

Calumet Collaborative State Agency Task Force  
Meeting Minutes for July 20, 2017, 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

**LOCATION**

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, 1 Natural Resources Way, Room Lake Level C, Springfield, IL

**PRESENT**

***SATF Representatives***

Governor's Office: *representative was not able to attend*

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

Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT): Brian Carlson

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA): Emily Clamp

Historic Preservation Division (HP): Heidi Brown-McCreery

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO): Michael Dropka

**Welcome & (re)introductions**

Suellen Burns (IDNR) welcomed everyone to the meeting. A new representative from IDOT – Brian Carlson – joined the Task Force. Heidi Brown-McCreery from Historic Preservation (HP) participated in place of Ryan Prehn. Task Force members introduced themselves to Brian and Heidi.

**Meeting minutes approval**

The Task Force reviewed draft minutes from the April 2017 meeting. Members requested one edit. Diane Tecic (IDNR) proposed a motion to approve the minutes, pending the edit. Mike Dropka (DCEO) seconded. The minutes were approved with one abstention from IDOT; Brian did not attend the April meeting. Annie Turek (IDNR) will post the finalized minutes at <http://www.calumetcollaborative.org/public-meetings.html>. All Task Force meeting information can be found at this webpage.

**Evolution of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency**

Heidi – Director of HP – shared information on the evolution of Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). Executive Order 17-01 consolidated IHPA into a new division within IDNR. Filed on March 31, 2017, the executive order went into effect on July 1, 2017. The new division manages 57 historic sites, including the executive mansion. HP also undertakes revitalization. The Lincoln museum and library became a stand-alone agency.

Ryan Prehn – who represented IHPA on the Task Force – took a new position as Chief of Parks for IDNR. This role builds on his experience with historic sites at IHPA, and he will work closely with HP.

Suellen proposed to IDNR leadership that HP continue to be a part of the Task Force. More specifically, she suggested HP participate in Task Force meetings and activities that relate to HP's niche within IDNR, including discussions of Pullman historic district, tourism, and wayfinding.

Brian asked which historic sites fall within IDOT Region 1 and the Calumet region. IDOT is updating its approach to prioritizing project improvements and plans to better incorporate bike accommodations and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. Brian would like to include historical areas in the prioritization protocol as well. The two state historic sites in Region 1 are Pullman (although now a National Monument, this site is owned in part by HP/IDNR) and Douglas Tomb.

## Other updates

Each Task Force member reported on one thing it has accomplished since the April 2017 meeting or has in the works that helps advance Calumet Collaborative's mission.

Brian shared that bike accommodations is a new IDOT priority. IDOT is working with Active Transportation Alliance and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Other agency priorities are maintenance (70-80 percent of IDOT projects) and ADA compliance. Illinois' Complete Streets Law is one way to ensure bike accommodations, but this law only applies to new projects. There may be opportunities to include bike accommodations as a part of resurfacing projects, but this would require an additional planning phase upfront to modify roadway and lane widths. Brian plans to look into adding bike accommodations for the two projects identified as IDOT Pullman commitments: 1) 95<sup>th</sup> street and 2) 111<sup>th</sup> street. Bike advocacy groups have prioritized project areas, but areas around Pullman will also be considered if they are not already included. IDOT receives better bids when bike lanes are included as a part of an existing project. Many projects are planned around Pullman; IDOT could start incorporating bike recreation in these areas. Brian noted that IDOT will coordinate closely with Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT).

Emily Clamp (IEPA) shared that the former DCEO Office of Energy moved to IEPA. Emily works as a part of this new team. The Office of Energy focuses mostly on grant-making, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. Suellen offered to brief any new staff from IEPA's energy team on Calumet Collaborative, if helpful.

Emily also talked about IEPA outreach around health risks at the Schroud property. Once an LTV Steel site, the property suffers from contamination. The site is located across the street from IDNR's William Powers state park. Some community residents have been trespassing, posing health risks to themselves and potentially to nearby neighbors. The City of Chicago developed a fact sheet, which IEPA reviewed. The City also erected barriers on 126<sup>th</sup> street to prevent access to the site. City of Chicago 10<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderwoman Susan Sadlowski Garza will host a community meeting on July 25 at 6 pm, with the Chicago Department of Public Health and IEPA present to answer questions.

Mike shared that DCEO Office of Tourism, Annie, and Calumet Collaborative are developing a blog piece on the Calumet region for Tourism's website – *Enjoy Illinois*. Annie is also coordinating with Tourism to revamp the Millennium Reserve / Calumet region page on *Enjoy Illinois*. Annie will share the updated webpage with the Task Force when complete. She is also providing Tourism with updated information on bike paths and trails in the Calumet, and will provide information on water trails as well, if useful.

Suellen and Annie met with National Park Service Pullman staff about the Task Force's Pullman commitments. Suellen also shared these commitments with the five Pullman key stakeholders that she met with last fall. Everyone was excited about the Task Force's dedication and creativity.

Diane and Suellen wrote a proposal in partnership with the Illinois Conservation Foundation to the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund to support on-the-ground improvements at William Powers state park. The proposal builds on the William Powers park enhancement recommendations that consulting firm The Lakota Group and IDNR developed in 2016 with input from the local community. The application is for \$166,000, and would be matched by \$149,000 in IDNR Coastal funds. The project focuses on public use improvements -- an ADA-compliant fishing pier, bike racks and bike fix-it station, ADA-compliant kayak

and canoe launch, and wayfinding and site interpretation. Coastal also committed around \$20,000 towards phase 2 of the regional wayfinding initiative led by Calumet Collaborative.

Heidi requested information on what “wayfinding” is. Suellen defined wayfinding as a system of signs but also much more (for example, apps, public art) that helps people find their way to and around a place as well as better understand what is meaningful about a place. Wayfinding can be directional, locational (you are here), proximity-based (what is nearby of interest), and interpretive (why is this place special). A wayfinding system is unified in concept and look. The Freedom Trail in Boston and Looking for Lincoln in Illinois are examples. Calumet Collaborative is developing a wayfinding system for Illinois and Indiana that connects the Calumet region. Phase I of the Calumet wayfinding project, which has won two prestigious planning awards, identified five pilot sites, one of which is Wolf Lake, the location of William Powers state park. IDNR and Illinois Conservation Foundation’s William Powers project would be one of the first sites to implement these wayfinding ideas on-the-ground. William Powers is the only state park in the City of Chicago, and is a strategic choice because it is at Wolf Lake, which spans Illinois-Indiana state lines. Wolf Lake is also one of the cleanest water bodies in Illinois and is located near many neighborhoods with significant African American and Latino populations.

Brian noted that if the project involves rehabilitating roads in William Powers and there is funding available, IDOT could partner with IDNR to provide in-house expertise for the road improvements. IDOT has undertaken similar work for Illinois Beach State Park.

### **Illinois International Port District**

At the April meeting, the Task Force discussed how each agency could support the revitalization of the Illinois International Port District (IIPD). (Please see April meeting minutes.) Six members of the Task Force visited Lake Calumet in June 2017 to learn first-hand about IIPD’s needs. Annie summarized the site visit for those unable to attend:

IIPD is an independent municipal corporation created through state legislation and is the entity tasked with maintaining the Port of Chicago. Its operations include the management of industrial maritime zones, as well as jurisdiction over conservation and recreational areas. IIPD is divided into two areas of operation commonly referred to as: 1) Lake Calumet (1,500 acres) and 2) Iroquois Landing (190 acres).

The visit started at Haborside, a links golf course on IIPD property. From Haborside, Clayton pointed out Big Marsh, a nearby property now owned by the Chicago Park District that includes a world-class bike park. IIPD Executive Director Clayton Harris shared three possible economic development and recreation opportunities at Lake Calumet: 1) a pedestrian and bike path across the northernmost end to connect Pullman historic district and Big Marsh; 2) a marina on the northwest side of the lake; and 3) a proposed hotel site in the same area as the proposed marina. There is no hotel presently in close proximity to Pullman, Big Marsh, and other nearby attractions. The Task Force learned about IIPD industrial operations and tenants, and maintenance needs including road and dock paving, drainage, storage facility upkeep and rail/road connectivity. Clayton noted IIPD’s staffing challenges.

Suellen asked the Task Force where its agency aligns with Port opportunities and needs.

Brian noted that IDOT could support bicycle paths, particularly to connect Pullman to the Port across Bishop Ford Expressway. There is currently no plan in place for this work. Brian thought that an overpass

would be the best option. CDOT's bike overpass on Lakeshore Drive is an example. IDOT would not be able to fund the project, but it could coordinate partners and steer concept design. IDOT could also support enhanced access. It is difficult to find Harborside. When work is planned along the Bishop Ford Expressway, IDOT can improve accessibility to Harborside. The agency has partnered with other agencies on similar projects.

Diane highlighted that these ideas are long-term. She asked Brian if there are any short-term opportunities as well. Brian thought that IDOT may be able to add pedestrian and bike access to its project at Stony Island or at 130<sup>th</sup> street bridge. Active Transportation Alliance and IIPD submitted a \$30,000 – 40,000 grant application to Cook County's Invest in Cook program to plan bicycle access around Lake Calumet and connect Pullman and Big Marsh. IDOT could act as a liaison on this project. Suellen will talk to Clayton and the Active Transportation Alliance project lead – Jim Merrell. Earlier this year, IDNR organized local stakeholders to prioritize Calumet trails. One of the highest priorities was connecting the Pullman neighborhood to Bike Marsh and neighborhoods to its east.

IDOT could support IIPD revitalization through road resurfacing. Resurfacing is a CDOT activity, but IDOT has civil engineers to manage projects. Brian could also provide an introduction for Clayton to Beth McCluskey from IDOT's Office of Intermodal Project Implementation. She would be the appropriate person to involve in rail/road connectivity work on IIPD property.

Emily shared that IEPA could provide technical assistance for brownfield remediation work, if needed. She noted that IEPA could connect Clayton with funding resources. For example, Emily found a USEPA funding resource manual. At a national energy conference, Emily connected with a colleague who focuses on green ports. She offered to introduce Clayton and to provide technical assistance if he pursues steps to "green" the Port.

Mike noted the tourism opportunities with Harborside golf course and its connections to nearby sites like Big Marsh. Diane asked if DCEO might be able to support projects like: 1) technical assistance or funding for workforce development or 2) cultivate potential IIPD tenants. Suellen asked if DCEO has tax incentive programs that would attract additional tenants. Mike was unsure if this aligned with DCEO's mission. Heidi, who used to work for Business Development at DCEO, noted that office as a key partner. She highlighted the Economic Development for a Growing Economy tax credit program and the Calumet's enterprise zone status as important resources. Heidi recommended that Clayton get in touch with Julio Rodriguez from DCEO's Office of Employment & Training. The office receives about \$120 million annually in federal funding to increase employment. Clayton may also want to connect with Andrea Winters from Intersect Illinois, the new private organization that evolved from a DCEO division.

Suellen noted that a listed menu of DCEO options will help Clayton prioritize which options to pursue. She recommended sharing the two or three most useful DCEO contacts or resources with Clayton, along with a few bullet points on who to contact and how the division can help. Mike committed to talking to the two or three most relevant DCEO teams before the October meeting.

Suellen asked if DCEO could support IIPD intermodal transportation. Heidi noted DCEO's Community Development Block Grant program as a potential resource. Mike shared that capital development bonded funds could also be used. If there is a capital budget, that could be a future resource. Clayton has been in close touch with Senator Trotter. Discretionary capital legislation is in the Illinois House and has been filed. Mike will check what designated funds are in the legislation.

Brian asked for an update on the status of Illinois House Bill 1797 that would formally forgive some of IIPD's debt. Suellen shared that the bill passed the House and Senate and is with the Governor's Office, but has not been signed yet.

Heidi highlighted the historic tax credit initiative as a potential HP resource for the Port. There is a 25% federal tax incentive for commercial spaces, and five Illinois cities are a part of a state pilot program. HP is trying to expand the tax incentive to all enterprise zones. IIPD does not have any existing historic buildings, but this resource could support connections to Pullman. Kathy Schneider from the National Park Service participates in the Calumet Collaborative wayfinding initiative and will continue to focus on site connectivity.

Diane shared that IDNR hopes to invest in IIPD's staff capacity. Clayton is one person with limited time, and one of IIPD's greatest needs is additional staff. Diane is considering several ways to achieve this, one of which could be funding a partnership between IIPD and Delta Institute. IDNR and the Chicago Community Trust aim to meet in August to discuss how to align funding interests. Two other private funders may participate as well. Metropolitan Planning Council offered to organize and facilitate this discussion. Metropolitan Planning Council recently helped IIPD apply for a Local Technical Assistance grant from Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

IDNR Coastal invited IIPD to apply for a grant to support a port re-visioning plan, but finalizing the grant application has been a challenge for Clayton because of his limited capacity. IDNR brokered a Memorandum of Understanding between Calumet Collaborative and IIPD around coordinating community interests. Suellen and other IDNR staff have focused on building relationships with south side community groups, many of which have felt ignored by IIPD in the past. The Memorandum of Understanding was in response to a state legislator's request when he was considering whether or not to support House Bill 1797.

IDNR is also trying to connect Clayton to experts and other resources. The IIPD is a huge economic engine, and could be a game-changer for the south side. Clayton is committed to revitalizing it, but he needs resources, support, and more staff capacity.

Suellen asked the Task Force if any other information from Clayton would be helpful. She also inquired if any other agency or organization should be involved in this effort. Brian noted that CDOT should be included, particularly with Interstate 94 frontage and Lake Calumet roads. IDNR will follow up by email with these two questions so the group can consider them.

Suellen asked the Task Force to vet our discussion with their respective agencies before the October 2017 meeting. Clayton plans to attend. The group should prepare any follow up questions for Clayton so that the Task Force can develop firm commitments for the Port in October. Suellen and Annie have a meeting scheduled with Eric Wagner from Tourism in August. Annie will send the calendar invitation to Mike so that he can join if he is available.

### **Calumet Collaborative work groups and other immediate opportunities**

Suellen gave a brief update on the Calumet Collaborative on behalf of Sarah Coulter, who was unable to attend. The organization has created an advisory council with 30 organizations. IDNR represents the State of Illinois on the advisory council, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources represents the State of Indiana. The advisory council met for the first time and began initial planning in four areas: brownfields; bi-state wayfinding; a bi-state conservation strategy; and the Calumet National Heritage

Area. Suellen noted that the National Park Service is very engaged in incorporating Pullman National Monument and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore into Calumet Collaborative wayfinding efforts. The National Park Service and Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission have funding available. The wayfinding initiative has a lot of momentum right now, so this is one Suellen thinks we might see the most immediate action on.

Suellen and Diane will attend the preliminary Calumet Collaborative work group meetings. They will connect Task Force representatives to relevant efforts at the appropriate time. IEPA could be involved in brownfields and the bi-state conservation strategy. HP and DCEO could be involved in wayfinding and the Calumet National Heritage Area. IIPD is not targeted as a Calumet Collaborative priority per se, but it will be a special initiative. Since none of the work groups in development are immediately relevant to IDOT, Suellen suggested that Brian focus on IDOT support for Pullman and IIPD, and she will keep him updated on other opportunities as those arise.

### **Public comments**

There were no public comments.

### **Wrap up and next steps**

- IDNR will send out an immediate to-do email.
- IDNR will send out draft July minutes.
- IDNR will post the approved April minutes on the Calumet Collaborative website.
- Annie will share the *Enjoy Illinois* – Calumet region webpage with the Task Force once it is updated.
- Task Force members will discuss IIPD needs with their agencies and come prepared for our next meeting with any questions for Clayton. IDNR will email the two questions raised at this meeting for the group to consider.
- Mike will determine the two to three most helpful DCEO teams for Clayton before October.
- Annie will send Mike the calendar invitation for the IDNR-Tourism briefing in August.
- The next Task Force meeting will be on October 19, 2017 in Chicago. The meeting will include updates from each agency on its Pullman commitments, enough additional discussion on IIPD that each agency can make one or more IIPD commitments shortly thereafter, wayfinding, and any Collaborative work group updates.