

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2001
AT THE COMMISSION OFFICE
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
PORTAGE, INDIANA**

Chairman William Tanke called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Eight (8) Commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Quorum was declared and guests were recognized.

Development Commissioners:

George Carlson
Charles Agnew
Mark Reshkin
William Tanke
Curt Vosti
Bob Huffman
Marion Williams
Steve Davis

Visitors:

Don Ewoldt – Lake Erie Land Company
Sandy O’Brien – Dunelands Sierra Club
Jim Flora – R. W. ARMSTRONG CO.
Jomary Crary – IDNR, Div. of Water
Ruth Mores – Hammond resident
Bill Petrites – Highland resident

Staff:

Dan Gardner
Sandy Mordus
Lou Casale
Jim Pokrajac
Judy Vamos

Commissioner George Carlson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 5, 2001; motion seconded by Chuck Agnew; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman’s Report – Mr. Tanke announced that \$5.5 million has been approved for the Development Commission. He thanked everyone who played a part in supporting the budget request. He went on to say that he felt it was a combination of a number of things that helped us out. A lot of correspondence went out, a lot of phone calls were made, meetings were held and support was solicited at every opportunity given us. Mr. Tanke proceeded to read a letter received from the COE in which they provide an estimated funding contribution of local share to be at \$9.8 million for the next two years (through FY 03). That amount includes a cash requirement, the estimated lands, easements, and rights-of-way, and the Burr Street betterment levee. Mr. Gardner added that he would be attending a meeting in Indianapolis at the Governor’s Office next week. Mr. Tanke suggested that a joint meeting be held (Legislative Committee and the Finance Committee) to explore additional sources of funding and how we can get our fair share of new money and we should begin the process now.

Executive Director’s Report - Mr. Gardner informed the Board members that we have received a spread sheet that keeps track of the project funding, both Federal funds and state funds. This is the first time we have ever received anything from the COE showing all expended funds. Imad Samara, project manager, will explain to us

how to read it. The chart takes us through project completion, estimated to be at year 2008. We have shared this spreadsheet with the Congressman's Office and the Governor's Office.

Mr. Gardner talked about the upcoming meeting at 9:00 Wednesday, May 9th at the Capital in the Governor's Office. Jeff Viohl, the Federal liaison representing the Governor's Office in Washington, has initiated the meeting. Several staff people from the Governor's Office will attend, including the Governor's chief of staff. The IDNR, State Budget Agency, Dept. of Administration, and INDOT have also been invited. Mr. Gardner will show the 7-minute video of the project. It was discussed whether the Congressman's Office should be included. Mr. Gardner will ask Jeff Viohl. He will report back at the next meeting.

Mr. Gardner distributed a draft letter from Imad Samara breaking down how the \$5.5 million would be spent. These figures in the letter were the result of a joint meeting with the COE and staff in which we anticipated the best way to spend the monies that would yield the highest benefit to us. Mr. Gardner stated that we need to continue showing progress; i.e. starting the IDNR permit process, finishing up the east reach remediation area, start the process to get the city of Gary out of the floodplain, show good faith and do at least as much as we can in the west reach to begin construction with available funding.

Land Acquisition/Management Committee – Committee Chairman Chuck Agnew reported that there were no increased offers or condemnations this month. He reported that he, Dan Gardner and Judy Vamos attended the River Forest School Board meeting on April 24th to explain Phase I of the handicapped accessible park. The remaining equipment has been ordered and construction will begin in June when school is closed for the summer. A groundbreaking ceremony will take place with the Commission and the school corporation coordinating. Mr. Agnew added that the city of Lake Station is taking the old equipment and they will remove it at their expense.

Mr. Agnew informed the Board that FOCUS Sign Co. has erected 2 billboards in the I-65 and I-80/94 area on NIPSCO property. The signs do not obstruct our roadway easement and they have improved the roadway with stone. Attorney Casale will review the agreement to determine if any compensation is necessary.

Mr. Agnew continued, informing the Board that Boy Scout Troop #280 would once again perform their levee landscaping/cleanup work from June 1-3 in the area of River Drive in Hammond. Mr. Agnew made a motion for the Commission to supply pizzas to the Boy Scouts on Saturday, as we have done the last couple of years; motion seconded by Curt Vosti; motion passed unanimously. The Boy Scout troop has received \$2000 from the Hammond Community Corp.

Mr. Agnew added that a meeting would be scheduled in the near future with GSD, WREP and the City of Gary to review East Reach operation and maintenance.

Project Engineering Committee – Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave the engineering report. He reported that a request was received from the North Township Trustee to consider the realignment of the levee adjacent to Hart Ditch in Munster. Title work recently performed shows that the Township owns all of the property on the west side of Hart Ditch to Hawthorne St. They would like to utilize that property and push the levee over further to the west adjacent to the town of Munster property.

Mr. Huffman referred to a meeting on May 1st with the town of Highland to review drainage issues at Indianapolis Blvd. south of the river. With the INDOT project bringing a large amount of additional storm water into that area, the town of Highland has agreed to add some culverts that will help with drainage by re-directing some of this storm water to the east that will tie into the 81st Street pump station. It appears that the COE nor the LCRBDC have had the opportunity to review INDOT's plans and the issue of drainage was not adequately addressed. The COE will do a hydrology review upon receipt of the plans from INDOT. Jim Pokrajac added that an issue has recently developed with KROSAN ENTERPRISES in the Kennedy Industrial Park area. Their recently constructed building has been built so close that it may not allow enough room for levee construction. The COE is now reviewing the plans and specs and will modify them as much as they can to allow construction in that area. It is not known at this time whether they have encroached onto the 75' drainage easement we have. We will have to have it surveyed. A field meeting will be held with them once that is determined.

Legislative Committee – Committee Chairman George Carlson referred to items in the agenda packet consisting of our letter to Senator Robert Meeks and Senator Sue Landske. Also included was a letter of funding support to Rep. Earl Harris from the N.W. IN forum Environmental Committee, as well as a newspaper article regarding the State Budget. Mr. Carlson recapped the highlights of what the Commission has done to obtain support for our budget request. Ultimately, it has paid off as the language mandating local match support of the \$5.5 million has been removed and the Commission now stands alone and not under IDNR. He thanked all parties who played such an important role in realizing the importance of this flood control project and doing something to make it continue to fruition.

Commissioner Mark Reshkin added that he would suggest an active marketing campaign begin as soon as possible so we are not up against the same problem in another two years. The communities and people living along the river who will benefit from this project need to take an active support role.

Commissioner Marion Williams echoed what Mark Reshkin said in regard to marketing the project. This is important because, once this entire project is constructed, operation & maintenance will take over and that will require cooperation and a real understanding and dedication on the parts of the municipalities affected. It was stated that this agency has no taxing authority.

Mr. Gardner presented a Resolution of Appreciation to be sent to the several legislators who really played an active role in the Conference Committee or who advised those conferees.

George Carlson made a motion to send the resolution; motion seconded by Marion Williams; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Vosti added that a thank you letter needs to go out to all the delegation and all people who helped support this request.

Recreational Development Committee – Committee Chairman Curt Vosti informed the Board members that a meeting was held on April 11th with the COE and INDOT. INDOT agreed that the recreational trail crossing could be placed further south at the existing light at Highway Avenue in Highland. INDOT is opposed to crossing Cline Avenue at the levee intersection because of a higher pedestrian risk. Concern was that people would cross at the frontage road anyway. Discussion ensued. Mr. Vosti made a motion directing staff to write a

letter to INDOT trying to get them to reconsider their position about the crossing; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Vosti then reported that a meeting was held with the city of Gary, I.U. Northwest, COE and the LCRBDC on April 12th to review the proposal for the recreation trail re-alignment at Broadway and at Grant Streets and the LCRBDC will submit a proposal for all to review and discuss.

Mr. Vosti will schedule an Engineering/ Recreational committee meeting shortly to discuss the options on the feasibility study that R.W.Armstrong Co. did for a pedestrian walkway on the east side of the Kennedy Ave. bridge to allow the trail to be contiguous.

Marina Committee – Committee Chairman Bill Tanke stated that there were no monies earmarked for the Lake Michigan Marina Development Commission from this year's state biennium budget. We need to have a meeting with the city of Portage shortly to see how we can go about financing the build-out of the marina slips in order to fulfill our obligation with the Federal government. Commissioner Steve Davis added that the city of Portage is obtaining a permit so the dredging of a sand bar that is obstructing the entranceway can be removed.

Finance Committee – Treasurer Curt Vosti referred to the monthly financial status report in the agenda packet and referred to the claims for approval. He proceeded to make a motion to approve the financial status report and claims sheet totaling \$59,045.87; motion seconded by Chuck Agnew; motion passed unanimously.

A renewed Public Officials liability policy has been received. Staff is working on updating the acreage that the Commission owns and will get that information to the insurance company. The insurance policy may have to be updated (at additional cost) once the new acreage figures are known. We have a new insurance underwriter, Nautilus Insurance Company. Staff is also following up with a letter to other entities that we have a lease/ agreement with for use of that property in order to be added as an additional insured to that entity's insurance coverage. The attorney will approve and review before staff sends out. At Commissioner Tanke's request, the attorney will review the insurance policy for land liability when we receive it.

Minority Contracting Committee – Committee Chairman Marion Williams reported that there is no report this month.

Other Business –There was none.

Statements to the Board –

Ruth Mores, resident along the river in Hammond, provided pictures to the LCRBDC showing how debris has built up in the river behind her house. She had an informal meeting at her house with about 15 neighbors in attendance to talk about the flood control project that will impact their properties. She indicated that some of her neighbors had no idea that the project existed and suggested that we really need to get the word out. She is concerned not only with the immediate debris problem in the river, but the continuous operation and maintenance after the project is complete. Jim Pokrajac informed her that the COE is doing the engineering now for that area. He will be reviewing them when they are 50% complete, probably in Oct/Nov. We will share them

with the communities at that time and public meetings will be held with the affected residents so their concerns can be addressed before plans are final.

Mr. Gardner added that he had talked to Stan Dostatni about the debris accumulation. He said that it is very difficult to get equipment down the slopes to get to the river. Any detailed cleaning of the channel requires a DNR permit also. The Commission itself is not responsible for clearing debris. We will talk to the COE about clearing the channel when they are constructing there. At least at that time, perhaps it could be a project cost and once it is cleaned up, it would be easier to maintain. Staff will pursue this with the COE.

Commissioner Vosti (wearing his hat as Hammond Parks & Recreation Dept.) will work with Ruth Mores and see what the city can do for her. Commissioner Tanke suggested that perhaps we could contact the Mayor to consider establishing a Stormwater Management Board.

There being no further business, the next regular Commission meeting was scheduled for **5:00 p.m. for a Work Study session and 6:00 for the regular Board meeting on Thursday, May 31, 2001. Please note that this date will serve as June meeting.**

/sjm