

Calumet Collaborative State Agency Task Force
Meeting Minutes for January 12, 2018, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

LOCATION

Michael A. Bilandic Building, 160 N. LaSalle Street, Room N-703 (7th floor), Chicago, IL

PRESENT

SATF representatives

Governor's Office: *representative currently unassigned*

Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR): Diane Tecic, Suellen Burns, Annie Turek, Rachel Leibowitz

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT): BJ Murray and Clayton Stambaugh on behalf of Brian Carlson

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA): *could not attend due to a family emergency*

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO): *representative currently unassigned*

Special guests

Illinois International Port District: Clayton Harris

Looking for Lincoln / Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area: Sarah Watson

Calumet Collaborative: Sarah Coulter

Public attendees

IDNR: Jeff Edstrom

Calumet Collaborative: Emily Prisuta

The Field Museum: Mark Bouman, Madeleine Tudor

Calumet Heritage Partnership: Sherry Meyer, Gary Johnson, David Holmberg

Welcome & introductions

Suellen Burns (IDNR) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Task Force representatives introduced themselves. Two new representatives from IDOT – BJ Murray and Clayton Stambaugh – joined on behalf of Brian Carlson, who was unable to attend this meeting. Emily Clamp (IEPA) had a family emergency and could not attend. Mike Dropka – former DCEO Task Force representative – left the agency. Clayton Harris from Illinois International Port District (IIPD) and Sarah Watson from Looking for Lincoln and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area participated as speakers. With many new attendees and members of the public present, everyone in the room introduced themselves.

Meeting minutes approval

There were not enough Task Force representatives present to approve the October minutes. The minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Illinois International Port District commitments

In October, Task Force members discussed potential agency commitments to support IIPD redevelopment. Diane Tecic (IDNR) asked Task Force members to share firm commitments that are specific, timebound, and measurable.

As noted above, Brian was unable to attend, but emailed Suellen and Annie Turek (IDNR) IDOT's commitment. Annie shared that IDOT will incorporate non-motorized connectivity in its planned 111th street bridge project over Interstate 94. Brian also connected Clayton with the Illinois Competitive Freight Program grant opportunity. BJ suggested IIPD might be able to apply for IDOT support in port master planning as well.

Diane shared four commitments from IDNR. First, IDNR Coastal Management Program provided a \$75,000 grant for a market analysis. The project will take place from March to June 2018, and findings will inform opportunities highlighted in a future port master plan. Second, IDNR participates in a Calumet Collaborative work group to coordinate and align support for IIPD needs and opportunities. In addition to IIPD, Calumet Collaborative, and IDNR, the work group includes: IDOT, Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago Community Trust, Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Active Transportation Alliance, and ArcelorMittal. Third, IDNR built a partnership with University of Illinois' Illinois Sustainable Technology Center to enhance sustainability and workforce development at IIPD. Finally, IDNR initiated discussions with IIPD about a multi-year grant to build port capacity in grant management, planning and stakeholder engagement. A private source may match this funding.

Suellen will follow up with Emily on IEPA's commitment. Clayton expressed his gratitude for agency commitments and continued IIPD support.

Rachel Leibowitz from Historic Preservation (HP) noted that if an agency contributes federal or state dollars, HP should review the project to ensure there is no negative impact to cultural resources (e.g., the grain elevators). IIPD wants to meet federal and state standards while pursuing creative ideas for reuse. The port master plan could include a historic and environmental review. IDOT funds can only focus on transportation and cannot be used for surveying.

General updates

Diane shared a few other IDNR projects in the Calumet region that align with Calumet Collaborative objectives. At the Office of Tourism's request, the Coastal Management Program is contributing [an article for the Enjoy Illinois website on African American history](#). It will be posted online in advance of black history month. All five sites in the piece are within the Calumet Collaborative geography. Suellen will share the link when it is posted. The program plans to work with Office of Tourism on several additional blog posts this summer and fall.

The Coastal Management Program also received a Chi-Cal Rivers grant with its sister agency – Illinois Conservation Foundation – for habitat and public access improvements at William Powers State Recreation Area. The grant will be matched by Coastal Management Program funds. This will total \$315,000 worth of improvements. Project activities will include: wayfinding and interpretive signs; a set of guidelines for wayfinding that could be implemented more broadly in the Calumet region; an ADA compliant canoe and kayak launch; an ADA compliant fishing pier; and pollinator habitat.

Task Force annual report to Governor Rauner

The Task Force submits a progress report to the Governor each year. In 2017, each agency provided one to two written pages on tangible accomplishments in support of Calumet Collaborative goals and priorities. The first part was a narrative, and the second part provided specific measurables and results in the following categories: 1) information; 2) expertise; 3) streamlining; 4) funding; and 5) policy. Each agency wrote its own content and IDNR edited the final report.

The Task Force agreed to develop this year's report the same way. The report will be due in June. Suellen will send a template and last year's report as an example in March. Agencies will send their drafts to Suellen in April. IDNR will finalize the report in May.

Wayfinding and Looking for Lincoln with guest speaker Sarah Watson

In October, Mark Bouman from The Field Museum introduced the Task Force to the Calumet National Heritage Area initiative. To further explore wayfinding and creating a heritage area, Sarah Watson from the Looking for Lincoln trail and Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area presented to the Task Force. Sarah focused on three key topics: 1) what is wayfinding; 2) Looking for Lincoln's wayfinding model; and 3) how Looking for Lincoln worked with state agencies.

Wayfinding – in the broadest sense – helps people move from one place to another, but also conceptually connects different places and tells a story of why they are special. Wayfinding can include signs, exhibits, public art, maps and guides, and phone applications. In phase one of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, 265 wayside exhibits went up in 42 counties that tell a story of Abraham Lincoln's life. The heritage area website includes GPS coordinates of all the wayside exhibits. IDOT played a critical role in getting 12 Abraham Lincoln Heritage Area signs posted around the perimeter to enhance wayfinding.

In phase 2, which is being implemented now, the 26 communities are posting signs along their own perimeters. This effort is as much branding as wayfinding and interpretation. The communities are connecting to the broader heritage area identity to promote tourism. The branding tells the heritage area story, but also each community's story. For branding, there are two medallions on the Lincoln signs – a Looking for Lincoln logo and a National Park Service logo. The Looking for Lincoln logo is used widely and consistently on signs, maps, guidebooks, and other print and media to create a visual memory. Quincy, Jacksonville, and Decatur have created their own trails. There is information on the heritage area website on how you can use the interpretive signage available to do your own self-guided tour.

Each community has a Looking for Lincoln group; it also has a representative on a Steering Council that includes state agencies. Looking for Lincoln acts as the coordinating entity, and provides additional capacity to communities as needed. The organization approaches communities to identify their greatest needs, and then connects communities with state agencies or other resources. Communities most need support in signage and marketing. Looking for Lincoln coordinated a logo and created logo use guidelines and standard press release messaging. It is also revamping its website with itineraries that integrate wayside signs and messaging. HP funded Looking for Lincoln to develop guidebooks.

Looking for Lincoln often works with state agencies; it developed a management plan with the Governor's office, collaborates with Department of Agriculture on state fair exhibits, and often coordinates with IDOT, IDNR and HP, and the DCEO Office of Tourism. The organization started a pollinator project with IDNR in December to encourage monarch-friendly habitat in the heritage area and to incorporate monarchs into messaging. Ottawa's mayor has signed a pledge for pollinator-specific gardens. Mark Bouman (The Field Museum) shared that his organization will map monarch habitat for the flyway corridor and the tool from this work could be used by Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area communities.

How does Looking for Lincoln connect with state partners? The organization's legislation focuses on preserving and telling Lincoln's story. Looking for Lincoln is always in search of ways to get involved in

state initiatives that are aligned with its mandate. National Parks Service introduced the pollinator project, which led Sarah to IDNR. With IDOT, Looking for Lincoln has collaborated on interstate signs. Signage is never simple and usually local. Looking for Lincoln designed sign templates, but communities are responsible for sign production and posting. IDOT funded federal highway signs. A heritage area needs a recognizable brand and identity, but it also tells a local story. To navigate this, Looking for Lincoln started with the interstate sign design. Once a sign is designed at a broader scale, communities can adapt it to fit their needs. Looking for Lincoln follows the communities' lead with wayfinding. Greater consistency is enforced with wayside interpretive signs, since it is less of a local decision.

Communities retrofitted signs and interpretives that existed before the design templates and guidelines with the Looking for Lincoln logo. Communities find value in the consistency, the link to National Park Service, and broader tourism branding. The Office of Tourism's three biggest attractions are Chicago, Route 66, and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Route 66 runs through the heritage area, and the Office of Tourism promotes cross-marketing.

Any advice for Calumet Collaborative in working across Illinois and Indiana? Building a national heritage area is all about relationships. State tourism offices are driven by administrations and have shifting priorities. The staff maintain consistency and have been strong advocates for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.

Questions & Answer with the public

Gary Johnson from Calumet Heritage Partnership asked if the guidebooks are digital or print? Looking for Lincoln partners with SIU press to publish the guidebooks and sell them in local shops, at Barnes and Noble, and on Amazon as online or paper versions. This is not very profitable, but the hope is to break even. He also asked if the wayside placard content is reviewed for accuracy? Yes. Local communities tell the story and draft the wayside text, but Looking for Lincoln collaborates with historians to vet stories carefully. As the coordinating entity, the organization is responsible for brand identity and content quality control. There are 49 natural heritage areas, all with different legislation. Looking for Lincoln strives to be faithful to its legislation.

Rachel Leibowitz from Historic Preservation asked how involved Looking for Lincoln was in its legislation? The organization director at the time - Niki Stratton – and the Board of Directors worked closely with Senator Durbin and Representative LaHood. Looking for Lincoln started as a state tourism project that became an independent non-profit. A national heritage area was already its goal, much like Calumet Collaborative. Sarah Watson recommended Calumet Collaborative play an active role on bi-state legislation development.

Sherry Meyer from Calumet Heritage Partnership asked if there are wayfinding signs to direct people among communities? She also asked if there have been any studies that link the wayfinding signs to economic impacts? No physical signs direct people between communities, but virtual wayfinding links the communities together. Office of Tourism has raw data on dollars spent, tax revenue, and tourism revenue. While Sarah thinks the signs would have a direct economic link since they move people through the communities, she cannot say for sure. Senator Durbin is a strong proponent of a large-scale bike ride around the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. IDNR has a June bike ride for the Grand Illinois trail, perhaps it could be a partner.

Suellen asked what Sarah's top pieces of advice are to foster strong relationships between Calumet Heritage Partnership/Calumet Collaborative and state agencies?

1. DCEO/Office of Tourism: Get to know the state agency staff. They can inform you of what best aligns with agency goals. An employment-related project could be helpful (e.g., job opportunities for young people to serve as historical actors). Also, do not wait for Office of Tourism to call you; it has a lot to do, and staff welcome phone calls and new ideas.
2. IDOT: Finding the appropriate staff to work with is key. Sarah started with the director's office and worked from there. Again, relationships are critical. It could be helpful to work with the IDOT Task Force representative to find the appropriate contact. The Calumet is smaller than the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. If the Calumet falls into one IDOT region, that is the best place to focus relationships.
3. IDNR: It can be easier to decode IDNR departments and programs. Start with who you know at the agency and build from there. Diane has a long history at IDNR; start with her.
4. HP: Approach HP staff at the local/site division level. Sarah works closely with statewide staff, but working directly with a site manager or superintendent can sometimes be more effective. They can alert you to opportunities to loop in statewide staff.
5. IEPA: Sarah has not worked with IEPA as often; but, as with her other advice, get to know people.

Calumet Collaborative executive director report

Sarah Coulter, executive director of the Calumet Collaborative, presented on initiative progress relevant to the Task Force. The Collaborative partnered with the Illinois Institute of Technology on a semester-long project on rethinking brownfield design. Brownfield redevelopment is often undertaken on a site-by-site basis, and is complicated, expensive, and requires management of large federal clean up grants. Pittsburgh is a great example of how to revitalize brownfields. In this project, students will look at usable sites near Calumet region assets and consider the different players involved in redevelopment. The project will ultimately create redevelopment solutions for different "archetypes" of brownfields (natural areas that have received hazardous materials, blights, industrial sites, abandoned buildings, etc.). The class will meet from January 19 until the end of May. It will produce a final report and solution toolkits. Sarah will approach Task Force members with specific asks for participation. Sarah can liaise with Diane, Suellen, and Annie to figure out who might be appropriate. The Collaborative is also working with University of Illinois, Chicago on a complementary mapping project. Brownfields mapping will provide the foundational information for redevelopment solutions. IEPA has helped the Collaborative identify available data for this project.

Rachel noted that HP archeologists are involved in remediated soil monitoring, and this helps communities find uses for abandoned buildings. Rachel offered HP architects' participation, if it would be helpful.

Public comments

There were no public comments.

Wrap up and next steps

- IDNR will follow up with IEPA about IIPD commitments.
- IDNR will consider a DCEO Task Force replacement.

- Suellen will send the Task Force the annual report to Governor Rauner template in March. All Task Force members will work on their sections of the annual report in April.
- At the next meeting, we will check in on IIPD and Pullman commitments and have a more robust discussion about the Calumet National Heritage Area.
- If you have ideas about ways you would like to work with Calumet Collaborative on brownfield redevelopment, please let Sarah know. Otherwise, Sarah will call on Task Force members as needed.
- The spring meeting will be in the same building and room: 160 N LaSalle Street, 7th floor, room N-703.