

## **Transit Development District Steering Committee meeting May 23, 2018**

### **Location**

Purdue Tech Center, Crown Point, IN

### **Present**

Lynn Eplawy, Scott Jefferson, Karen Freeman-Wilson, Bernie Doyle, Rich Murphy, Brian Poland, Marino Solorio

### **Election of Chair**

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority legal counsel David Hollenbeck opened the meeting by asking the audience to identify themselves and then entertained nominations for chairperson of the committee. Karen Freeman-Wilson nominated Lynn Eplawy, seconded by Scott Jefferson. Lynn Eplawy was elected chair.

### **Regional Development Authority Update**

RDA President and CEO Bill Hanna was invited to update the committee on the status of the commuter rail expansion project. Hanna said the projects continue to move forward and that the RDA had been working with the Federal Transit Administration and the State of Indiana to firm up project oversight. The RDA anticipated resubmitting applications to FTA for project ratings in the fall with the goal of being in the best possible position for federal funding in fiscal 2019.

### **Discussion**

Lynn Eplawy asked what the members of the TDD committee could do get information regarding the formation of Transit Development Districts in their communities to the RDA. RDA COO Sherri Ziller pointed to the process of creating a TDD that was ongoing in Michigan City as a template. The RDA, she said, would like the communities to take the lead on creating a proposed GIS map of their district. The RDA can then overlay its draft districts and double-check boundaries. A mid-August deadline for these GIS maps was discussed.

Rich Murphy noted that it had taken a few meetings before Michigan City had produced its first draft.

Bill Hanna offered the resources of the RDA if they could be of any assistance and also noted resources would be available at NIRPC as well.

Karen Freeman-Wilson suggested a working session with technical staffs, which Lynn Eplawy thought would be helpful.

Brian Poland asked about reconciling differences between the TDD boundaries as presented in the Farr study and the RDA comprehensive strategic plan.

Marino Solorio pointed out that the half-mile radius of the TDD meant that East Chicago's TDD extended into Hammond, and Brian Poland asked what happened when a TDD overlays an already existing taxing district.

Bill Hanna said that the authority to create a TDD lies with the RDA and that it would have to be a joint effort with all communities involved to maximize value.

Marino Solorio agreed, saying that we talk about the train being an asset for the region, and we don't want politics to get in the way of the best development for a site, and that Hammond would benefit from development in East Chicago.

Lynn Eplawy suggested using the Michigan City process to guide a working session. Michigan City planning director Craig Phillips noted that their process involved economic development, planning and redevelopment bodies who needed to be at the forefront of the effort.

Marino Solorio asked about the impact of federal opportunity zone on TDDs. Karen Freeman-Wilson said it was her understanding that opportunity zones could operate in tandem with the TDDs.

Lynn Eplawy suggested that it made sense to put together a workshop by late summer or early fall to begin to get information to the RDA.

Future meeting dates of August 22 and November 14 were set.

The meeting was adjourned.