

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2000
AT THE COMMISSION OFFICE
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
PORTAGE, INDIANA**

Chairman Emerson Delaney called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Nine (9) Commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Quorum was declared and guests were recognized.

Development Commissioners:

Charles Agnew
John DeMeo
George Carlson
John Mroczkowski
Steve Davis
William Tanke
Bob Huffman
Curt Vosti
Emerson Delaney

Visitors:

Terrence Savage, Munster resident
Denis Buksa, Munster resident
Jim Flora, R.W.Armstrong Company

Staff:

Dan Gardner
Sandy Mordus
Lou Casale
Jim Pokrajac
Judy Vamos

Mr. George Carlson made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 3rd meeting; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Emerson Delaney presented the Committee structure for the year 2000. He announced committee chairman to be:

Land Acquisition/Management Committee – Chairman Chuck Agnew
Engineering Committee – Chairman Bob Huffman
Legislative Committee – Chairman George Carlson
Finance/Policy Committee – Chairperson Arlene Colvin
Marina Committee – Chairman Bill Tanke
Recreation Committee – Chairman Curt Vosti
Minority Contracting Committee – Chairman Marion Williams

Mr. Tanke made a motion ratifying the committee structure; motion seconded by Chuck Agnew; motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Executive Director Dan Gardner stated that he and Attorney Casale have talked with John Sirles, District Engineer for the COE office, relative to the COE's aggressive schedule and the Commission's inability to meet it with the funds that are currently available. Mr. Gardner estimated that we have about \$1.7 million with no reserve money available. We have asked the COE to pull back on some of the west reach engineering and just focus on the priority construction phases that would best maximize our remaining dollars. June/July of 2001 would be the first opportunity to release any more money from the next State budget session. Mr. Vosti inquired at what part of the west reach would the COE pull back on. Mr. Pokrajac answered it would be Stage VIII (Stateline to Columbia), Stage VII (Columbia to Northcote) and Stage VI (Kennedy to Cline).

Mr. Carlson expressed his dismay that, after all these years, we are still struggling to obtain state dollars, even when the state is only matching \$1 toward the Federal \$3. Mr. Gardner added that it is critical we get in the Governor's budget; only once in all these years were we in the Governor's budget. Discussion ensued on whether the public should be made aware through the media of the difficulty in obtaining enough money each biennium to keep up with the COE schedule. Mr. Carlson thought we should be more aggressive. Chairman Delaney asked the Board members to check their calendars and a meeting date would be set at the April 6th Board meeting to plan a strategy of what we can do about the funding situation.

Mr. Gardner informed the Board members that we have hired a person that will work about 24 hours per week on land acquisition crediting.

Land Acquisition Committee – Committee Chairman Chuck Agnew informed the Board members that a meeting was held on February 15th. Topic at meeting was possible sites for a handicapped park. Judy Vamos is researching alternate sites.

Mr. Agnew also indicated that about 140 acres of land north and south of 35th Avenue between Grant and Chase would be advertised for farming.

Mr. Vosti made a motion to dispense with the normal proceeding of the meeting in order to allow a resident, Terry Savage, to speak. Mr. Savage lives in one of the four houses west of Hohman Ave. on River Drive in Munster (houses are in COE's plans for future buyout and relocates); motion seconded by Chuck Agnew; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Savich addressed the Board. He stated that he had bought in 1996 with no knowledge of the Commission's intent to eventually purchase those homes when the project reached his area. His home has flooded twice and is the lowest elevated home of the four. He has been in communication with Judy Vamos, Land Acquisition Agent for the Commission and has informed her that he tried selling the house from May to September with no luck. Once he has informed any potential buyers of the situation, they are scared off. He was informed that acquisition at this time would not be possible. In lieu of that not happening, he asked 3 things: (1) consider moving up the acquisition schedule; (2) give him a date so he would be able to plan accordingly; and (3) help in floodproofing his home. Chairman Emerson Delaney stated he was very familiar

with the problem in that area since he lived very close to him. Unfortunately, that area is at the very tail end of the project (Stage VIII); and, unfortunately, the date keeps getting pushed back because of funding problems. Mr. Gardner added that the Commission originally requested the COE to protect these 4 homes but because of the location of Stateline, a long enough levee could not be built to protect them. The COE also felt that seal-proofing the homes was not sufficient. Mr. Gardner did not know if anything could be done in the interim. Mr. Vosti felt that we, as a public body, needed to pursue any avenue open to us to be able to help the public. He suggested we look into accelerating the project date for that area and possibly look into floodproofing his home so he does not flood again. Mr. Vosti reminded the Commission that we were able to move up the recreation at the Carlson Oxbow Park in Hammond. Mr. Gardner answered that we were able to do that because it was not a flood control area and did not impact downstream. Chairman Delaney added that it is impossible to commit to a date. He suggested to Mr. Savage that he pursue some research himself on floodproofing and keep us informed of what he finds and possibly, we could help with some limited funds in that respect. Mr. Gardner added that there are firms that can inspect the home and make recommendations for floodproofing. Mr. Tanke suggested that this issue be discussed at the engineering committee to see what options are available and we will inform Mr. Savage directly. Mr. Carlson made a motion to return to order of business; motion seconded by Curt Vosti; motion passed unanimously.

Project Engineering Committee – Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave the engineering report. He reported that a pre-bid meeting for Stage IV Phase 1 South was held on 2/23/00 and a pre-bid meeting was held for the Burr Street betterment levee Phase 1 on 3/1/00. Mr. Gardner added that these pre-bids are important in that we do a separate mailout to local firms that may be interested in bidding; if not as a prime contractor, then as a sub contractor.

Mr. Huffman reported that a coordination meeting was held with the COE and the Gary Sanitary District on 2/16/00 to discuss ongoing drainage and design concerns.

Mr. Huffman then reported that a pre-design meeting was held with Rani Engineering on 2/24/00 for Stage VI Phase 2.

Legislative Committee – Committee Chairman George Carlson referred to Mr. Gardner. Mr. Gardner stated that he has heard nothing from the legislative delegation. He expressed his frustration of, first, being left out of the budget altogether, then, secondly, only receiving \$1.5 million when this was the biggest construction season yet and the federal money received was the largest amount ever. He understood that there was a possibility of receiving additional monies in a Technical Corrections Bill but, as the session is drawing to a close, that does not appear it is going to happen. Mr. Gardner has given information to the Congressman's office to talk with the Governor.

Recreational Development Committee – Committee Chairman Curt Vosti deferred to George Carlson. Mr. Carlson and Mr. Huffman thanked Jim Pokrajac for the marked-up map showing how the trail connection looks

in the area between Hammond and Highland and where our trail would connect. Mr. Huffman still thinks that some re-alignment needs to be done.

Marina Committee – Committee Chairman Bill Tanke gave an update on the dredging of Burns Waterway. IDEM permit is received. It is hopeful that dredging will take place soon.

Mr. Tanke then referred to the letter in the packet that staff wrote to the City to request the next marina bond payment of \$28,643.84. Mr. Tanke made a motion authorizing payment to Bank One for payment of the April 1st marina bond payment; motion seconded by George Carlson; motion passed unanimously.

Attorney is pursuing reclaiming the sand money back to us that was originally put up to secure the marina bonding.

Finance Committee – Committee Chairperson Arlene Colvin presented the claims for approval. She proceeded to make a motion to accept the financial report and approve the February claims totaling \$46,869.79; motion seconded by George Carlson; motion passed unanimously.

Minority Contracting Committee – Mr. Gardner stated that there was some discussion at the pre-bid meetings on what the COE is doing to make sure the goals of minority participation are being met.

Other Business – There was none.

Statements to the Board – Denis Buksa, who owns one of the four homes next to Mr. Savich, asked the Board members that they are kept apprised of projected schedule dates. Chairman Delaney reiterated that it would be quite a few years before we are in their area for construction. Mr. Carlson added that the protection the city of Hammond has, the city itself took it upon themselves and provided that protection for the residents. He felt that the town of Munster should do the same and help the 4 homes. Mr. Buksa asked about whether some publicity could be done about the area flooding history and that we are due for another flood.

There being no further business, the next regular Commission meeting was scheduled for **6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 6, 2000.**

/sjm