

# Commission on Sustainability



## MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, September 8, 2022, 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

- I Roll Call—Present: Tristan Bogart, Andie Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Faye Moore, Nancy Moldenhauer, Angela Reynolds, La'Tonya Troutman. Excused absent: Tim Bauer, Daisy Lee, Mary Cate Neary, Bailey Chavis. Absent: Bryant Dabney, Clarence Hulse.
- II Approval of August 11, 2022 Minutes.--Faye moved and Andie seconded approval of the minutes. Approval was unanimous.
- III Reappointment of Angela Reynolds as a Student Commissioner for one school year beginning September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023.--It was noted that Angela has graduated from middle school and will be attending Michigan City High School. She has served on the waste reduction/garbology project team, worked on getting recycling containers and signage into most of the Michigan City parks, and was very helpful with the Earth Day Extravaganza.  
Laura moved and La'Tonya seconded approval of her reappointment, which was unanimously approved.
- IV Brief guest presentation on issue of keeping weeds and grasses under control by grazing sheep around solar array installation by James Mellowitz.--James Mellowitz, part owner of a one-acre solar array within the edge of Michigan City, and Brett Kessler, sheep farmer who supplies sheep to several solar arrays in the area, described some of the details and the zoning issue which so far is preventing the use of sheep at the one-acre array, and requested our support in their efforts to persuade the Board of Zoning Appeals to grant a variance. After the guests answered several questions from the Commission, Laura moved that the Commission support the use of sheep to control weedy growth on the one-acre solar array on Pahs Road. Faye seconded the motion, which passed 4 in favor and 1 abstention. Mellowitz provided supportive evidence from *The Wall Street Journal* entitled "Sheep Are the Solar Industry's Lawn Mower of Choice".
- V Project Teams
  - A **Waste Reduction/"Garbology"**—Daisy Lee, Tim Bauer, Bailey Chavis, Angela Reynolds, & Mary Cate Neary [IDEM grant for recycling projects up to \$100,000 with submission acceptance from September 1 – October 6, 2022 forwarded to team; ideas from around the world for an artist commissioned native fish sculpture to collect recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans at Washington Park Beach was shared with team and partners, contacts within NIPSCO for potential funding and support require follow up; *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 or recycling*  
<https://www.in.gov/idem/recycle/resources/indiana-community-recycling-grant-program/>--Nancy noted she

will be unavailable to help with grant writing but the Garbology team may pick up that task. The committee for this project includes Sacha Gee Burns of LP County Solid Waste District, the Garbology Project Team, and also probably Shannon Eason of the Parks Department who may still need to be contacted. Later Nancy will be available to contact NIPSCO regarding possible matching funds as possibly required by the grant.

- B Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [Future contact with Geisen-Carlisle headquartered in Crown Point being planned]--skipped due to Bailey's absence
- C "Caught YOU Being Green" Engagement**—Andie Jahnz-Davis & Tim Bauer [Upcoming social media posts; Green Halloween event; report on Region Neighbors for Sustainability event presentation in Highland]--Andie reported that Mary Cate's story about Abby Neary was successfully shared on our Facebook page. Andie is looking forward to Bailey's coming article regarding Plant a Tree option with funeral homes. Green Halloween post from Tim may be coming soon. Andie spoke on behalf of this Commission at the Region Neighbors for Sustainability in Highland, as well as Alex Bazan from the South Bend Sustainability Office. Highland may want to start their own sustainability commission so had many questions for Andie and Alex.
- D Carbon Neutral Indiana (CNI)**—Andie Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Daisy Lee & Nancy Moldenhauer [On Wednesday, Carbon Neutral Indiana successfully launched their innovative book--entitled *Carbon Neutral Indiana: A Practical Guide to Climate Solutions* which is now available for purchase--with an inspiring panel of presenters. Who needs to schedule an assessment or get an update for their home to become carbon neutral with Daniel, Executive Director and Founder of CNI?]  
About the book: <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/book>  
To order: <https://store.carbonneutralindiana.org/> --Nancy encouraged all to view the video of the launch party when it becomes available.
- E U.S Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)**—Ed Shinn, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Daisy Lee, Laura Henderson, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Held our 5<sup>th</sup> meeting on August 23<sup>rd</sup> with our consultant Scott Belding of NREL. We added to our list of stakeholders. A decision needs to be made in collaboration with the Zoo whether we will go with primarily supplying solar energy to the zoo or focus solely on electric-vehicle charging stations in the parking lot. Will set up a meeting with Zoo Director in the fall. Scott emphasized that NIPSCO is looking for new customers, so they would be willing to work with our Commission. We are receiving FREE consulting, engineering, and 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 funding to be provided by the Federal Government.] --as above.
- F NWI Climate/Resilience Action Planning Work Group**—Nancy Moldenhauer, Laura Henderson, & Andie Jahnz-Davis [Third meeting with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) was held on Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm, via Zoom; fourth meeting will be on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1 pm, via Zoom.] --Andie will attend the September meeting as Nancy and Laura will not be able to. Nancy reiterated the need for markers to judge progress.
- G Soul Power**—Faye Moore & Nancy Moldenhauer [Received no update from Donnita Scully, NAACP Program Manager.]—to be mentioned in U.S. Department of Energy Solsmart case study article.

- H **Continue Promoting SolSmart Silver Designation with Partner Indiana University Resilience Cohort**—Laura Henderson, Tristan Bogart, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Case study authored by U.S. Department of Energy on the Michigan City SolSmart experience will focus primarily on the Soul Power aspect of how we received our SolSmart Silver Designation; 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> --La'Tonya and Nancy are making final revisions on the case study article and will return it to be nationally published soon.
- I **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**—Faye Moore & Nancy Moldenhauer [Plans in the making with Dan Robinson for Round 3 hopefully in the fall; Nancy's solar panel installation scheduled for October as part of Round 1] <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/> ; <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/go-solar/>--Round 3 will most likely be deferred to early 2023 rather than this fall. Faye noted that NIPSCO had helped a friend of hers get solar panels installed.
- J **Shared Press Conference**—Faye Moore & NAACP [Watch the video of the Indiana Alliance for Equity Diversity and Inclusion of Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and Economic Opportunity. You'll recognize some of these presenters from Northwest Indiana Green Drinks and NAACP Indiana State Conference presentations. Faye, thank you for bringing awareness and commitment to our attention.] <https://fb.watch/fhZGArCfGi/> --the above referenced Alliance urges citizens to contact their state representatives about the need for inclusion in HB 1221 so that the Black community can also benefit from EV infrastructure.
- VI Commission Comments—La'Tonya encouraged all to consider going solar, that this is a great time to go solar with or without net metering, that Solar United Neighbors has many resources listed on their website. Nancy added that there is a federal tax credit.
- VII Public Comments--none
- VIII Announcements—Andie announced that National Cleanup Day is September 16, and LaPorte County Solid Waste District has a 7-in-1 recycling drop-off event on September 17 at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- IX Adjournment—La'Tonya moved and Laura seconded for adjournment. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned by Chair Nancy Moldenhauer at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Henderson, Secretary