Citizens Participation Meeting

Date...........................................March 13, 2019
Time..........................................5:45 PM
Place.........................................Grand Prairie Room
County Office Building
20 North 3rd Street
Lafayette, Indiana

AGENDA

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 12, 2019 MEETING

Documents:

CPC Draft Minutes 12.12.18.pdf

II. FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

• Wind Turbine Discussion

III. PROGRAM

• Public Hearing: FY 2020-FY 2024 Transportation Improvement Program
  Draft FY 2020-2024 TIP

IV. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

V. ADJOURNMENT

• Next meeting is June 12, 2019

Planning for Lafayette, West Lafayette, Dayton, Battle Ground, Clarks Hill and Tippecanoe County
Cat Schoenherr called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the September 12, 2018 CPC meeting were approved as submitted.

2. FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Annual Listing of Obligated Projects
Title VI Plan

Cat Schoenherr said the update on the Title VI Plan is that after some delays, it is almost finished. She had to slightly rework the complaint review process. She also incorporated feedback from last quarter’s CPC meeting. The final document will be ready soon and will go to the Policy Board and Carroll County Administrative Committee for final approval and be translated into Spanish.

Jan Myers asked for a reminder of what Title VI refers to.

Cat Schoenherr said Title VI is the non-discrimination plan that relates to the planning work we do as the MPO.

3. PROGRAM

Wind Turbine Discussion

John Burns said he works for APC in current planning and one thing he deals with are potential ordinance amendments that go before our zoning board. Earlier in the year, the APC was contacted by citizens in the southwestern part of the county, in Jackson and Randolph Townships, who told us that leases were being signed...
between individual land owners and a company called Invenergy for a proposed wind farm. These things often start months before we become aware of them so that was our first indication that there was another proposed project. It was at the APC’s August Ordinance Committee meeting under citizen comments where citizens came and spoke on the record to notify APC that this was happening. They came to the meeting to ask the Plan Commission and staff to revisit some guidelines that had been developed for wind farms. The guidelines were originally written in 2007 with an amendment in 2008, then again in 2010. At that meeting there were six main issues that the citizens wanted us to look at, one of which was lighting of the towers. There is a new system where the blinking red light only comes on when airplanes are in the area. Another issue was limiting the overall height of the towers. When the amendment was first written, towers were between 250-350 feet tall to the top of the blade. Since towers are getting taller, it was asked that APC review the guidelines on the books to see if they provided the same amount of protection, which included increasing the setback from the turbines to non-participating properties, meaning someone who has no obligations of contracts with the company. Another issue was shadow flicker, which refers to when the sun casts a shadow through moving blades and causes a flicker. The current ordinance does address this, but the citizens wanted it to be reexamined. Still another issue is noise generation. And finally, the requirement that cabling associated with the turbines must be buried whenever possible. They were asking that APC regulate to a lower depth so that if the wind farm were ever to go away, they would have to take everything out underground. At that meeting, staff was asked by the Ordinance Committee to look at two of these issues to start out with: maximum height and the setback to non-participating properties. John said he spent about 2.5 months researching other regulations and ordinances that currently exist, as well as those both supporting and against wind farms. After looking at 17 ordinances, 15 in Indiana, it became very clear that the regulations we had were very similar to what we found in other communities around us. Some of the communities that had stricter standards were so strict that it was difficult to even have a project, which was their mechanism to make sure they didn’t get windfarms at all. Currently, the setback is 1200 feet to a non-participating dwelling and 750 ft to a property line, which was the standard agreed upon in 2010 under the assumption of the towers being a certain height. With the height increasing, the 750 and 1200-foot setbacks no longer seemed adequate, so we tried to look at it as a ratio instead. In 2010 we had a 1:4 ratio, towers 1, setback 4. It seemed that maybe a ratio was better than a set number, and maybe we also wanted to limit the overall height to keep them from being so tall. After speaking with plan commissioner in Benton County, we learned that the wind turbines to the furthest northern part of the county, currently under construction, are 620 feet tall. For reference, the courthouse is only 226 feet tall. There have been two sides at the public meetings so far. One side doesn’t want them for certain specific reasons. The wind energy company is good at pointing out why the turbines are good. One thing that happened at the Ordinance Committee meeting last month was the committee suggested limiting where these wind farms can be built. Currently they can be done through the BZA by special exception in rural zoning districts and industrial zone. The idea the committee pitched was that maybe they should be removed from rural zones which would effectively make them unable to be built here at all. Discussion will be continued in February. Ultimately the question is how tight should the regulations surrounding wind turbines be. The argument was made by the Ordinance Committee that when we look at our surrounding counties, particularly Clinton, Carroll, White, Benton, and parts of Fountain, where turbines exist, the demographic is very different than what we have here. Their population is either static or declining, but Tippecanoe County population is increasing. Parts of Jackson Township, our least populated township, are sparsely populated enough that it could be an appropriate place, but the feeling still seems that we are more of an urbanizing county and tying up land with windfarms for 25-50 years might not be the wisest decision. Green energy is a great thing to support, but it’s a matter of determining where it’s appropriate.

Steve Clevenger said he thinks it is valid to ask how Tippecanoe County wants to be. In Benton County and White County, when they build a windmill farm, they have preserved prime agricultural land. There will be no subdivisions, factories or schools because they have preserved the agricultural land with a tower. The question is, does Tippecanoe County want to preserve any agricultural farmland? He has seen that we have another big box/warehouse going in on agricultural land near the interstate recently. He thinks it’s not about the height or the flicker problems, its about whether we want to be a county that urbanizes out to county line or do we encourage urbanization inward and leave some agricultural land open.

Stewart Frescas referenced a conversation with a representative from a wind mill corporation about the political process and the methods they use when they want to locate on a site. They have a conscious policy of asking certain land owners to put up signs about how much they love the wind mills. Then they use the power of persuasion to get people to come to a meeting and say how great they are. And the belief is that once they’re in an area, it’s going to be like Bird Scooters. They’re not concerned about preserving agricultural land, they’re interested in putting wind mills as many places as they can. If you decide to let them into one small place because it seems ok in that area, that’s not the only place they’ll end up locating. Stewart referenced the website WindyTV and how it shows that Tippecanoe County is right at the edge of a wind system that is connected to Iowa and Central Illinois but that is north of us. That system doesn’t include the areas south of here so there is a question of
why they are interested in locating windmills here. Benton County let them build and they were installed everywhere.

John Burns said from talking to officials in Benton County, he has learned that citizens there don’t have many complaints or problems with the windmills after they have gone in.

Jim Beaty said he has relatives in Benton County who say the windmills are very good for the school system.

Curt Ashendel said the tax base had been declining for decades due to the declining population.

John Burns noted that we have other things supplementing our tax income here in Tippecanoe County.

Steve Clevenger asked if White or Benton County has a density limit on windmills?

John Burns said there is a minimum spacing requirement which is about 1.1 times the tower height to another tower. What we have learned though, is that the wind energy companies have learned about how the strategic placement is so important and they may exceed these minimums because that’s how they capture the most wind. It doesn’t make sense to put two windmills very close to each other because they don’t get the optimal wind, so therefore they are typically spaced further apart.

Stewart Frescas said if you go to WindyTV they have a function that shows height dependency for wind strength/speed. Higher up winds are faster than lower winds. Part of the reason why the windmills were installed just north of here is because it’s very windy. Stewart still sees Tippecanoe County’s fate linked to urbanization over wind farms.

Curt Ashendel said that, on the other hand, in the outer regions of the county, you can look at any of the four corners and those areas are extremely rural with large farms.

John Burns said what was hard to understand at first was that when you have a 6 square mile area in Jackson Township to a 6 square mile area in the northern part of White County, what’s different? You might have a similar population density, but the mindset is different. In Tippecanoe County, people tend to associate themselves with the Metropolitan Area more than people in White County who go to Rensselaer for the closest town.

Lynn Nelson said she thinks there is concern about what the wind turbines do to bird migration, especially when you have Purdue and people that are environmentally conscious that way. She agrees with the way APC has framed the issue as determining whether the future of Tippecanoe County development will be more urban or rural.

Jan Myers asked whether staff has spoken with anyone in Colorado. In Boulder, they have ordinances that allow individual home owners to have windmills on their property, so we can’t assume that all urban residents wouldn’t want windmills.

John Burns said that the way the ordinance is structured is that there are three different levels of wind energy conversion systems (WECS). The smallest are called micro wind systems, which are roof mounted and appropriate for residences and businesses in an urban area. The medium level, called small WECS, is anything under 140 feet tall with a rotor diameter of 50 feet. Even those are still permitted, and nobody has brought any attention to these two lower levels regarding how they are regulated. The only focus has been on utility scale or large windmills over 140 feet tall.

Curt Ashendel said, with respect to the height, there is a function that these companies use to figure out the most economically and physically optimal spacing and the taller you allow them to be the further apart they will be spaced. This results in fewer overall, but you are still able to preserve rural land.

Stewart Frescas said the height of the windmills being built in Norway over water are taller than 600 feet. Those companies make them as tall as possible and he feels they could eventually be 1000 feet tall when construction technology catches up.

Cat Schoenherr noted that there is a lot of interest in the topic of windmills. She asked John Burns if there are more public opportunities to continue the conversation.
John Burns said the first Wednesday in February is the next Ordinance Committee meeting where the conversation will continue. He offered to give an update to Cat and Doug and even come back to the CPC with an update.

Curt Ashendel asked if that meeting was open to the public.

John Burns said yes, it is open and Cat Schoenherr offered to email that meeting information out to the CPC.

**FY 2020-FY 2024 Transportation Improvement Program**

Doug Poad began by stating that every time you go to the gas station and purchase gasoline, a small portion goes to the FHWA trust fund. That money is then distributed to states, cities and counties. The process we are looking at now is how do we take that money and apply it to road, transit projects and pedestrian or non-motorized vehicle projects and get the most out of the money? The process is defined in legislation and there is a lot of public input involved, and tonight’s meeting is a kickoff for the process. We started back in October by distributing call for project sheets to local agencies: Lafayette, West Lafayette, Tippecanoe Count, Battle Ground, Dayton and Clarks Hill. They were asked to submit a wish list by December 3rd. We have now received those requests, filtered through them and put them in list form to share with the group. The next big event will happen at the January Technical Transportation Committee on January 16th when we discuss the projects with all the local agencies and decide what projects should receive funding. This year may be a difficult year to make that decision. We have a lot of requests for FY 2022-2024. After that is complete, a draft document will be submitted to INDOT by February 15th. INDOT will complete the draft statewide TIP (STIP) on the same day. Next will be a public hearing process for the draft document. All comments will be documented at that meeting and anytime they are made between now and then. After the public hearing, our Technical Committee and Policy Board will vote on whether to adopt the document. The whole process should wrap up May 10th. Looking at gas tax dollars, Doug explained that there are 3 categories of transportation funds that we use for road safety improvements, road or non-motorized projects. One is STBG, which we receive a little over $3.9 million per year. We also get safety funds from two different pots of money, one is general safety funds, $568,000/year, and because the State of Indiana does not have complete legislation related to alcohol, we receive penalty funds in the amount of 160,00/year. We also receive a small amount of funds called TA funds which go to non-motorized projects, and the amount is around 200,00/year. Overall, each year, we get 4.87 million dollars.

Doug reviewed the project lists. First by city, town and county. First is the City of Lafayette with Concord Rd. and S. 18th St. It is a non-motorized transportation project that came from a newly formed committee that meets regularly to discuss these types of needs in the community. On Concord Rd. from Maple Point to Veteran’s Memorial there is currently a trail on the west side and they would like to install lighting. The next project is on S. 18th St., where there is a linear trail following the railroad tracks, and they want to install a “hawk” bike/ped crossing signal that will stop all lanes of traffic to allow safe non-motorized crossings. The problem now is that pedestrians and drivers have difficulty seeing each other from the far lane of traffic in each direction.

Lynn Nelson asked Doug to explain the HAWK signal.

Doug Poad said that when a pedestrian or cyclist pushes the button, the lights start flashing to alert drivers that they will have to stop soon. After a short time, the light changes to solid red requiring drivers to stop completely and let the pedestrians cross.

Lynn Nelson compared the signal to the one on Tapawingo and noted that signal does not have a red light.
Doug Poad said that is rapid flashing beacon, not a HAWK signal. There is a HAWK signal that exists now on Concord Rd. just south of Walmart, which was put in for people to walk from Benjamin Crossing to Walmart. The next projects on the list are in West Lafayette. The Cherry Lane Extension project will move into the construction phase to connect it to US 231. The end goal is that drivers will be able to access Cherry Ln. directly from US 231. The next project is Phase 2 of Cherry Ln., which will improve the section west of McCormick to Northwestern. It will be road reconstruction and a new trail. The total will be nearly $10 million.

Curt Ashendel asked why the project is so expensive.

Doug Poad said that it is a major project being with the road being completely reconstructed and adding a sidewalk and trail and possibly a roundabout at McCormick, although that hasn’t been decided for sure yet, and reconstructing the next section west of McCormick to allow access to Purdue’s sports facilities.

Jim Beaty asked if there are any plans to widen the road or if it will have a center turn lane.

Doug Poad believes it will be a 3-lane design.

Stewart Frescas asked if there will be a need to buy property.

Doug Poad said he does not know that yet, but West Lafayette is doing the second phase with local funds, so they can move the project along more quickly.

Jan Myers asked if the construction is still scheduled for FY 2026.

Doug Poad said yes and pointed out that if federal funds were used it would be more likely to go to construction closer to FY 2030. Next on the list is Cumberland Ave. Phase 4, from US 52 to Sagamore Pkwy, road widening. When Cumberland was connected, they widened it to four lanes. This fixes the old section of road, sidewalk and traffic lights.

Jan Myers asked if this is the section by Walmart and Applebee’s.

Doug Poad said yes, they are looking at improving that entire section. Another project funded with local funds is Lindberg Rd. from Northwestern Ave. to Salisbury. The will reconstruct the road and make it Complete Street compliant.

Steve Clevenger pointed out that for Cherry Lane and Lindberg the funds say they are for construction and asked whether that includes funding for PE and ROW.

Doug Poad said that he has not received information for PE and ROW on those projects. He will be asking for that information.

Jan Myers pointed out that the term “Complete Streets” is used in the Lindberg description and “urbanization” in other projects and asked what is the difference.

Doug Poad said urbanization means relatively the same thing as Complete Streets, but when it was used in reference to S. 9th St. it is because that road is currently a rural road with no shoulder and no curb and gutter.

Stewart Frescas said that urbanization can mean adding curb and gutter.

Doug Poad said that S. 9th St. will include a sidewalk and trail when it is reconstructed. Everyone has agreed that there needs to be sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Jan Myers said that Lindberg has no facilities for bikes/pedestrians even though there is a school on the street. It was always a promise that when the school was built, sidewalks would be added, and this was 9 or 10 years ago. Even last year it was said that Lindberg would be completed in 2019 and now the list says 2020.

Curt Ashendel said that he believes that they wanted to do Lindberg earlier, but it was in such bad shape and there was such a delay due to utilities they decided to patch it instead to give it a few more years.

Jan Myers said there are still no sidewalks for students at the school so there is no way to walk from Salisbury to Northwestern.
Doug Poad returned the attention to the project list. The next project is the Sagamore Parkway Trail which is currently in the engineering phase. This is a trail on the new bridge over the Wabash River that connects to the Wabash Heritage Trail. They are looking at Soldiers Home Rd. and doing major work from Sagamore Parkway to just north of Kalberer Rd. The project will be broken into phases due to the amount of work. Another project is Yeager Rd. from the end of the pavement to the City limits and it is a reconstruction/urbanization project. Tippecanoe County also has several projects they have asked to fund. One is a traffic signal at County Farm Rd. and 500 which will be done with local funds. They will receive federal funds to inspect the bridges. The Lindberg Rd. project was supposed to be a companion to Klondike but had to be delayed due to the cost of Klondike. The dates shown on the list are state fiscal year dates, so while it says FY 2021, that year begins July 1, 2020. Another project on the list is the safety improvements around McCutcheon, which is currently in the engineering phase. Next is Morehouse Rd., north of Sagamore Parkway road reconstruction and widening, with a date of 2023, which may be optimistic. Yeager Rd. once you get to the City limit is gravel and has 90 degree turns. This project will fix that by constructing a 2-lane road with pedestrian amenities. Engineering is currently underway. The North River Rd. at 500 N. project is a safety project. There were no requests from Battle Ground or Clarks Hill; however, we did receive one from the Town of Dayton for a major project to construct Yost Dr. Yost is the road by the BP gas station on SR 38 which currently goes a short distance and stops. The project will extend the road all the way to Haggerty Ln. Eventually, the County will improve 650 to McCarty Ln providing a nice north/south connector east of the interstate. The rest of the projects are for Citybus and are the same each year. They are asking for operating assistance, purchase of tires, engines, transmissions, other bus components, computer hardware and software. They just rolled out a new sophisticated app for bus routes.

Jan Myers said that in Tippecanoe County there are seven requests and four begin or end at 500 N. She asked if there is something developing there that we are trying to connect to.

Doug Poad said 500N is the first major east/west road, so it important. He referred to the purple list from the packet and said it contains state projects. The state project list that APC will publish in our TIP is slightly different than the list INDOT will publish. They are moving to listing projects by contract number. A single contract number could contain multiple des. numbers, and it lists the total funding amount for all. The APC decided that we are not going to follow that methodology because it does not provide enough detailed information about the multiple projects contained in a contract number. As you review the list of state projects, you will see that they have many bridge rehabilitation or thin deck overlay projects on their list.

Jan Myers asked Doug to explain the difference between those two project types.

Doug Poad said thin deck overlays are a thin coating on the bridge deck that seals the concrete.

Jan Myers said she believed that there was a minimum and maximum that distinguished a thin deck overlay from a deck overlay.

Doug Poad said that he is not sure about the required thickness, but the intention is to do whatever is necessary to protect the bridge deck from eroding. There are many projects on SR 25, several on SR 26 including a structural overlay on the west side of the county, which means they are adding another layer of asphalt to extend the life of the road. One project to note is that INDOT will install a new traffic signal at SR 26 and 900E. They will install it in FY 2020, so late 2019 or early 2020. There are projects on SR 28 to repair wear that occurred when I-65 was shut down temporarily and that was the detour. Specifically, a major project to widen lanes and add shoulders to a section. They are also looking at projects on SR 38, including addressing drainage issues and other maintenance projects. Several projects are on SR 43, including work to improve the exit/entrance ramps to I-65 and a bridge replacement over the Walter Ditch. US 52 will see a bridge improvement project over Indian Creek, which is by the golf course. On US 231, where there is significant truck traffic, INDOT plans to add auxiliary passing lanes that will allow slow moving trucks to move over so other traffic can go around. Ideally the road would be widened, but when compared to other priorities for widening projects, this project didn’t measure up in overall significance statewide to receive funding for widening. Continuing down the list there are two more traffic signals on US 231, one at SR 28 and one at 800S. Both are currently flashers.

Curt Ashendel asked about project number 57 on the list.

Doug Poad said INDOT is proposing to remove the bridge over the Wabash River on SR 225.

Curt Ashendel asked if they were going to replace it with anything.
Doug Poad said he doesn’t have any additional details, but per what is stated on the list, it sounds like they will not replace it.

Stewart Frescas asked if the people who live in that area are aware that this is going to happen.

Doug Poad said at this point they probably are not, but he has sent an email to the Town Council President letting him know that the project had been proposed.

Stewart Frescas asked if the bridge has been in bad shape for a long time.

Doug Poad said he knew they did some maintenance work to it about five years ago, but he is unsure other than that.

Cat Schoenherr added that there will be many more conversations about this project and it will not be something that stays under the radar.

Curt Ashendel asked how much say the local communities have in determining what is on the project list.

Doug Poad said there is a rather lengthy process for comments on the process. If we receive comments about INDOT projects, we send them to Central Office and the District Office. INDOT also has a comment process for their STIP document. When the draft TIP is presented to the Technical and Policy Boards there will be representatives from INDOT there who can hear comments and answer questions. Individuals can reach out to contact INDOT at any point in the process.

Cat Schoenherr said that this is the list of what INDOT wants to do, but there is still a chance to influence the list.

Jim Beaty asked for clarification that the finances for INDOT projects are completely separate from the LPA projects.

Doug Poad said that is correct, they are separate.

Jan Myers asked for clarification on the location of the project “Eastbound bridge over Sagamore Pkwy on US 52.”

Doug Poad said that this is confusing sometimes because most people think of this as 231, but because of the 231 relocation, INDOT decided to rename it 52 all the way down to 25, and rename 25, Teal Rd.

Jan Myers said she can’t figure out where that road goes over Sagamore Pkwy.

Curt Ashendel said he thinks it’s the one-way bridge by Walmart and State Farm.

Doug Poad said the description should say Special 52.

Curt Ashendel said he heard that they wanted to get rid of that intersection and create a roundabout.

Doug Poad returned attention to the project list and said there are a few other bridge deck overlay projects on SR 225 and maintenance projects on I-65. Some notable projects are bridge deck replacement and widening over SR 43 as they are looking at 6-laning I-65. Bridges over Burnett’s Creek also show replacement and widening of the overlay which supports INDOT’s goal of adding a third lane to each direction of I-65 through the state, but due to cost it’s a piece by piece approach.

Cat Schoenherr added that INDOT just allocated $40 million to add another lane south of Columbus and north of Lebanon.

Doug Poad said to finish out the list there are a few statewide projects that allow INDOT to do work anywhere.

Cat Schoenherr said to please email any further questions about the project list to her or Doug.

Doug Poad said the list will be available on the website in the next few days. He has put notices at 17 locations, 6 of which were targeted toward the Hispanic population.
4. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Jim Beaty said that he heard that the new US 231 bypass in West Lafayette from Airport Rd. to the intersection with US 52 is a smart road and they are using it for research and asked if that was accurate.

Doug Poad said that the thought is that with autonomous vehicles, the cabinets located by the intersections will talk to the vehicles traveling through the signals and provide notice that a light is going to change. They have been using cars to test that technology. Purdue has an autonomous Audi they are currently testing.

Jim Beaty said it looks like they just finished Airport Rd. at US 231 and they have reconnected much of the trail system. It is too bad that there is just a few hundred feet between Airport Rd. and the bottom of the hill where the trail goes up Jischke Dr. that is unfinished, despite being connected all around State St.

Doug Poad said that is part of Purdue’s State St. project and we aren’t involved with that.

Curt Ashendel asked if we knew what was going to be done with Newman Rd. and access to the new building at the top of the hill.

Doug Poad said that will be discussed at the Technical Committee meeting next week.

Lynn Nelson shared that the construction company who worked on Main St. was very considerate of the Methodist Church and their pumpkin patch. They helped direct traffic and even bought pumpkins. She was very appreciative of their help.

Doug Poad said we will pass that along to the City Engineer.

Jan Myers said she will follow up with Doug Poad after the Technical Transportation meeting next week regarding intersections that are not ADA compliant.

Doug Poad asked if they were in Lafayette.

Jan Myers said they are on Purdue’s campus.

Doug Poad said we have no control over facilities on campus.

Lynn Nelson said they don’t want people to cross State St. and Main St., so they didn’t provide the opportunity to do so.

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Cat Schoenherr thanked everyone for coming.

The next meeting is March 13, 2019

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Underwood
Recording Secretary

Reviewed by,

Cat Schoenherr
Assistant Director/Transportation