

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2011**

**Held at  
Munster Town Hall,  
1005 Ridge Road, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session and Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Three Board members were present, with Commissioner Ron McAhron being absent. Quorum was declared.

**Development Commissioners:**

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

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Staff:**

Sandy Mordus

**Attorney:**

Dave Wickland

**Visitors:**

Vanessa Villarreal – Army Corps  
Rob Mangus – Munster Town Council  
John Mulesa - Munster  
John Beckman –Lake County Fish & Game  
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster  
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Munster  
Stephen Jadrnak – Forest, Hammond  
Craig/Bea Hanusin – Munster  
Michelle Quinn – Post Tribune

**Visitors:**

William Coomes - Munster  
Fred Baginski - Hammond  
Joseph Simonetto - Munster  
Dave Nellans – Munster Town Councilman  
Imad Samara – Army Corps  
Brenda Peers - Munster  
Jim Pokrajac – Griffith  
Tom DeGiulio – Munster Town Manager  
Bob Paulson - Munster  
John Mogle - Munster  
Bridget Bodefled - Munster  
Tina Kutkoski - Hammond  
Mike Zarantonello - Hammond  
John/Laurie Czulno – Forest, Hammond  
Don Parker – Calumet Citizens Connecting  
Communities  
Dorreen Carey – Broadway, Gary  
Linda Cook - Griffith  
Bill Petrites - Highland  
Bill Howard - Munster  
Ted Muta - Hammond  
Dorothy Pazanin - Munster  
Peter Yackanich - Hammond  
Elizabeth Johnson – Congressman’s Office

Minutes of the December 1, 2010 meeting were approved by a motion from Tom Wichlinski; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote. Minutes of the January 12, 2011 meeting were approved by a motion from Tom Wichlinski; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed by a 3-0 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. Although it took 30 years to get to this point, the lines of protection are in. When the new Commission was put in place, the goal was to make sure the lines of protection were completed by the end of 2010; that goal was met. The Army Corps is responsible for design and construction of the project. This Commission is the local entity providing 25% local match to the Federal 75% cost. The

Commission is responsible for land acquisition and operation/maintenance. Since this is a man-made structure, it will require continuous maintenance. At this point in time, there is no funding mechanism in place for O&M. At present, the General Assembly is working on some legislation in an attempt to secure a funding source. There was a committee hearing last Wednesday, which is why the meeting was moved to today. The O&M is needed to keep the accreditation so residents will not have to pay the full cost of flood insurance. There is an emergency plan in place; everyone in the community needs to work together as we go forward.

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

- Regarding the flooding of back yards in the 1300 block of River Drive, he has talked to both the Corps and Munster town officials. A plan has been formulated to have several pumps start pumping out the accumulated water in the back yards. The Corps will contract with a private contractor to do this pumping since the contractor is still on winter shut-down.
- A safety concern was raised by Commissioner McAhrn at the last meeting regarding a couple of structures that was built as part of Stage VII. Since the contractor is gone for the winter, the Corps will put up some fencing/gates so no one can access the area.
- We are still waiting for the agreement to be signed by the city of Gary to allow the culverts to be put in at Chase Street. Work will be ready to go as soon as a signed agreement is received.
- A RFP was advertised and sent out to about seven billboard companies to see if there is an interest in erecting billboards on Commission-owned properties. RFP's are due on March 9, which is our next meeting date. They will be opened at that time.
- The A99 letter was sent to the Region V Administrator at FEMA. The letter is supported by all 5 communities and signed by all 5 communities. If approved, it would provide a significant reduction in the flood insurance premiums that residents now pay. The Army Corps and the Congressman's Office helped us in that submittal. When asked about long it would be to receive an answer back from FEMA, Imad Samara said it would probably take about 90 days. He added that FEMA was in favor of us submitting the A99. Mr. Repay added that this is only the second one ever submitted across the country.
- Mr. Repay reported that there were 3 areas in the river identified at the last meeting that needed to be cleaned – (1) East of Calumet Avenue – a tree was cut down but there is some debris remaining. It was not a safe situation and the machinery could not access it. (2) West of Calumet – there was a lack of access; we are hoping the work can be done this week. (3) West of NICTD – that area was cleaned up.
- A timeline was received from the Corps as to when they will start work in the Southmoor area.
- A timeline was also received from the Corps as to when work will begin in the Forest Avenue area and tie back for Stateline.
- Purdue Cal will give a presentation at the next meeting. Since the meeting was changed to Tuesday, they have class that night and could not attend this meeting.

**Army Corps Status Report:**

Imad Samara reported that the contractors are in winter shut-down. They probably will be back at work sometime in March.

- Imad continued to say that he has provided a timeline to the Commission for the area of the tie-back at State line. He stated that 50% plans will be available in March; review will take several weeks and that review process will allow everyone to see what is proposed. Given a satisfactory outcome of the review, 100% design plan would be available in May with a contract in July.
- Regarding the Southmoor area, Imad sent Mr. Repay the schedule this week. The plan and review process will be done in April. The Commission and the homeowners will be a part of the review process. Changes, if necessary, can be made to the design plan in the review process. For the flood control and emergency operation of the Southmoor area, it does include sandbagging. If there are no changes in the review process, it would probably be a May advertising contract.
- Imad also said they are in the process of getting a contract together with Austgen Electric to pump out the ponding areas in residents' backyards on River Drive.

Action Required – Chairman Bill Baker referred to Mr. Repay for the financial report. Mr. Repay reported that we are still on budget. We are drawing against the \$6.3 million received from the State and that should be enough to complete the remaining contracts.

- The claims for February were presented in the amount of \$89,689.44. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the claims; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed with a roll call vote of 3-0. Chairman Baker inquired about the USGS invoice for the Hart Ditch gaging station and whether it is in the project area; Imad replied that it is in the project area.
- Commissioner Broadnax then made a motion to approve the O&M claims in the total amount of \$9,953. Commissioner Wichlinski seconded the motion; motion passed with a roll call vote of 3-0. Chairman Baker asked whether the pump at Burr Street was replaced with a new pump or repair was done and how many more pumps are around the same age that may require replacement/repair. Mr. Repay replied that this particular pump was replaced with a new pump. There are probably about 15 pumps that will require some attention in the near future. Commissioner Wichlinski asked how many gage stations do we have with OMMYX. Mr. Repay replied we have 4 gages installed & working but one more not yet installed.

Land Acquisition/Land Management – Commissioner Bill Baker stated that an RFP has been advertised in two papers and sent out to about seven companies. The RFP is an inquiry to see if there is interest for additional billboard placement. The billboard company would still need to secure all local approvals. Any RFP's received will be opened at the next meeting, March 9.

- Consideration is still being given to some land that we own to be used for wetland mitigation banking.

Project Engineering and

Operation & Maintenance – Dan Repay stated that he and communities were watching the river last week when we had heavy rains. All the snow we had melted quickly and then we had rain on top of it so everyone would have been ready for an emergency situation if it was needed but it was not.

- **Chairman Baker** stated that the Army Corps does an annual inspection of the entire levee system. Whatever those results are from the inspections, the Commission is responsible for fixing. That is why operation and maintenance funding is so important. All components of the flood control system have to work to remain certifiable. He referred to the handbook that has been developed that lists out everything that has to be done to keep the entire project in certifiable condition.

Legislative Committee – Mr. Repay stated that we provided an estimated amount for O&M to the Legislature for their use in developing the House Bill 1574. That amount included some deferred maintenance costs and then a yearly cost to upkeep the levee system. Estimated costs were given to us by the Army Corps. The Legislature drew up the boundaries. He thanked the three sponsors of the bill, Representatives Ed Soliday, Chet Dobis, and Mara Candelaria-Reardon. We are hopeful that it will pass out of the House. It will then move to the Senate. We will continue to work with all municipalities and meet on a regular basis.

Other Issues/New Business – There were none.

Statements from the Floor:

- **Laurie Czulno** from Forest Ave. in Hammond asked about the status of property owners on Forest Ave. Mr. Repay replied it appears that there will be two condemnations. He went on to explain that is why we went in this direction to have all the properties appraised and make offers so we can go forward with the process. Attorney Wickland said offers will be made upon appraisal review process is completed. Upon rejection, condemnation process can begin. Once the court-appointed appraisals come back and we pay into court, we have ownership of the easement. He said the process would probably take at least four months. At this point, the Commission will probably let the contract.
- **Mrs. Czulno** asked how long it would take to hear back from FEMA with the A99 submittal. Imad responded that it usually about 90 days. She also expressed disappointment that the plan for that area is taking so long. Imad stated that it is a lengthy process for final design of the plan, surveys, geotech info, borings, review process, etc. Discussion ensued about the cost share of the project.
- **Bridget Bodefeld** from Munster thanked the Commissioners for working on behalf of the residents. She expressed her concern about seeing more positive information in the papers concerning the project and costs to maintain them. She felt that if more people were knowledgeable, they would be supportive. Mr. Repay agreed that we have a good story to tell to those who want to listen. Educating the public with knowledge, instead of rumors, is invaluable.
- **Mike Zarantonello** from Hammond inquired about the \$6 million to be paid back to RDA; and why the State is not covering it. Mr. Repay stated the current legislation calls for \$300,000 to be paid over a 20 year period. Chairman Baker added that the money from RDA helped us continue with the project and move forward; it needs to be paid back. The State biennium that approved the \$14 million was for the remaining completion costs. The \$6 million pay-back was not part of the \$14 million received from the State. The RDA bailed us out when we needed help to go forward.
- **Bill Howard** from Munster questioned that if there is money to finish up needed upcoming contracts, is there also money to finish up tree clearing out of river between the levees? Mr. Repay replied that we will work with the Corps; we will try to stretch the remaining dollars

as far as possible. There are still some pending condemnation cases that have not been paid for yet. There are a lot of variables yet. Mr. Howard was concerned whether there would be enough money to do the tree cleaning between the levees, who will police the levees afterwards, who will oversee the maintenance, etc. Mr. Repay reiterated that we need to make the dollars left finish off the project. The legislators have made it clear that there is no more money for project construction. At this point, the plan is to have local agreements with the communities adjacent to the river do the maintenance; an alternate plan would be to engage a third party contractor. Commissioner Broadnax added that, in some form, the Commission would probably still exist.

- Ted Muta from Hammond asked about the remaining trees on his property that were not hauled away. Imad stated that it will all be cleaned up once the contractor starts working again. Mr. Muta also asked about a screen gate with a door that was built into the river. Mr. Repay stated it is a sluice gate/duck bill design to drain the water off the land and into the river and then downstream to protect business area. Mr. Muta credited the Corps with a job well done on the flood wall behind his business. He is very pleased and wished there were more positive news articles highlighting the construction and the work that goes into it so public can be aware of the magnitude of the project and how good the area looks upon completion.

- John Beckman thanked Mr. Repay and others for upland water storage support. He referred to a flyer in which the Lake County Fish & Game is sponsoring a second presentation on upland water storage in the Little Calumet River watershed. Various subjects and speakers will be available. He will continue to work with all parties in trying to reduce the water volume to various storage areas to help alleviate potential flooding situations.

- John Mulesa from Munster inquired about the status of access ramps to keep the river clean. Imad answered that the access roads to the river so clean-up can happen will be included in the State line tieback contract. The proposed plan is to tie back the levee to high ground. All areas need to be consistent and at same level so certification can happen.

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, March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.