

Commission on Sustainability



MICHIGAN CITY INDIANA

Thursday, November 10, 2022, 4:30 pm
City Hall, EOC Room Downstairs
Minutes

Chair Nancy Moldenhauer called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

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: Tim Bauer, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Andi Jahnz-Davis, Laura Henderson, Daisy Lee, Nancy Moldenhauer, Faye Moore, Angela Reynolds. Absent: Bryant Dabney, Clarence Hulse. Excused absent: Mary Cate Neary, La'Tonya Troutman.
- II Approval of November 10, 2022 Minutes –Andi moved and Faye seconded that the minutes be approved. All voted in favor.
- III Project Teams
 - A **Solar Power Options for City Government**—Tristan Bogart [solar panel array update; email being sent to identify department ownership of six government buildings to geospatial intelligence systems (GIS) service representative who was recommended by Michigan City Planning Department; to introduce plan for installation of solar panels for remaining city buildings as part of American Rescue Act Funding granted to municipal government] –Tristan received a reply email from GIS, indicating that all properties are owned by the city, and one belongs particularly to the City Parks and Recreation Department. Having this information allows Tristan to proceed with his project.
 - B **Funeral Homes & Crematoriums with Plant a Tree Opportunity:** Bailey Chavis [future contact with Geisen-Carlisle headquartered in Crown Point via written communication in process for adding "Plant a Tree" memorial option] –Bailey will be sending letters to all the Geisen-Carlisle locations once she determines which specific individuals to target.
 - C **Waste Reduction/"Garbology"**—Daisy Lee, Tim Bauer, Bailey Chavis, Angela Reynolds, & Mary Cate Neary [PepsiCo Recycle Rally on Nov. 15th, explore preparation and timeline for next round of IDEM grant for recycling projects up to \$100,000; emailed "Gobi" fish photos from Asia to Commissioners to inspire ideas for an artist commissioned native fish sculpture to collect recyclable plastic bottles and aluminum cans at Washington Park Beach in collaboration with Sacha Gee Burn of LaPorte County Solid Waste District and Shannon Eason of MC Parks & Rec Dept.; 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/>] --Nancy noted that her email to commissioners re "Gobi" fish did not go through, and she will resend. Daisy updated on the Pepsico challenge which starts November 15, inviting people to drop off plastic bottles #1 and 2 and aluminum cans at Barker Middle School office between 7:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. In exchange for the amount

that Daisy can collect, Barker Middle School receives points which can be exchanged for various items, such as reusable water bottles for Barker students or other options. These bottles and cans can be any brand, but no alcoholic beverages. This program continues through mid-summer 2023. Also, Daisy offers a recycling package to any interested organization or business, including training, recycling bins, and support. Daisy can be emailed at daisyvb33@gmail.com. Nancy noted that a member of the Michigan City Public Arts Committee needs to be included in the working group for the Washington Park recycling fish sculpture.

- D “Caught YOU Being Green” Engagement**—Andie Jahnz-Davis & Tim Bauer [Upcoming social media posts for Recycling Day on Nov. 15th; Update on Earth Month Extravaganza 2023, Saturday, April 29th, Krueger Memorial Hall] —Bailey’s feature will be next on the Facebook page. Meijer has installed additional electric car chargers. Andie is inviting ideas for mini features. Regarding Earth Month Extravaganza, Andie has completed and turned in the paperwork for Krueger Memorial Park as the venue and is talking with a ranger and a scientist regarding potential hikes, samplings, etc., at the event. The Tree Board also plans to give away trees at the event again in 2023. Tim will work with Andie in organizing this event. Andie also noted that November 15th is America Recycles Day. She noted that the 3 counties, LaPorte, Porter, and Lake, all use the same facility, Homewood Disposal Services, for curbside recycling, so the requirements are the same in all 3 counties now.
- E Continue Promoting SolSmart Silver Designation with Partner Indiana University Resilience Cohort**—Laura Henderson, Tristan Bogart, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Case study was published last week with photo of Commissioners holding our SolSmart plaque on national blog by U.S. Department of Energy on the Michigan City SolSmart experience focusing 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?; share new article posted on Blog and 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/>] --In a conversation between Nancy and Skyler York, he encouraged Nancy to try for SolSmart Gold designation. He reported that he has hired more inspectors, so the previous issue of being unable to promise fast enough turn-around time for solar installation inspection is no longer a problem. There may be points that we have earned but were not previously adequately documented, that we may now be able to use. The US Department of Energy has now published a blog about the local NAACP Soul Power project and the Michigan City Sustainability Commission. Indiana University also mentioned us in a blog celebrating all the Indiana cities that had achieved a SolSmart designation. Angela Reynolds volunteered to join the committee, which will reevaluate how best to achieve Gold designation.
- F 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. Michigan City residents who were interviewed are Deborah Chubb (Indiana Women's Action Movement), Faye Moore (Indiana Department of Corrections), Larry Zimmer (No Place Like Home), and Nancy Moldenhauer (Michigan City Sustainability Commission). Our MC Sustainability Commission is given recognition too! Who needs to schedule an assessment or get an update for their home to become carbon neutral with Daniel Poynter, Executive Director and Founder of CNI? About the book: <https://www.carbonneutralindiana.org/book> ; To order: <https://store.carbonneutralindiana.org/>] --- An additional Michigan City person in the CNI book is Deb Chubb. There will be a Volume 2.
- G U.S Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)**—Ed Shinn, Tristan Bogart, Bailey Chavis, Daisy Lee, Laura Henderson, & Nancy Moldenhauer [Generate ideas for survey regarding amenities in Washington Park related to solar arrays and electric-vehicle chargers; Will schedule our 6th meeting for this fall/winter with our consultant Scott Belding of NREL. In process of scheduling an exploratory meeting hopefully soon with Ed, Scott, and Jamie Huss, Washington Park Zoo Director. A decision needs to be made in collaboration with the Zoo whether we will go with primarily supplying solar energy to the zoo and/or

focus solely on electric-vehicle charging stations in the parking lot. 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 funding to be provided by the Federal Government.] --As above.

- H **NWI Climate/Resilience Action Planning Work Group**—Nancy Moldenhauer, Laura Henderson, & Andie Jahnz-Davis [Fifth meeting will be on Friday, November 18th, 1 pm, via Zoom.] --Andie reported the working group had discussion on energy-saving services thru NiSource. The group also was concerned with how to utilize data from greenhouse gas emissions inventory, she suggested using a group such as a Sustainability Commission to actualize. Nancy had invited Working Group members to visit our Sustainability Action Plan on our Sustainability Commission page on emichigancity.com.

- I **Soul Power**—Donnita Skully & Faye Moore [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; conducting a six-week Solar PV Associate training with 11 participants, when completed on Nov. 10th, will be eligible to sit for the NABCEP PV Associate Exam to obtain NABCEP certification; Interested individuals can sign up here for future offerings: <https://www.laportecountynaacp3061.org/soul-power-project>] --Faye reported that classes have been held at the Hope Building at 222 McClelland Ave. Current training will be completed today. Most of the work for the class is done on computer or laptop. Those considering the next round of training can go to www.laportecountynaacp3061.org/soul-power-project to sign up for more information as it becomes available.

- J **Solar United Neighbors (SUN)**—Faye Moore & Nancy Moldenhauer [Plans in the making with Dan Robinson for Round 3 hopefully in 2023; Zach Schalk decided not to offer more installation opportunities at this time since net metering was ended by the Indiana Legislature; Nancy’s solar panel installation scheduled for Nov. as part of Round 1] <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/> ; <https://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/indiana/go-solar/> -- Nancy hopes for a Round 3 in 2023. She has received many inquiries about solar installations from people who are not deterred by the lack of net metering. There is a court case pending regarding net metering. A bill will be introduced to the Indiana legislature in January to fully reinstate net metering.

- K Invitation to sign onto letter [Tristan} received from Genevieve Cicchiello & Rahul Durai of Confront the Crisis (West Lafayette):

[DATE]

The Honorable Ed Charbonneau
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785

Dear Senator Charbonneau,

We are a coalition of community organizations in your district, and we have a common mission of improving the environment and economy in northwest Indiana. We care about our well-being, our environment, and the economic futures of our communities. We are writing to ask you to co-author upcoming legislation to create a statewide climate change task force.

As Hoosiers in District 5, we have always been burdened with substantial industrial pollution, which increases children’s asthma and dirty water in the Calumet River. We have become increasingly concerned for our public health with the growing threat of climate change. According to research, our water supply will be more threatened as Earth continues to warm up and we will experience more negative health effects. We appreciate your support on IN SB0271 on small modular nuclear reactors but our community needs greater assistance that a climate task force could provide.

In Indiana's 2022 Legislative Session, bipartisan legislators led by Senator Ron Alting (R-Lafayette), introduced Senate Bill 255, a bill championed by Indiana's youth to create a statewide climate task force. The task force would have brought several important stakeholders to the table to study innovative solutions that the Indiana General Assembly can implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the effects of climate change, and simultaneously enhance economic development for our communities. This bill is likely to be introduced again in the 2023 Legislative Session, and we hope that you will be a co-author on the upcoming bill.

We believe in an Indiana where our environment is protected, and sustainable industries are developed. This bipartisan climate task force legislation will allow our state government to work towards these goals by creating a plan for Indiana to mitigate and adapt to climate change. For these reasons, we strongly urge you to co-author this bill.

Thank you very much for your time and service to Indiana. We look forward to hearing back.

Sincerely,

[list of names] –Laura noted that we are not in his district which is Valparaiso and south of Valparaiso. Faye encouraged us to contact friends and/or groups in his district to sign the above letter. Bailey suggested we contact the authors to let them know we support the thoughts expressed in the letter but we are not in the district. Laura moved that we let Genevieve Cicchiello and Rajul Durai of Confront the Crisis know that we support this letter but cannot sign because we are not located in Ed Charbonneau's district. Tim seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The youth commissioners also unanimously and symbolically approved the motion. Tristan will email Genevieve and Rahul our response and cc Nancy.

- IV Commissioner Comments –Tristan noted that part of the agenda in item G was not addressed: “Generate ideas for survey regarding amenities in Washington Park related to solar arrays and electric-vehicle chargers”, so Nancy led us in a brainstorming session to do this. Brain-storming ideas generated included restrooms, device charging station, eating, showers, water bottle refill station, dog walk, dog wash, shade trees, ADA accessibility, shopping, coffee, ice cream. Faye said that many people have asked about getting solar panels. She has had no problems, and her bill has been very low. Nancy announced that her roof will finally be getting solar panels next week.
- V Public Comments --None
- VI Announcements –Nancy announced no NWI Green Drinks during December, but will be back in January. February will probably be focused on working with our state legislature with Amanda Shepard of Sierra Club Indiana. Tristan announced that he saw his first Rivian in Michigan City charging at Lighthouse Mall. Rivians are electric vehicles built in Michigan.
- VII Adjournment –Daisy moved and Laura seconded for adjournment, which was unanimously approved. Chair Nancy Moldenhauer adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Henderson, secretary