



## White River Vision Plan Transition Team | Meeting 2 Notes

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Videoconference

Wednesday May 6 Noon-1:30pm

### Attendance

#### *Team Members*

Matt Cohoat, Co-Chair  
Sam Odle, Co-Chair  
Emily Krueger  
Betsy McCaw  
Vop Osili  
Brian Payne  
Aaron Smith  
Julie Thompson  
Amy Warner

#### *Panelists*

Gabriel Fillipelli  
Indra Frank  
Kevin Hardie  
John Hazlett  
Jill Hoffman  
Tim Junk  
Tim Maloney  
Ryan Mueller

#### *Staff*

Brad Beaubien  
Sarah Buckner  
Matt Carter  
Carmen Lethig  
Andrea Miller  
Brenda Myers

### Q&A:

#### **EMILY K Q: CURRENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS?**

*Jill: works with all on the call, sometimes divided by area. Sometimes layering one another, often talk about legislation/project/spill/cross promotions/speakers at each other's events/policy.*

#### **BRENDA FOLLOW UP Q: PULLIAM PARTNERSHIP BROUGHT YOU TOGETHER OR WERE YOU ALREADY WORKING TOGETHER?**

*Jill: Knew everyone beforehand, partnership did make everyone more connected and stronger.*

*Indra: all known each other well, become more coordinated over last three years.*

*Ryan: regulatory planning and technical assistance projects over the years, historic preservation efforts, etc. Wide variety of interests.*

*John: Technical knowledge is often used for the other partners, used as a resource for partners and their members.*

*Kevin: overlapping interests, but not always a shared audience. They have a collective voice. FOWR is grassroots, watch dog role, advocate role in showing potential.*

*Tim J: Agency resources role.*

**BRENDA FOLLOW UP Q: YOU HAVE WORKED TOGETHER BEFORE; PARTNER'S PROGRAM IS AN EARLY INDICATION ON HOW A COLLECTIVE CAN MOVE THINGS FORWARD. WRVP HAS TO BE A BIT BROADER (CITIES, PARKS, ETC.). FAVORITE QUESTION: WHAT SCARES YOU? IN THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE WITH PULLIAM, KNITTING TOGETHER THE OVERLAPPING INTERESTS, ETC.? WHAT IS IT THAT YOU NEED IN YOUR TOOLBOX THAT YOU DON'T CURRENTLY HAVE?**

**Kevin:** *a vehicle for more coordination in a more structured format, a little bit of confusion for general public. A structure, a voice for the river as the whole (geography, people who use/enjoy/fear river), that would be helpful as long as we agree on the unified message in that regard.*

**Jill:** *Public officials are a tool that we need. Much stronger leadership, but it is elusive on how to grab their attention and commitment to the environment. Issues can be polarizing or political. Officials turn over all the time, so we have to restart. How to change the conversation to make it not so divisive so it is a part of all conversations, and not a "leftist" topic. Storm water managers seeing things completely differently than mayors or planners or others. Some way we start to integrate the environment into other conversations among people making really significant choices every day.*

**Indra:** *more elected officials see the benefit of a healthy river and what keeps the river healthy. If they could understand what we do on the land, the watershed.*

**BRAD Q: ROLE OF FEDS?**

**Indra:** *Federal environmental laws important in Indiana, all play a role. Currently working on coal ash issues for the state. Weigh in as EPA tries to weaken coal ash issues.*

**John:** *in past year, 2018 farm bill, Indiana NRCS offices seem better funded for programs and have more staff on board. Programs applied in more urban settings, urban ag and soil health. Very solid partnership. Invasive involvement as well. Key to include them in the federal partnership conversation.*

**AMY Q: ONE REPORT TALKED ABOUT A TIF MODEL THAT IS MULTI COUNTY DRIVEN, WITH REGARDS TO FUNDING – IN INDIANA, HAS THIS HAPPENED BEFORE – WITH MULTI COUNTIES? IS IT SUCCESSFUL?**

**Tim Junk:** *I suggested this, I don't know of any examples where it has happened so far.*

**Brad:** *Currently, individual redevelopment districts establish tif districts.*

**BETSY McCaw Q: CONSISTENCY AMONG REPLIES, ONE SCARY THING: ADDITIONAL BUREAUCRACY. WHERE IS THIS MORE VALUABLE TO "SIT" TO HAVE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF BUREAUCRACY? AN EXTRA BODY ADDS A LAYER? ARE THERE LAYERS THAT CAN COME OUT TO MAKE THE PROCESS MOST USEFUL?**

**Tim M:** *Apart from having a normalized collab process along the river, a new governance structure is another layer, how to do that without having another layer? Obvious option: River Basin Commission. Regional councils of government: Planning organizations. (audio cut out a*

few times). Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) model that covers a lot of policy. There are models out there.

**Kevin:** Entity needs to be a voice, a champion. Layer doesn't have to be a negative. This can be a team builder, but that is a grassroots perspective.

**Jill:** It is important how you start this out the door, can be the difference between opportunity and bureaucracy. How we frame and deliver messages can be the difference. Funding.

**BRAD Q: TIMJ NOTED IN BRIEF THAT DEDICATED FUNDING COULD FRACTURE CONSENSUS IF EVERYONE IS FIGHTING OVER THEIR SHARE, BUT IF FORCED TO FUNDRAISE, IT ALSO FORCES COLLABORATION?**

**Ryan:** Legislation passed for Kankakee Yellow River Basin Commission, example of coming together for collaboration. This is an evolved model...historically, each member county would pay in and expect to get that much out. In new model, common larger-issue mission around erosion, sedimentation, and flood control provides mandate. Consensus reach through appointed members of each county with votes and minutes transparent. Property assessment funds it. Find common need > pool resources > reach consensus.

**MATT COHOAT Q: DECISIONS LIE WITH GROUP, ALL ON CALL CAN PROVIDE INPUT – COMFORTABLE ABDICATING DECISIONS ON THE RIVER TO THIS GROUP?**

**Ryan:** Part of the commission is tech advisory committee. Issue to committee, ask for recommendations. Doesn't cut out planning function, it enhances it a bit. Not 30 commissioners making decisions, a smaller group of tech advisors making decisions.

**Gabriel:** Critical part of this, you need expert advice, can't all be economically driven. Some community representation beyond county commissioners.

**BRAD Q: LACK ROLE FOR PUBLIC? WHAT IS THE ROLE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC? FORMALLY OR INFORMALLY?**

**Ryan:** The role of the public KYRBC is somewhat limited, some of the public do participate on technical advisory committee. Old model was too big, unwieldy. New commission pared down numbers. Public can provide comments at monthly meetings, written comments. Projects public driven (passed through advisors). Limited public role but consistent. However, mandate given to the commission was the result of a public desire.

**Jill:** this is hard science, a whole set of issues that require technical experts. Just one voice for a group - one voice of so many stakeholders that can be quickly outvoted if there are a bunch of other people at the table. Caution against government representative aspect we have seen, serious technical issues that require more than one voice on new developments or new opportunities. Public health expert, geologist, hydrologist, on and on and on.

**SAM Q: IS THERE AN EXISTING ORGANIZATION HERE TODAY OR NOT THAT COULD BE TASKED WITH THE GOVERNANCE GOING FORWARD?**

**BETSY FOLLOW UP Q? IF THEY DO EXIST, WHY HAVEN'T THEY BEEN SUCCESSFUL? WHAT ARE THEIR BARRIERS TO THEIR SUCCESS?**

*Kevin: that is what we are exploring during this phase of the WRVP process.*

*Brian Payne comment: I have always noticed a correlation between giving money and believing in the leadership/mission. We need passionate people on the board that represents mission and leadership. How do you balance an appointment process with attracting passionate people that are critical to attracting resources?*

**BRENDA Q: A WAY TO DO A HYBRID? EXISTING ORGANIZATION WITH ANOTHER ARM? DIFFERENT?**

*Ryan: two commissioners are local farmers, not all governmental entities.*

**BETSY Q: EXPECTATION QUESTION. WHAT IS THE PACE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOMETHING LIKE THIS MOVE? MORE AUTHORITY MEANS YOU CAN MOVE FASTER – NOT BROAD TAXING CAPABILITY, FUNDING RELIANT ON DONORS. IDEAL SITUATION, WHAT IS THE PACE YOU WOULD SEE THIS MOVE? ASSUMING THE BEST OF INTENTIONS IN THIS.**

*Jill: We can't move fast enough on protective measures; be more cautions on development measures. It is years and millions in the making to undo development. Quickly: legal entities on protective measures. Other projects could and should more slowly.*

**MATT COHOAT Q: RIVER & ENVIRONMENTAL STANDPOINT, YOUR DEFINITION OF A HEALTHY RIVER? WHAT IS ONE THING THAT SHOULD HAPPEN FOR SURE WHEN THIS IS DONE? AS TANGIBLE AS POSSIBLE. ONE THING AT THE END OF IT THAT SHOULD NEVER HAPPEN?**

*Jill: elevate status of river: value water in community, foundational to every business and public health. Everyone understands critical value of river. SHOULD NOT underestimate climate change.*

*Kevin: Natural infrastructure, general lack of awareness among public and office- broad based support. NOT HAPPEN: WRVP becomes another document on a shelf.*

*Indra: respect flood plain and space river needs. NOT HAPPEN: new development that interferes with function of flood plain.*

*Tim M: River top of community consideration. NOT HAPPEN: show me budget and I'll show you what is important to you.*

*Tim J: More people down to the river, the more public interest/support we will have.*

*Ryan: Connectedness, river to flood plain, people to river, people to the plan. Can't rely on past events Planning thoughtful, do not increase flood risk.*

*Gabe: acknowledge that River is a part of a larger system. Managing them as a natural resource and not as an engineered system.*

*John: reconnect to flood plain, setbacks for new development. Embrace the river, mindful of giving it room. Not inconsistencies across counties for development.*

## KEY TAKEAWAYS...

**Emily K:** Had just assumed that science-based decisions would be integrated, so helpful to hear lots of concern from stakeholders that it would not be. Also, a lot of informal coordination structures to build on, wish more formalized.

**Betsy:** Need to think not just about the structure, but its rules of engagement, the managing documents that embed promises or assumptions into writing.

**Amy:** No reason participation in working along waterway doesn't have to meet all key pillars. Believe we're continuing to head into a more environmentally sensitive period as a community, and hope that environment becomes more and more a basic expectation.

**Brian:** Came away with a much greater sense of the science – develop cool things for the river versus destruction of the river. Struck by the comment about undoing damage to the river. Who gets to set principles? Traditionally you recruit a board and they set principles, but in this case, the principles that are set should drive who gets recruited.

**Sam:** when looking at governance, want to play a role in elevating status of White River

**Brenda:** number of people that tap into the White River for water supply. 150 different taps, well structures....

**Matt Carter:** Economy has historically trumped environment and equity every time, how do we find balance?