

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2003**  
**6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD**  
**PORTAGE, INDIANA**

Chairperson Arlene Colvin called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Eight (8) commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Guests were recognized.

**Development Commissioners:**

Arlene Colvin  
Robert Huffman  
Mark Reshkin  
George Carlson  
Steve Davis  
Charlie Ray  
Emerson Delaney  
Bob Marszalek

**Visitors:**

Jim Flora – R.W.Armstrong Company  
Kelsee Waggoner – Congressman's Office  
Imad Samara - COE  
Don Ewoldt – Lake Erie Land Company  
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart  
Spike Peller – GSD  
Jomary Crary – Div. of Water, IDNR  
Sean Fahey – Div. of Water, IDNR  
Walter Church – Boy Scouts, Troop 280  
Mark Lopez  
Phil Gralik – R.W.Armstrong Company

**Staff:**

Dan Gardner  
Sandy Mordus  
Lou Casale  
Jim Pokrajac  
Judy Vamos  
Lorraine Kray

The minutes of the March 6, 2003 meeting was approved by a motion from Bob Marszalek; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously.

**Chairperson's Report** – Chairperson Arlene Colvin encouraged members to contact their legislators in regards to project funding support. There are about 45 days left in the session.

**Executive Director's Report** – Executive Director Dan Gardner reported that mitigation pursuance is ongoing. Accepted offers have yet to be obtained in the Hobart Marsh area but property acquisition is still a priority. He also stated that the IDNR permit to construct in a floodway application has been submitted to DNR. One letter was received by DNR requesting a public hearing but it did not meet the requirements of needing 25 signatures. Although a file number has been issued to the application, the 2 year countdown to construction does not begin until all pertinent information is received and the COE is still submitting additional documentation.

- Mr. Gardner stated that he had a conference call with Imad Samara and Jay DuMontelle of FHWA, Indiana Div., regarding the Federal Highway bridge credits. He referred to a letter from INDOT stating that over \$19 million is available for the Commission to use as state credit for the COE federal funding. The letter was signed by Richard Whitney, the Chief Financial Officer for INDOT. INDOT will be contacting the COE soon.
- Commission Huffman asked whether securing the bridge credit would allow us to move forward into the west reach Mr. Gardner explained that the \$19 million would be approved "credit" which would help us in our 25% cost share but that does not get us any "real" money to buy land with or relocate utilities; both non-federal obligations.

**Land Acquisition/Land Management Committee** – Committee Chair Arlene Colvin gave the report. She stated that there were no increased offers or condemnations. She proceeded to make a motion authorizing acceptance of the high bid of \$35,101 submitted by G. W. Berkheimer for the sale of a 7 acre surplus property site on 35<sup>th</sup> St. in Gary; motion seconded by Bob Marszalek; motion passed unanimously. The property did go through the standard State procedures and was advertised properly.

- The 3 vacant structures in the Burr Street betterment area will be demolished no later than the end of March by the city of Gary. Bob Huffman made a motion to sign the agreement with the City for the Consent to Demolish; motion seconded by Emerson Delaney; motion passed unanimously.
- Troop leader Tom Warren of Boy Scout #280 made a presentation on the clean-up/improvements of the levee trail in the Riley School area (Northcote to Columbia in Hammond). This is the fifth year that several Boy Scout troops have had a camping outing in which the Development Commission has supplied pizza for the boys on Saturday. It was stated that the COE will replace the work the boys are doing after levee construction is completed in that area.
- In regards to O&M, Bob Huffman reported that the first meeting was held on February 26 and the next meeting will be held on March 18.

**Environmental Committee** – Committee Chairman Mark Reshkin gave an update on the Hobart Marsh mitigation properties. He reported that to date only refusals are coming in. The primary area that has been targeted for acquisition is not going as well as we had hoped; and we cannot acquire any of these properties with condemnation. We are still pursuing some properties in the area but not in a contiguous configuration. We will continue to contact all property owners. To date, we have not received any counter offers.

**Legislative Committee** – Committee Chairman George Carlson gave the legislative report. He referred to the news article listing out all the lobbyists that spend more than \$100,000 a year in lobbying efforts. Mr. Gardner added that he just wanted to show the dollars spent by the private entities to influence this session's outcome. The point was not to hire a lobbyist, but just to highlight the need to keep up the momentum ourselves.

- Mr. Gardner committed to sharing a list of "talking points" to the members for their use in talking to any elected officials. This was at the request of Commissioner Reshkin.
- Mr. Carlson talked about a possibility of a Conservancy District being formed to help defray the costs of operation and maintenance of the levee system once it is in place.
- Mr. Carlson also stated that we are depending on Representative Earl Harris to "carry the ball". A meeting date will be scheduled for the Finance/Legislative Committees to meet.
- Mr. Gardner added that he is going to Washington DC next week and will have the opportunity to meet with the Congressman.
- Discussion ensued on the strong language the COE letter used in regard to the project being delayed if we did not receive any funding. It was stated that the project would have to be finished to Hart Ditch control structure. If it was not, it would greatly impact Illinois and that is unacceptable.
- Imad was asked if the COE had any data or maps on what a 6" impact of floodwater would do to the area. He will check.
- Mr. Gardner referred to the news article stating that more than \$26 million for 16 water and sewer projects in Northwest Indiana was passed in Congress. It earmarks \$3.5 million of Federal funds for the Little Cal flood control project.
- Mr. Carlson also stated that a Legislative meeting will be scheduled shortly.
- Mr. Gardner also indicated that he will be getting in touch with the newspaper editorial boards next week to see if an editorial could be put in regarding the Little Cal funding. He also will be talking to the Northwest IN Construction Advancement Foundation and the Northwest IN Forum.
- Sean Fahey added that the budget is out of the House and now in the Senate. He said it was imperative that we make sure we are engaging the legislators to keep us in their minds.

**Project Engineering Committee** – Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave the engineering report. He reported that Letters were sent to Highland and Munster asking that we be notified of any potential developers/property owners wanting to build in the project area in order that we can discuss impacts of our project relative to their proposed construction. To date, neither community has responded to this request.

- Mr. Huffman reported that INDOT has had several meetings with communities/agencies affected by the I-80/94 expansion. Some of the expansion is anticipated to overlap onto some of our easements in the project area. INDOT may need some easements from us. The vast majority of the permanent work will be done in their easement.

**Recreation Committee** – Committee Chairman Emerson Delaney thanked the Boy Scouts for their presentation.

**Marina Committee** – Committee Chairman Emerson Delaney reported that the marina revenue bond payment is due April 1. He made a motion approving payment; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously. The city of Portage has already been notified that the payment is due.

- Mr. Gardner added that Burns Waterway dredging will be done this spring. The lake levels are low so dredging is critical. The clean sand will be placed on the beach. \$1.6 million is included in the recently-passed Federal budget for this purpose.

**Finance Committee** – Dan Gardner gave the financial report. He referred to the financial status report. Mr. Delaney made a motion to approve the claims for a total of \$41,414.85; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously.

**Policy Committee** – Committee Chairman George Carlson stated there was no committee report at this time.

**Public Relations Committee** – Committee Chairman Bob Marszalek stated there was no committee report at this time.

**Other Issues** – There were no other issues.

**Statements from the Floor** – There were none.

The next scheduled meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 3, 2003. Staff will be checking with members to see if another regular meeting date would work better for them.