

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2011

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 and Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. All four Board members were present (one vacancy exists). Quorum was declared.

Development Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Anthony Broadnax, Treasurer
Tom Wichlinski, Secretary
Ron McAhron

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Staff:

Sandy Mordus

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Visitors:

Mike Wood, Munster
John Mulesa - Munster
Mike Echterling-Lake Cty Fish & Game
T. Cholipski - River Drive, Munster
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
Stephen Jadrnak - Forest, Hammond
Craig/Bea Hanusin - Munster
Dorothy Pazanin - River Dr. Munster
Elaine Fay - River Drive, Munster
J. Plusch - Munster
Bridget Bodefied - Munster
Jeff Groen - Hammond
Pat Lynx - Hammond
Jayson Reeves - Gary

Visitors:

William/Beverly Coomes - Munster
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Ronald Albin - Munster
Dave Nellans - Munster Town Councilman
Imad Samara - Army Corps
Lynne Whelan - Army Corps
Ruth Mores - Southmoor, Hammond
Susan Miller - Hammond
Jim Linstrom - Hammond
Joe Simonetto - Munster
Philip Golden - Hammond
Rodney Trotter - Hammond
Demetrio/Consuelo Ornelas - Munster
Pam/Mary Lou Daniels - Munster
Bill Howard - Munster
LuAnn Franklin - The Times
Allen Blocker - Hammond
Dorreen Carey - Broadway, Gary
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek - Hammond
Bill Petrites - Highland
Tina Kutkoski - Southmoor, Hammond
Mike Zarontonello - Southmoor, Hmd
Brenda Peers - Munster
Peter Yackanich - Hammond
T. Ahearn - Hammond
Matt Felder - View Outdoor
B. Runberg - Munster
Arnold Schmidt - Hammond
Carrie Rich Diombala - Hammond
Kathleen Hill - Hammond
Chuck Krest - Hammond

Minutes of the March 9th meeting were approved by a motion from Tom Wichlinski; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed by a 4-0 roll call vote.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Bill Baker referred to the major flood event we had in October 2008 that no one ever wants to witness again. Every time he looks at the flooding

pictures, he reminds himself that is why he is sitting in this seat. It has been a real challenge trying to get money earmarked for O&M. Given the project is a man-made structure, it makes maintenance all that more important. We have put together a great plan for O&M and emergency management and we need to utilize that plan with available funds.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay reported on several items:

- He met with the Corps and some Munster residents to review the 50% plans of the Stateline tieback levee. Several ideas were discussed; the Corps will try to incorporate them into the plans.
- Regarding Forest Avenue levee, Mr. Repay reported that most of the residents have signed the offer and sent it back to the Commission; some residents have requested changes; some we did not hear back from. We will work with the residents to try to avoid condemnation proceedings, or, at least, minimize them.
- Army Corps officials met with Southmoor residents on Saturday morning to view the area and review the 100% plans.
- Mr. Repay and Chairman Baker met with some city of Gary officials to talk about Chase Street. We are waiting for Gary to sign off on the plan to replace the culverts at Chase Street.
- We have been monitoring the areas at Cabela's, Marshalltown, and Kennedy Ave – new solar monitoring stations are working good.
- Regarding standing water on NIPSCO right-of-way under the high tension wires, he met with NIPSCO to discuss how the culverts can be cleaned so water can move out faster further east. NIPSCO does not want water under their wires.
- Farm land leases have been sent out for 2011 farming season.
- Work should begin soon in stages VII & VIII; it is still the wet season now. Several issues need to be settled between the Corps and the Commission regarding the stages.
- Chairman Bill Baker commented that he was glad he attended the meeting in Gary. It gave him a better understanding of the severity of some issues and it was good to hear some of their concerns.

Army Corps Status Report:

Imad Samara reported on items that remain to be done in the construction stages:

- In Stage VII – fix outlet structures, sluice gates must raise entirely; complete installation of wall caps and pilasters; finish all wall surfaces, patching, etc; finish all seeding and restoration, final grading; complete installation of catchbasin 4, manhole and connection to existing vault beneath resident driveway along River Drive; complete all recreation features, asphalt trails, etc.; fix sloped sidewalk issue at Columbia (modification to contract); finish gatewell fencing.
- In Stage VIII - complete all installation of precast wall panels and wall caps; numerous areas remain; finish all wall surfaces, patching, etc.; remove debris from levee surface; finish topsoil spreading, finalize surface; complete all final grading, seeding, restoration, erosion control as needed; complete all recreation features, trails, etc.; finish asphalt park road.
- Drainage issue in Stage VII when contractor left. They bid it out; awarding the contract tomorrow; work will be completed by June. Issue is beyond outside of levee in Munster. 5 bidders – low was \$39,000.
- Design of tie back, review process done by 18th. Comments may come in; being reviewed now.

- 100% tie back projected for end of May; all comments have been incorporated and then they will be finalized.
- Regarding Southmoor, plans will be finalized after the meeting with residents on Saturday.

Action Required – Chairman Bill Baker stated that the Commission is trying to do some maintenance work with limited funds as well as addressing some outstanding issues in Stages VII & VIII. We are trying to be fiscally prudent with the remaining dollars. Mr. Baker referred to Mr. Repay for the financial report. Mr. Repay reported that we are still within budget. We have remaining monies that we will be using for future expenses; i.e. Forest Avenue, Southmoor, Griffith, and remaining acquisitions.

- The claims for April were presented in the amount of \$312,950.21. Mr. Repay referred to the large claim received from Conoco Phillips. This is the last invoice for the Stage V-2 pipeline corridor. The agreement with Conoco was for an estimated amount of \$333,000 so the actual invoice was considerably less. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to amend the claims payable to add \$75,000 payable to INDOT; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a roll call vote of 4-0. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the total claims payable of \$387,950.21; motion seconded by Ron McAhron; motion passed with a roll call vote of 4-0.
- Commissioner McAhron proceeded to make a motion to approve the O&M claims in the total amount of \$15,710.00. Commissioner Broadnax seconded the motion; motion passed with a roll call vote of 4-0.
- Commissioner Broadnax inquired about the work completed for O&M. Mr. Repay replied that in certain areas, a contractor needs to be hired because of the complexity of the job; companies have insurance coverage; companies have the equipment. Some of the work is dangerous and the municipalities are not trained for some of the heavier work. They also have limited employees that can help; they are strained with other jobs going on. The last time that Munster helped, it took 8 people to do the job. Mr. Repay stated that 11 miles of the project are in the west reach (Cline Avenue westward) and 7 miles are in Gary (Cline Avenue eastward). Right now, some of the bigger issues are in the west reach. Combining some of the areas that need cleaning may save us a little money when we have to hire a contractor.

Land Acquisition/Land Management – Before any discussion took place, Commissioner Wichlinski removed himself from the room while discussion took place on the issue of the billboards. Mr. Repay stated that bids were opened and received from View Outdoor Advertising, Lamar, Outdoor One, and Clear Channel last month. He has composed a list of potential leases. Chairman Baker added that additional billboard leases would generate some funding and the billboard companies will be responsible for securing all necessary permits. Commissioner McAhron made a motion authorizing the Executive Director and attorney to initiate conversation with prospective lessees and work toward final negotiations; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed by a roll call vote of 3-0. Commissioner Tom Wichlinski did not participate in the vote and was then called back into the room.

Project Engineering and

Operation & Maintenance – Mr. Repay stated that he has monthly meetings with the municipalities. The main topic today was the access points to the river. Imad added that the proposed access points are included in the plan. If municipalities want any additional

access roads, they would have to be added. Municipalities will need to know where they can launch a boat in case of an emergency. Imad stated that Friday is the deadline to finalize the plans for the access points to the river.

- Mr. Repay reported that there are additional blockages that need to be removed. There are about seven locations for an estimated total of about \$15,000. Some of the areas are difficult to access because of their location. Chairman Baker added that it is a case by case basis whether the municipality can clean it out or if a third party contractor would need to do the job. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to give the Executive Director the authority to engage in a contract on a one time basis to clear the blockages for \$15,000; motion seconded by Commission Wichlinski. The motion was amended to grant authority up to \$20,000, which is the \$15,000 over the standard limited amount of \$5,000; motion passed with a 4-0 roll call vote.
- Commissioner Wichlinski asked about the status of the pump being re-built. Mr. Repay answered that repair of the Grant St. pump should be completed by the end of this month.

Legislative Committee – Commissioner McAhron condensed the status of the bill. It was originally introduced in the House, where it died. It was then inserted onto the budget bill with the modification of using casino funds. It passed in the House and is currently working its way through the Senate. It will probably end up in conference committee. The end of the session is April 29; it must be resolved by then. Chairman Baker added that we just know we need a perpetual funding source.

- Commissioner McAhron reported that there has been no response from FEMA regarding the A99 flood reduction request we sent to them on January 20. The approval of a flood insurance reduction is a Federal process; we can only ask. He further explained that the re-mapping that was done for the county did not include the Little Cal portion because the project was ongoing. He stated that the A99 letter has a commitment for maintenance funding; not a specified funding source.

Other Issues/New Business – There was none.

Statements from the Floor:

- Bill Petrites from Highland asked for an update about the pump lift station on Indianapolis Blvd. Mr. Repay replied that this is an INDOT project and it is moving forward. Imad Samara added that his office has seen some plans for the project but does not think they were the final plans. Mr. Repay says he can check with INDOT again to see if the bid letting date was met. Commissioner McAhron added that he has just sent an email to INDOT for clarification.
- John Mulesa from Munster questioned the efforts to obtain the O&M funding. Mr. Repay stated that the monies of the \$7 million is front-end loaded because of deferred maintenance that needs to be done. The proposal on the table now is to use casino monies. Mr. Mulesa will send info to the Corps regarding some relatively simple and inexpensive solutions to flood control that he saw firsthand in his travels.
- Beverly Coomes from Munster expressed concern about a boat ramp access into the river across from her home. She would hope that the area will be ascetically acceptable to the area residents. The area is a total mess right now; Imad Samara stated there is still work to be done there by the contractor. When completed, the area will be acceptable. He will have the 100% plans available at the next meeting.

- **Jason Reeves** from Gary expressed concern about excessive water accumulating in the Burr Street – Harrison Street area, east toward Gary. If we have a lot of rain, it will cover the road. Trees are dying there because of standing water. He asked that we look at that area.
- **Jeff Groen** from Hammond inquired as the status of the Forest Ave easements. Mr. Repay replied that we are in the process of acquiring easements; there will probably be some condemnations. We are trying to work with homeowners to avoid condemnation. Plans for the tie-in at Stateline should be completed by end of May. Imad added that they will submit the 100% to check to make sure all comments were incorporated. Once final, they will prepare a solicitation to bid the project. Projected date to award a contract would be August; it would probably be one construction season. If changes are still necessary, it will cause delay and more time and money. The Corps will also require the funding to move ahead. Mr. Repay stated that this was not in the original budget for the \$14 million but some areas have come in under budget so we are hopeful that funding is there.
- **A resident on Beech Avenue**, Munster expressed concern about safety issues in his neighborhood; fence is down; much debris not cleared up. Mr. Repay informed him that the contractor will be back to finish up and clean up. There is no recreation in his area; the bike trail will stay on the Hammond side. Imad added that the contractor should be done by June. The cleanup & completion is part of their contract.
- **Mike Wood** from Munster asked whether the tree removal contract had been bid out yet. Imad Samara replied that it had not; there are other priorities right now that must be met first, like Southmoor and the tie-back.
- **Kathleen Hill** from Hammond asked about levees in the deferred maintenance area. She asked that when sections come out of the flood plain, what effect would be in other area. Chairman Baker expressed that is why funding is so important, to be able to keep up with blockage removal on a continuous basis; everyone should be keeping an eye on the river and report any blockage they see.
- **Lee Kozlowski** from Munster questioned plans that have been done for the Northcote bridge. Mr. Repay replied that DLZ Engineering did the work plan options at Northcote bridge for the Lake County Highway; it is not our project; Hammond Sanitary District will do the contract there. The Corps involvement is just to check the elevations to make sure that nothing interferes with their project. Mr. Kozlowski inquired about the news article about Cabela's offering some of their land for developing and how can they get out of the floodplain first. Commissioner McAhron answered that the city of Hammond, as well as the town of Highland, filed for a letter of map revision to take that selected area out of the floodplain because the construction project from Cline to Northcote is complete. The area includes residents properties also. Local communities enforce the flood plain area with FEMA. Their application has not been approved yet; it has been going on for several years. Since the construction is not totally complete in the remaining area (VII & VIII), we could only ask for an A99 flood insurance reduction. This is a short term fix for lower payments; all we can do is ask. We have not heard from FEMA at this point.
- **Bill Howard** from Munster expressed concern that the Corps has not let a contract for tree removal yet. Residents have to worry every time it rains because of trees and blockages in the river. He feels they are just as vulnerable until an O&M plan is in place with funding to do it. Commissioner McAhron replied that a flood protection system is in place. It may not be 100% yet but the Commission is dealing with O&M as best it can with the limited funds on hand. Until O&M funding is in place, we will deal with trees one at a time as needed. We'd like to see it done sooner rather than later, too.

- **Philip Golden** from Hammond expressed concern about not having enough money to build the protective block system on Stateline. He asked whether any of the O&M monies could be used for construction. Mr. Repay replied that any O&M funding cannot be used for any construction. Commissioner McAhron added that the city of Hammond will flood fight on state line if it is necessary.
- **Ken Vavrek** from Hammond expressed how critical maintenance on the river is. He has if Illinois is doing anything on their side for maintenance. Imad said they are meeting again with Illinois on the 20th; he realizes it is important to work with them. They have the Thornton Quarry on their side. They have a certain amount of blockage in their model as a safety mechanism; the Corps has built in safety features also. There is more protection than you think.
- **Craig Hanusin** from Munster asked about the INDOT pump station on Indianapolis Blvd and who it affects. Imad Samara answered that the town of Highland and North Township determined that a pump station was necessary in the area. INDOT did the re-design and added a pump station. The Corps has seen the plans and has commented on them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, May 11 at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.