

LA PORTE COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 12, 2025

The La Porte County Redevelopment Commission meeting was held on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 4:00 P.M. (CDT) in the Assembly Room #3 of the La Porte County Government Complex, 809 State Street, La Porte, IN 46350.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting called to order by President Koronka at 4:00 P.M.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

Adam Koronka – Present

John Carr – Absent

Scott Cooley – Present

Tom Fath – Absent

Mark Parkman – Present

Connie Gramarossa – Present

Brett Kessler – Present

Jennifer Farlie, La Porte Community Schools Ex-Officio – Present

Others Present: Attorney Guy DiMartino, RDC Attorney; Matt Reardon, MCR Partners; and Mary Jane Thomas, MjThomas & Associates.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Mark Parkman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Koronka announced the appointment of Brett Kessler as the new member of the Redevelopment Commission, succeeding State Representative Randy Novak. Mr. Kessler was administered an oath by Attorney DiMartino.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve October 22, 2025, meeting minutes as presented. Scott Cooley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

421/I-94 #1 - \$441,558

421/I-94 #2 - \$0

KIDC - \$137,458

39 North - \$14,262

Mark Parkman motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Scott Cooley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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**CLAIMS**

<u>TIF</u>	<u>VENDOR NAME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
<b>KIDC</b>	MCR Partners	November '25 Professional Services	\$1,000.00	
	Guy S, DiMartino, P.C.	October '25 Legal Services	\$1,500.00	
	Herald – Dispatch	Legal Publications Claims	\$22.77	
	Hendricks & Associates, P.C.	Survey revisions	\$783.34	
	Cender Dalton	Financial Advisory Services Inv#12024	\$110.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				\$3,416.11
<b>US 421 #1</b>	MCR Partners	November '25 Professional Services	\$4,000.00	
	NIPSCO	October '25 – Nov '25 electrical service	\$109.05	
	NIPSCO	October '25 – Nov '25 electrical service	\$40.21	
	Cender Dalton	Financial Advisory Services Inv#12024	\$110.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				\$4,259.26
<b>39N</b>	MCR Partners	November '25 Professional Services	\$1,000.00	
	Cender Dalton	Financial Advisory Services Inv#12024	\$110.00	
<b>Subtotal</b>				<u>\$1,110.00</u>
<b>TOTAL OF REGULAR CLAIMS</b>				<u>\$8,785.37</u>

President Koronka read the claims as presented for payment for the Kingsbury Industrial Park (KIDC) TIF area from the Claim Docket. Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve the Kingsbury Industrial Park (KIDC) TIF area claims in the amount of \$3,416.11. Brett Kessler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Koronka read the claims as presented for payment for the US 421 #1 TIF area from the Claim Docket. Mark Parkman motioned to approve the US 421 #1 TIF area claims in the amount of \$4,259.26. Scott Cooley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

President Koronka read the claims as presented for payment for the 39 North TIF area from the Claim Docket. Scott Cooley motioned to approve the 39 North TIF area claims in the amount of \$1,110.00. Brett Kessler seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. 421/194 TIF Project Update – Matt Reardon; MCR Partners**

Matt Reardon explained RQAW has been engaged to resolve issues related to the 300N utility extension project and Michigan City Sanitary. Mitch Bishop (LaPorte County Planner) will provide an update at the next meeting scheduled for December 10, 2025.

**2. Kingsbury Industrial Park (KIP) Update – Matt Reardon; MCR Partners**

Matt Reardon reported his team plans to adopt a more direct approach with landowners regarding roadway land matters and the possibility of quit claim deeding. In collaboration with Attorney Guy DiMartino and other staff members, there is an ongoing effort to clarify what is needed and what is being pursued, as there continues to be questions from landowners about the objectives of the county.

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Although the written communication appears clear, some confusion persists among landowners. To address this, staff will meet directly with the majority landowners and bring the surveyor along to answer questions about drawings and their implications. This approach is intended to facilitate progress on the project.

Securing agreements from larger landowners is seen as a way to encourage smaller landowners to also convey their property, enabling the county to work with roads more efficiently. As development opportunities continue at KIP, future zoning and special use access recommendations will require petitioners to demonstrate public access to the property they wish to acquire. This means petitioners or landowners must obtain roadways, upgrade them to county standards, and then transfer them to county control.

Mr. Reardon stated previous attempts to resolve this issue without resorting to condemnation have been unsuccessful, but the upcoming meetings may provide a solution. Additionally, moving forward, any new projects in KIP will require public access to be established in this manner.

Historically, it has been assumed that the roads in KIP are public ways and have been treated as such. However, there has never been a formal legal process to codify this status, which poses challenges for the County Commissioners when allocating resources for improvements on property not officially owned or controlled by the county.

Despite various explanations over the years, this process is considered the most efficient and legal approach. Alternatively, the private sector could rehabilitate the roads themselves to county specifications and then transfer them to the county, which would be an ideal outcome, albeit an unlikely one. Nevertheless, efforts will continue in both directions to resolve these issues.

President Koronka inquired about any updates on voluntary participation or signing roadway agreements since the last meeting. Mr. Reardon indicated that overall progress remains limited; most parties are still hesitant or have not moved forward. Attorney DiMartino announced there has been progress with one particular property. Following a recent sale, new surveys were required and have now been completed. This has led to an expectation that the new owners, 2M Shop Group, LLC will be willing to participate in the agreement process. Additionally, the company has made significant strides. After purchasing land in the area, including roadway property, they proposed an \$8 million project and demonstrated a strong willingness to collaborate with the County Council. Their proactive approach has been positively received.

Matt Reardon introduced a Kingsbury Industrial Park marketing video developed out of a collaborative partnership with NIPSCO, which selected a handful of communities to receive grants supporting drone-related projects. He appreciated the dedicated efforts of Mary Jane Thomas and the rest of his team for securing the funding. President Koronka asked what method of distribution would be used to publicize the video. Carlton Bishop responded an action marketing plan will be prepared and distributed at next month's meeting. The website is being updated also. Brett Kessler asked if the 80/90 Toll Road can be highlighted in addition to I94 in the video. Matt Reardon responded yes.

### **3. 39 N Update – Matt Reardon; MCR Partners**

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Matt Reardon explained this year marks the final year for revenue collection within the county's 39 North TIF district. The city has established its own Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district over this area, and upon completion, the tax base will be reset. All revenue previously generated in the 39 North area will be distributed to the overlapping taxing districts, after which the City of LaPorte will reset its base. Any new development will contribute to funding utilities. The city has indicated plans to construct a water tower and continue expanding water and sewer capacity in the area.

President Koronka confirmed the general goal is for the city to manage utility expansion and potential annexation. For the specific investment opportunity located on the north side of US 20, the Commission clarified that it does not automatically recommend annexation for all development. Since this site is not part of the redevelopment area, it is more logical for the city to handle this matter. Mr. Reardon agreed that if the city had not taken steps toward annexation, there would be ongoing discussions about whether to expand redevelopment efforts further north along State Road 39 to reach US 20, given the available developable land. However, such expansion depends on the city's willingness to invest in utility infrastructure. It is not practical to pursue random development efforts; instead, a more thoughtful approach is necessary. There is demonstrated interest in both the US20/SR39 and the toll road/SR39 intersections, but the distance between these two areas requires careful planning to ensure effective and sustainable development.

#### **4. 35/I-94 TIF Update – Matt Reardon; MCR Partners**

Mr. Gary Radtke, owner of Radtke Engineering and Surveying, LLC, presented a proposed development, working alongside Rich Ostergren, owner of Serenity Springs, who will serve as the developer for the project. The development plans for the Cobblestone Hotel, a sit-down restaurant, possibly Cracker Barrel, and coffee drive-through. Additionally, a fast-food establishment is planned for a site currently owned by INDOT, and we are working to negotiate a land exchange to secure more acreage along SR35. Mr. Radtke is seeking assistance in exchanging property, currently used by INDOT for maintenance, with the goal of securing land for development. This exchange could provide significant tax benefits for both the county and future stakeholders. He reported that Michigan City officials showed strong interest in the development which will require water and sewer extensions. He reported that construction of the Cobblestone Hotel is planned for 2026, with an anticipated opening in 2027. Preparation includes designing infrastructure, relocating roads, and completing surveys.

Chris Harth from Cobblestone Hotels provided background information about the brand and its planned involvement in the project. Cobblestone Hotels is a privately owned, upper midscale hotel brand based in Wisconsin, operating approximately 160 hotels across twenty-seven (27) states.

A hotel feasibility study was conducted for the area, demonstrating strong support for the development of a hotel. The study recommended a 54-room Main Street model, which would be slightly more upscale than typical upper midscale brands such as Hampton Inn or Holiday Inn Express. The proposed hotel would feature a boardroom, an indoor pool, a breakfast room, and an evening lounge serving wine and beer. Additional amenities would include an outdoor patio designed to complement the broader development plans for the area. The Cobblestone team expressed enthusiasm for the location, noting its proximity to the interstate as a significant advantage. Efforts have been ongoing to coordinate the project's timeline, and infrastructure needs to ensure that all utilities and necessary preparations are in place for a timely hotel opening.

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Mark Parkman questioned the status of property negotiations involving the INDOT site. Mr. Reardon responded that efforts remain ongoing to find a workable arrangement although, since the initial request was denied and the property is not deemed surplus, the owner's refusal effectively limits any external action concerning the site.

President Koronka asked Mr. Radtke if the proposed 12-inch sewer line assumes future connections including the current Speedway gas station. Mr. Radke responded yes. He asked Mr. Harth with Cobblestone Hotels if the location would be corporate or franchise owned. Mr. Harth stated that this location will mainly be franchise-owned, with two brand owners considering minority investment pending ongoing negotiations.

**5. Consideration of KIP Rail Switcher Agreement – Guy DiMartino**

Matt Reardon explained that JBC Rail was selected about 4 1/2 years ago to be the rail switcher for Kingsbury Industrial Park (KIP). The county invested \$525,000 in the construction of the rail extension in which JBC agreed to facilitate the repayment of the investment by sharing the switcher railcar revenue with the county. The agreement with the county expires December 31, 2025. JBC Rail has switcher agreements with CN and CSX (CSX until 2028). Attorney DiMartino recommended a modification of JBC's KIP Rail Switcher agreement with the county so that the termination date will end at the same time as the CSX agreement as opposed to a five (5) year extension. In addition, consideration of the rise in cost could be based on a certain index agreed by both parties. JBC Rail will provide railcar revenue data prior to the December meeting.

President Koronka pointed out that one potential path forward would be to establish a Port Authority or Transit Authority within the park. This approach would result in a larger financial return to the county over time, but it also requires a significant initial investment to create and organize such an entity. Attorney DiMartino explained the forming a Port or Transit Authority would involve navigating federal regulations and addressing various insurance requirements. In some cases, insurance coverage may need to be as high as \$50 million. Meeting these obligations would require specialized expertise. To operate effectively, the authority would need to hire personnel such as yardmasters and engineers, as well as staff capable of managing and maintaining the necessary infrastructure. These operational responsibilities extend beyond the typical scope of county functions.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Carlton Bishop, LaPorte County Business Retention Manager, explained the standard approach to business retention involves visiting a range of businesses within the county, primarily focusing on mid-sized to large organizations. During these visits, we meet with business owners or representatives to understand their needs and discuss potential incentives that might support their growth and continued presence in the area. As part of our process, we connect businesses to valuable resources such as workforce programs and the Small Business Development Center. We facilitate communication by sending introductory emails and bridging gaps between businesses and resource providers. This outreach requires considerable coordination and effort.

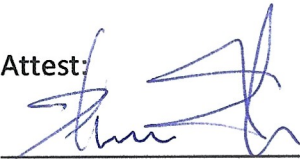
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Mr. Bishop explained in order to target the small businesses a business incentive guide was developed. This guide is designed to coach businesses on available county resources, explain how tax abatements function, and clarify that our office does not directly grant abatements; such incentives are overseen through the county council. The guide also references topics such as TIF (Tax Increment Financing) districts, aiming to generate enough interest in businesses to reach out for consultations. Through these consultations, business owners can learn about immediate opportunities and plan for future incentives should they expand or require larger spaces or specialized facilities, such as at the KIP location. He added they welcome any feedback or suggestions on the guide, which is scheduled for launch at the beginning of the year. Matt Reardon indicated efforts go beyond simply providing incentives. Mr. Bishop, for example, actively visits three businesses each month. Contrary to some beliefs, economic development is less about handing out benefits and more about guiding businesses through processes such as expansion, interacting with the planning, or building departments, or securing funding through organizations like the SBA or the Regional Development Corporation.

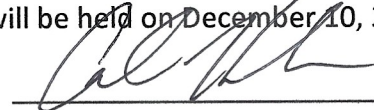
**ADJOURNMENT**

Connie Gramarossa motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:00p.m. Scott Cooley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting will be held on December 10, 2025.

Attest:



Tom Fath, Secretary



Adam Koronka  
President