

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 4:30 P.M. MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2008
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
PORTAGE, INDIANA

Chairman Bill Biller called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Seven (7) Commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Development Commissioners:

Mark Gordish
Robert Huffman
John Mroczkowski
Arlene Colvin
Dave Burrus
Kent Gurley
Bill Biller

Visitors:

Mark Lopez – Congressman’s Office
Elizabeth Johnson - “ “
Susan Brown – The Times
John Swanson – NIRPC Executive Director
Erik Potter – Post Tribune
Senator Frank Mrvan
Emerson Delaney – Former LCRBDC
Commission member

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Lou Casale

Chairman Biller called the special meeting to order. He stated that the purpose of this meeting is to address a letter received from Congressman Visclosky on September 22, 2008. The letter addresses four concerns: (1) the termination of Dan Gardner’s employment as Executive Director of the Commission; (2) the establishment of a Search Committee to hire a new Director who has construction management and contracting experience; (3) undertake the review of operations and personnel to propel the project to completion; and (4) make a commitment to transparency and accountability.

Chairman Biller offered his and the Commission’s condolences on the loss of homes, businesses, and property incurred in the recent flooding. He said their hearts and prayers go out to all the unfortunate people, especially in the town of Munster, whose areas were devastated by the flooding.

The main reason for tonight’s meeting is to consider the resignation of Dan Gardner, Executive Director to the LCRBDC. He has submitted a letter of resignation effective September 26, 2008. Mr. Biller proceeded to read Mr. Gardner’s letter (attached hereto and made part of these minutes as Attachment A). Mr. Burrus made a motion to accept Mr. Gardner’s letter of resignation; motion seconded by Arlene Colvin; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Mroczkowski inquired what happens next. Mr. Biller stated that the Commission needs to meet and decide on the next steps. There will be an Executive Session prior to the next regular Board meeting on October 1. A Search committee will be formed to look for a new director and discuss funding. There are numerous properties in condemnation and we need

to have funding in place to pay into court. Executive Session will address some of these issues. Arlene Colvin added that she thought the Commission needed to take any steps it can to engage the communities as well as the Congressman's office. Mark Gordish emphasized the need to keep the project moving forward and as quickly as possible so it is not slowed down. Funding is a big issue so the Commission will not be slowed down. Chairman Biller added that he understands an audit will be conducted of Commission's funds. He welcomes that.

Public Comments:

Emerson Delaney, town councilman from Chesterton, addressed the Commission. Mr. Delaney previously served on the LCRBDC Board for eight years, also serving as chairman. He grew up in a floodplain and lived on River Drive in Hammond. He proceeded to say that this was a record rainfall, falling in other communities away from the river, throughout the entire basin. He opposed the removal of Dan Gardner and opposed Board member replacement. The Commission, since 1980, has had six Governor appointments on this Board. The Board does not need to be streamlined; it needs local representation. No one is going to benefit at this point in time, when the project is so close to completion, to have a new 5-member Board appointed. The Commission has always had "clean" audits. He felt the problem is funding and has always been funding. The Commission never received the State funding it requested. That is the reason this project is not completed. And because sufficient funding was not available to the Commission, construction costs and all related costs thereto, go up. The Congressman has always secured sufficient Federal funding but the State did not and, therefore, could not keep up with land acquisition. Mother Nature was to blame for this flooding; not one man.

Commissioner Bob Huffman added that there is much to discuss in the Executive Session.

Meeting dismissed at 5:30.

September 26, 2008

Mr. William Biller, Chairman
Little Calumet River Basin
Development Commission

Little Calumet River Basin
Development Commission
Membership

Dear members:

I wish to thank the LCRBDC board for their support and commitment to me and the Little Calumet River Flood Protection/Recreation Project. I have always strived to conduct myself and the Commission's business in a professional, honest, and ethical manner. For the project, the Commission and the needed non-federal funding to succeed at this time, the full confidence of the Federal, State, and local elected officials must be restored. That effort and the work to restore it will require a full time Executive Director.

Toward that end, I submit my resignation as the Executive Director of the Little Calumet River Basin Development commission effective immediately. I offer to assist in any way requested by the Commission and area officials to facilitate a successful transition.

Respectfully submitted,


Dan Gardner

Attachment A (3)