

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

June 20, 2006, 2:00 P.M.

Indiana Statehouse

Room 233

Indianapolis, Indiana

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Beverly Gard called the meeting to order at approximately 2:40 P.M. She thanked the commission for their attendance (Attachment A).

MEETING AGENDA

- Call to Order Chair Beverly J. Gard
- Approval of Minutes of May 3, 2006 Chair Beverly J. Gard
- Announcements John L. Krauss
 - Appointments
 - Information for Indiana Initiative
 - Foreclosure Study
- Project Updates Jamie L. Palmer
 - Water Infrastructure Funding Debby Wyeth
 - 2006 Survey of Local Governments
 - Interlocal Agreements
- Adjournment Chair Beverly J. Gard

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 3, 2006

Senator Gard asked the commission to review the minutes briefly.

Sue Scholer corrected the statement about health departments in Tippecanoe County. Previously there had been three. Currently, there is one.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

APPOINTMENTS

Jamie Palmer reminded commission members that about one-third of the appointments on the commission were set to expire at the end of June. She suggested that members contact their appointing bodies if they wished to remain on the commission.

INFORMATION FOR INDIANA INITIATIVE

John L. Krauss updated the commission on progress made in regards to the Information for Indiana (IFI) initiative. Launched in July 2005 by Governor Mitch Daniels, the effort brings together government, university, and private resources to increase the use of data and analysis in public decision-making. The Center for Urban Policy and the Environment and the Indiana Business Research Center serve as the principal staff for the effort. He referred to the effort's recent publication of an issue brief on the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data (Attachment B).

Neil Pickett provided additional information on the activities of the initiative. The IFI initiative seeks to improve the data and analysis available to decision-makers in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. Most recently he and others gave a presentation to legislators about the effort. The data portal website is being held by the Department of Workforce Development at hoosierdata.in.gov. The site currently houses quite a bit of data and will house more in the future.

He reiterated that the second brief on the state GIS initiative is now out (www.ibrc.indiana.edu/ifi/briefs/issuebrief_GIS.pdf).

Senator Gard asked about how the information on the IBRC website and the hoosierdata.in.gov websites differ.

Mr. Pickett indicated that the websites are related and use some of the same data sources. The Hoosier Data site is a bit more accessible and user-friendly.

Joyce Poling asked about whether the effort would capture county government data.

Mr. Pickett indicated that eventually it would.

Mr. Krauss also indicated that the effort will coordinate a lot of existing resources and that the state is looking for a nimble structure that will allow access to GIS data in various counties without the hassle of downloading large files. IU has a state map at gis.iu.edu.

Ms. Scholer suggested that varied platforms used for GIS data creates a problem.

Mr. Krauss indicated that varied platforms are problems and that the POLIS Center at IUPUI is working on some bridge software.

FORECLOSURE PRESENTATION

Mr. Krauss indicated that Seth Payton would present an update on the Center for Urban Policy and the Environment study on foreclosures in Indiana at the next meeting. The work is associated with the Foreclosure Task Force that includes the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, Fannie Mae, and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. The study will include home sales and foreclosure data from a number of major metropolitan markets including Evansville, Fort Wayne and the NW Region.

Representative Sheila Klinker suggested that mortgage companies should be part of the discussion. In the Greater Lafayette area, there were 47 foreclosures in one month. The use of balloon and variable loans seems to be contributing to the problems.

Mr. Krauss indicated that the Foreclosure Task Force is looking into whether particular types of loan products are associated with foreclosures disproportionately.

Senator Allie Craycraft expressed an interest in explaining the reason for an elevated number of homes for sale in Delaware County.

Representative Klinker indicated that there have been problems with owner occupied homes turned rentals in the Greater Lafayette area.

Mr. Krauss indicated that the research also includes a component regarding home values.

Senator Glen Howard suggested that the problem is that our efforts simply shift lower income residents around the region and that a better solution might be possible if those residents were part of the discussion.

Senator Gard indicated that it would be important to know what percentage of the population were homeowners versus other states.

PROJECT UPDATES

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Ms. Palmer indicated that the water funding report has been waiting for new wastewater needs estimates that are due out from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Unfortunately, those data are delayed. Similar data for drinking water needs has been released recently.

Ms. Palmer referred to a recent speech given by Benjamin Grumbles, an US EPA administrator, which suggested that finding funding innovations is a critical issue across the country (Attachment C).

Work continues on funding issues surrounding Indiana's water infrastructure. The Environmental Quality Service Council will study regional sewer district issues over the summer. The Rural Wastewater Task Force also has been working with the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management to establish a permitting process for alternative wastewater treatment systems and on options for establishing septic maintenance pilot communities.

Representative Klinker asked about whether the study would include funding options for the various types of water infrastructure.

Ms. Palmer indicated that the study included a compendium of funding options including the State Revolving Fund and other assistance programs.

Senator Howard indicated that there are a surprising number of septic systems in Marion County and that more education is needed on responsible maintenance practices.

2006 SURVEY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Ms. Palmer indicated that the 2006 survey questionnaire was complete (Attachment D). The booklet has a new look to distinguish it from previous year's surveys. Several respondents have perceived that they were filling out the exact same survey from year to year. The survey would be administered in the coming months after sufficient time for design and printing. Respondents would have the option to complete the survey online for the first time.

She further indicated that there had been many suggestions for questions and that most had been included. In some cases, better data to answer particular questions are available from other sources. The usefulness of the survey is limited in some cases by the anonymity that we provide our respondents. It

serves as a better barometer of local official opinion than as a tool for collecting inventory data about particular practices.

Representative Klinker asked about how the staff would follow-up to get a sufficient response rate.

Ms. Palmer indicated that she would conduct following for the first few months, including a reminder postcard and a second letter and questionnaire to non-respondents. We have been able to achieve more than a fifty percent response rate in the past.

She also suggested that it was not too early to suggest questions for the next survey.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS

Ms. Palmer summarized the work plan for the interlocal agreement project (Attachment E) that was modeled heavily on an effort being conducted in Iowa (Attachments F and G).

Work has already begun on creating a database of interlocal agreements in Indiana. Ms. Palmer and Debby Wyeth worked with the Indiana State Board of Accounts to access some of the available agreements. These agreements were used to develop the template for recording data on individual interlocal agreements filed between 1995 and today. The data included are parties to the agreement, ordinance and resolution number, types of local government, statutory authority, date of the agreement, date recorded, date filed, purpose, purpose category, renewal and amendments, local effective date, expiration date, and any miscellaneous information (Attachment H).

Ms. Palmer also indicated that she had contacted the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns (IACT) and the Association of Indiana Counties (AIC) about holding focus groups at their fall conferences. She indicated that some arrangement would need to be made to do a similar focus group with the membership of the Indiana Township Association (ITA). Timing may preclude the use of their conference for that purpose; other arrangements could be made.

Mr. Pickett reiterated the importance and genesis of the study. He indicated that the database and information collected from the focus groups and the survey. He confirmed that the focus group and survey questions would be edited for Indiana and suggested questions about “what one factor most contributes to the development of interlocal agreements” and any identified cost savings. He asked staff from IACT and AIC to encourage their members to attend the focus groups.

Chris Ruhl indicated that the connection to the Iowa study would allow some direct benchmarking

Senator Gard asked about whether the study would identify what was allowed under current statute. One possible solution was to broaden the list of services listed in the statute.

Ms. Palmer indicated that after having looked at one-and-a-half year of data (24 agreements); it already appeared that a few counties accounted for a high proportion of agreements. The purposes of these agreements included infrastructure, animal control, fire protection, and others. 17 of the 24 agreements included Lake, Monroe, Elkhart and one additional county. Many agreements are structured to be continuous; they continue until one of the parties withdraws.

Ms. Scholer suggested that the categories of agreements may need to be broader because they would not match the categories that typically appear in budget or accounting documents.

Representative Klinker indicated that one reason that keeps local governments from collaborating is the fear that jobs will be lost. Tippecanoe County currently has three school districts. Many think that a single district might be too large. Issues of job loss must be considered against any potential cost savings.

Mr. Krauss indicated that the fiscal rules make it hard to keep savings.

Ms. Scholer indicated that some duplication of services just don't make sense.

Chris Ruhl indicated that this effort can help in reducing the cost of some services as well as increasing the quality. In some cases it may be difficult to identify collaboration opportunities. In Utah, for instance, they have unified budget meetings among local governments.

Mr. Pickett indicated that the new fiscal rules would provide some pressure to think about the collective cost of individual unit decisions.

Sue Paris indicated that there used to be local tax boards that served a similar purpose. Amidst complaints that they were just rubber stamping local decisions, they were eliminated.

Representative Klinker suggested that nearby local governments can be all over the board about policies. For instance, West Lafayette passed a no smoking ordinance, while Lafayette still allows smoking.

Senator Gard thanked David Bottorff and Matt Brase for their organizations' willingness to work a focus group into their upcoming fall conferences.

David Bottorff suggested that some agreements are informal and don't rise to the level of an interlocal agreement under 36-1-7. He also suggested that AIC and IACT give awards for cooperative efforts. These projects may provide some insights. Some award winners have done ditch assessment and joint purchasing cooperatively. AIC probably could do a better job of reminding folks that interlocal agreements are one available tool.

Matt Brase suggested that their list serv might also be a useful tool for uncovering additional agreements.

Linda Williams indicated that ITA would be happy to participate. Townships often use interlocal agreements for fire services, emergency management, and purchasing.

Senator Howard suggested using the media to disseminate information.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Gard closed the meeting at approximately 3:30 P.M.

APPROVAL

These minutes were approved by the commission on January 11, 2007.