



TO: President Koultourides and Members of Council

FROM: Dustin Anderson, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Next Level Trails Grant Coordination

DATE: October 21, 2019

Background

The Town of Munster applied for a grant from the State of Indiana last year for a bridge that would link the bike path along Elliott and Schoon Ditch to Highland across both Hart and Cady Marsh Ditches. This application was not approved. In our exit conference with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) we were told that a more successful application would be comprised of both broader multi-jurisdictional cooperation and a larger scope.

Methodology

The Town – with significant assistance from the Northern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) – has reimagined the simple pedestrian bridge connection between Munster and Highland as a connection between the Town's robust trail network and both Wicker and Bluebird Parks. This will include significant trail construction in Highland and in Munster along existing NIPSCO right-of-way.

Because of this potential construction, IDNR requires for some indication that all applicable parties agree that this is indeed a project that each are interested in pursuing. To that end NIPSCO has generated the attached Letter of Intent. This letter will allow staff to submit a complete application to the State. This letter allows all parties to reserve all rights and in no way commits any party to participation or future costs.

Both NIPSCO and Highland have signed this letter.

Recommendation

Authorize the Town Manager to sign the attached Letter of Intent on behalf of the Town of Munster