

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT**  
**COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2013**

**Held at**  
**Munster Town Hall,**  
**1005 Ridge Road, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Five (5) Commission members were present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski  
Debbie Long  
Ron McAhron  
Tom Gozdecki

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

Dave Wickland

**Staff:**

Sandy Mordus  
Judy Vamos

**Visitors:**

Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond  
John/Laurie Czulno - Hammond  
Charles Svitko - Hammond  
Judy Knapp – Forest, Hammond  
Dave Wellman - RDA  
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart  
Mark Gordish – City of Hammond  
Bob Paulson – Northcote, Munster  
Bill Emerson Jr – Crown Point  
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster  
James/Kalliope Dedelow - Munster  
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Little Cal  
Steve Jadrnak – Forest, Hammond  
Dan Gardner – Lake County Surveyor's  
Craig Hendrix – S.E.H.  
Tony Kenning – DLZ  
Peter Yackanich – Hammond  
Ivan Lewis - Munster  
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek – State Line, Hamd  
Mike Echterling – Friends of the Little Cal  
Arnold Schmidt – Hammond  
T. Ahearn – Forest, Hammond  
Marcia/Mark Taylor – Munster  
Col. Frederic Drummond – Army Corps  
Deputy Director Kevin Lovell – Army Corps

Chairman Bill Baker stated that the new legislation that provided an ongoing funding source for maintenance also increased the Board membership from 5 to 9 members. The Governor has 5 appointments; City of Hammond has 1 appointment; City of Gary has 1 appointment; and the Lake County Commissioners have 2 appointments. He proceeded to introduce Debbie Long from Hammond, who was nominated by Mayor McDermott and then appointed by the Governor as a new Board member. Debbie Long stated she is excited to be a member of the Commission and hopes to learn a lot from the other members.

•Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the August 13th meeting. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Ron McAhron; motion passed 5-0 with a roll call vote.

- Chairman Baker started off his report by referring to the flooding pictures and stressing the importance of taking care of this \$275 million man-made asset. That is the primary reason we are here and that is why we have been doing all the maintenance work up to this point. Overall, we are in a much better position and much better prepared if and when a flooding event like that would occur again. As we move forward, we all agree to do everything possible so something like that never happens again.

- Executive Director Dan Repay reported that the Army Corps annual inspections began on the 16<sup>th</sup> and will continue until completed. Munster levees were inspected on Monday; Highland levees were inspected on Tuesday; Hammond levee inspections started today. The inspections will identify any corrections that need to be made. So far, the inspections have gone very well. We have done a lot of maintenance repair prior to the inspections in anticipation of a good report so they can be “acceptable”. A draft inspection report will be received by the end of October, with the final report due end of November.

- Grimmer Construction is proceeding very quickly on Gary South rehabilitation. We are hopeful that the Army Corps can do an inspection of that segment and certify it.

- The last area of tree clearing from I-94 to State Line will be performed by R. A. Oros, who will be starting that segment later this month.

- Rip rap spraying took place this last week from Cline Avenue to Stateline. Army Corps standards dictate no trees/weeds can grow within the rip rap and outfalls.

- All the pump stations are working except for one of the pumps at the Burr Street pump station. Both pumps will be repaired but at different times so there will always be a pump running there. Repair should be completed by end of this year.

- The Monon pedestrian bridge is currently out for bid and should be awarded by the end of September. That contract will eliminate the middle four piers, which will really help the river flow.

- At the next O&M Emergency Management meeting, Scott Morlock from U.S.G.S. will talk about the gage stations.

- The concrete forms for State Line closure will be ready in about 3-4 weeks. We had hoped they would be ready earlier but there were unforeseen delays. We had hoped for Labor Day but now we will aim for Halloween. We will make sure the final plans are sent to the Colonel.

- Chairman Baker asked about the high velocity channel. Mr. Repay replied that a portion of the Hart’s Ditch channel will be redirected to flow east. Doing that will also help out the diverter structure that is already in place there. In the last rain event, there was a lot of storage for water in the east while we were closing streets at the west end. We are trying to make it easier and allow the water to go where the storage is. By redirecting a portion of the channel, it should take care of the problem. The permit process is going on now. A permit is needed from IDNR, the Army Corps, and IDEM. Originally, we thought a permit was needed just from DNR. The Corps and IDEM now have some questions so we will be meeting with them. Ron McAhron added that this is an unusual project; there are variations in the jurisdiction of these 3 entities and although we’ve lost some time, everyone will eventually be on the same page. Mr. Repay added that we always notify them of any possible need for a permit. We let them tell us whether we need a permit from them or not. Sometimes permits are needed from the perspective municipality also.

This project will most likely not be done this year.

- We will also be taking out 2 access roads at Grant Street that INDOT originally built but are no longer needed. We are currently waiting for the permit from IDNR.

- Commissioner Wichlinski asked if the piers on the Monon trestle would be removed this year. Mr. Repay replied that he believes it should be done by Thanksgiving. Removing the middle 4 piers should open the area to about 60-80' wide and this will really make a difference in river flow.

Finance - Mr. Repay referred to the September claims in the amount of \$525,619.00 and explained some of the higher claims. Three of the larger invoices were submitted by the contractors doing the tree cutting. Another large claim was submitted by DLZ for partial billing of the watershed plan (which is now posted on the Commission's web site) and Grimmer Construction has submitted a large invoice for partial billing of the Gary South rehabilitation project. In addition to another mowing invoice, there are also 2 large claims in land purchase. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$525,619.00; motion seconded by Commission Wichlinski; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote. Commissioner Wichlinski asked if there will be any more mowing this year and Mr. Repay replied that we may have to do one more mowing before winter. This last mowing was done so inspections could take place.

- Mr. Gozdecki proceeded to make a motion to allow the Executive Director to engage in negotiations and sign a contract with USGS in the monitoring of additional gage stations; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote. Mr. McAhron added that it would be helpful if we could get Scott Morlock of USGS to come in and talk to the Commission about the additional stations.

- Chairman Baker stated that each September, he remembers the devastation as a result of the 2008 flooding event. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves so we don't lose sight of where we've been so we never go there again. With that, Mr. Repay proceeded to show a short video presentation of that flooding event. The video will be posted on our website.

#### Statements to the Board –

- Ken Vadrak, Stateline in Hammond – Asked the Corps if they have approached Illinois about the Commission building up our side of the levee while the levee would be lower in Illinois, possibly increasing flood waters in their state. Col. Drummond answered that it is up to the community to talk to Illinois, not the Army Corps. Chairman Baker added that the Corps is directed by Congress. We have talked to the local leadership in Lansing and Calumet City and told them our plans. We are committed to do something at Stateline to finish off our project area to protect our residents. Commissioner McAhron added that our authority ends at State line. Illinois is not interested, nor do they have the money, in raising the levee on their side. We cannot just not do anything because we are worried about Illinois. They understand what we are doing to protect our citizens. Part of their responsibility lies with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. They did an extensive study of that area and determined it was not cost effective to raise their levee system up to the 200 year level of protection. Putting the blocks down State line for flood protection may not be ideal but it is a reasonable way to close out the project at that end for residents' protection.

- Mike Echterling, Friends of the little Cal, commented on the tree cutting between the levee system. He thinks that because so many trees were removed, the Commission may have to mitigate more land, or replant more trees. He talked about the land between Chase and Grant where it is usually always wet because water cannot get out. Mr. Repay stated that we longer are farming that area and it is turning into a mitigation area.

• **Ivan Lewis**, Munster – Asked exactly why we are cutting the trees down. Mr. Repay replied that all ash trees (because of the ash boor) were cut down as well as leaning trees, damaged trees, diseased trees – they were cut down before they would fall down into the river, especially during a storm event, that would impede the flow of the river. It was easier to leave more of the trees in wider areas; more trees were cut in areas that are very narrow. Some places had no access and the trees will be removed over the flood wall.

• **Sandy O'Brien**, Hobart – Also stated that with so many trees cut and habitat damaged/displaced, more mitigation property may be needed. She asked about the land management of the area and worried about the phragmites taking over. Mr. Repay replied we'll keep the area mowed where we can and we'll manage it by the guidelines we get from the Corps so we pass annual inspections each year. Commissioner McAhron stated that we are directed by the Army Corps and their rules are no trees within 15' from the toe of the levee. Discussion ensued on the jurisdictional issues in regard to tree cutting.

• **Bob Paulsen**, Munster – Thought it was a good idea that the trees were cut and asked if the banks will be cleaned at all. Mr. Repay replied that some of the old banks have been left in place. There are no plans at this time to take them out. Mr. Paulsen asked about the access points. Mr. Repay replied that the worse area for access is between Northcote and Columbia. As part of the high velocity channel, they will build a road for access. As part of some of the maintenance projects ongoing on the river, access roads have been built. Ron McAhron added that the Corps was originally going to do access roads as a separate contract but it makes sense for the Commission to go ahead and do them while they are there anyway. Chairman Baker added that the areas have been turned over to the Commission for O&M.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Chairman Baker announced that the next meeting is scheduled only 3 weeks way for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.