time, Vice-Chair Andie invited a motion for adjournment. La'Tonya made the motion and Daisy seconded. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Henderson, Secretary