

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 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. 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:

**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
C. Schneider - Post Tribune**

Visitors:

**William Coomes - Munster
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Ronald Albin - Munster
Dave Nellans - Munster Town Councilman
Imad Samara - Army Corps
Chandra Viswanathan - Purdue Cal
Wally Petruvic - Purdue Cal
Lisander Vainiko - Purdue Cal
Jim Kaiser - Purdue Cal
Judy Knapp - Hammond
Tom Gulbrandsen - Crown Point
James Batey - Hammond
Don/Josie Seagraves - Munster
Pam/Mary Lou Daniels - Munster
John/Laurie Czulno - Forest, Hammond
LuAnn Franklin - The Times
Doug/Karen Lorenz - Hammond
Dorreen Carey - Broadway, Gary
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek - Hammond
Bill Petrites - Highland
Jim Dedelow - Munster
Kim Poland, Hammond Council
Dorothy Pazanin - Munster
Peter/Patricia Yackanich - Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson - Congressman's Office**

Minutes of the March 9th meeting were approved with several minor corrections 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. Everything the Commission does is based on that scenario. A major focus now is obtaining a funding mechanism that would allow us to do operation and maintenance. Spring rains will be coming soon and we must be ready for them. The contractors will be back to work shortly. Overall goal remains the same - "that can never happen again".

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

- Several areas of concern that required debris removal were addressed. We will be watching those pinch points areas where debris collects. With heavy rains predicted last week, the communities met, as a precaution, to make sure everyone was ready in case the worst case scenario came. Rain did not materialize like it could have.
- The city of Gary has requested a meeting with the Commission to talk about replacing the culverts at Chase Street.
- A table-top exercise took place today. A “potential problem” is put on the table for communities to handle and then discussion takes place. It is beneficial for all communities to learn from.
- The Commission will be participating in a half hour program starting at 8:00 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month on WJOB. Residents can call in with questions.
- Easement acquisition offers are going out in the mail to landowners on Forest Avenue within the next week. All appraisals and review appraisals are in.
- The Commission advertised for bids for billboard locations on excess properties we own in fee. Bids were received today and are being opened at the public meeting. Additional sites would be an additional income source for the Commission. The companies themselves will be responsible for securing any needed permits and locations must not interfere with the levee system.
- Dr. Chandra and three students from Purdue Calumet proceeded with a presentation on a project they have been developing on the hydrology of the river system; they have studied the area and the affects of excessive rainfall and presented it to the Commission.

Army Corps Status Report:

Imad Samara reported that the contractors are in winter shut-down but should be back working by the end of this month or mid April, pending weather conditions. He will get the specifics of each area that needs to be completed in each of the remaining contracts.

- He stated that the tie back levee design is at 50% and the plans for the Southmoor area will be complete by next meeting and available at that time. They are completing the review plans now for Southmoor to finalize the design. The plans will be reviewed by residents and changes can be made if necessary. They have not been completed earlier because the focus was on completing the lines of protection, which was the priority at that time.

Action Required – Chairman Bill Baker referred to Mr. Repay for the financial report. Mr. Repay reported that we are still on 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 March were presented in the amount of \$31,849.38. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the claims; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed with a roll call vote of 3-0.
- Commissioner Broadnax then made a motion to approve the O&M claims in the total amount of \$1,696.64. Commissioner Wichlinski seconded the motion; motion passed with a roll call vote of 3-0. Mr. Repay stated that we are receiving monthly inspection reports for the pump stations from Austgen Electric. We are currently researching Austgen records to determine how old the pumps are to determine when they would most likely need replacing. This is part of the catch-up for maintenance that needs to be done.

Land Acquisition/Land Management – Mr. Repay stated that bids were opened and received from View Outdoor Advertising, Lamar, Outdoor One, and Clear Channel.

Project Engineering and

Operation & Maintenance – Dan Repay stated that he has already discussed the several meetings that were held this last month. He reiterated that the communities meet at least once a month and are in continuing contact with each other if needed. Basically, it is the city engineers and public works people from Hammond, Munster, Highland, Griffith, and Gary. They will be planning a practice drill shortly, probably in the city of Gary this time.

Legislative Committee – Chairman Baker stated that the project consists of federal money and state money. The A-99 that was submitted to FEMA is a flood insurance reduction plan. This is only the second one in the country that has been submitted. Mr. Repay stated that FEMA Region 5 in Chicago has received it; we're expecting some kind of response, probably within 90 days.

Chairman Baker added that the A-99 will reduce flood insurance. The recommendation is that residents keep flood insurance, but it would be at a lesser rate. Mr. Repay added that it could be a 75% reduction in cost. We are able to submit it now because the project is substantially complete. He also added that if an O&M plan is not in place with funding, the Corps will "de-certify" the levees. That is why O&M funding is so important.

Other Issues/New Business – Commissioner Broadnax reported that as a result of moving out of the NIRPC office in Portage, it is the Commission's desire to have Dan Repay and Sandy Mordus as independent contractors. Mr. Broadnax made a motion authorizing the Chairman to execute contracts for these two employees to become independent contractors with the attorney preparing the contracts; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed with a 3-0 roll call vote.

Statements from the Floor:

• **Judy Paulson** from Munster thanked the Purdue students for their presentation. She stated that she had called in on WJOB talk show to give her opinion on several Little Cal issues, one being the funding bill for O&M monies that was pulled from the House floor. Mr. Repay added that we had provided figures (that we got from the Army Corps) to the legislators and they drafted the bill. Everyone understands that O&M monies are needed but there is no consensus where that money can come from. Commissioner Wichlinski added that city/town representatives of affected communities always receive the meeting notice and minutes each month.

• **Karen Lorenz** from Southmoor in Hammond disagreed that homeowners will save as much as 75% of flood insurance premiums. She expressed her concern about a pump station not being built on Southmoor; she feels it should be. She reiterated to the Corps that plans for Southmoor area should have already been completed; she's tired of waiting for a final plan.

• **James Batey** from Hammond questioned the time frame for a FEMA response regarding a reduction in flood insurance. Mr. Repay stated that when FEMA does respond (typically within 90 days), there may be changes or additional work that has to be done at that point. It's frustrating for everyone but with the entire scope of the project almost complete, we are hoping for a good response.

- **John Czulno** from Hammond questioned if Forest Avenue and Southmoor area were part of the overall project and whether we had the funds to complete. If these areas are not completed yet, he questioned how the A-99 could be approved. Mr. Repay answered that the majority was done and all parts do not need to be 100% completed for them to accept the application. Imad Samara added that the design plan for Stateline is 50% complete. The Southmoor plans are almost complete. They will only be changed if the residents want changes. If there are changes, there would be a delay. Previous funding had to be put toward completed VII and VIII. Now that those stages are complete, funding could then be put toward completing design plans for Stateline and Southmoor.
- **Mike Wood** from Munster asked about tree removal this spring. Imad Samara answered; that there will be a final contract after all construction is complete; debris will be removed and dead trees will be removed. Work has to be coordinated with IDNR and IDEM. Because of funding, it was delayed. The contractor will try to take out as many trees as he can.
- **Karen Lorenz** – Mrs. Lorenz questioned the Corps whether or not the Southmoor plans were actually complete or not.
- **Laurie Czulno** from Hammond stated she enjoyed the radio show. Mr. Repay stated that the blocks that would be used at State line in a flood event would be temporary structures and will be part of the bid. Financial statements will be available at future meetings.
- **Bonnie Vavrek** from Stateline in Hammond questioned how the protective system would look on State line. She wants to see the height, length, and exact location from where her house is. She is concerned about losing some of her property. Imad replied that surveys will be done prior to any work being done in the area. He added that where the floodwall is being built, easements will be necessary. Mr. Repay indicated that he thought that would be just city of Hammond land. Imad stated that the permanent floodwall structure will be from the river at Forest and Stateline, running past the detention pond. After that, it becomes a temporary structure; it is just on the Hammond side, not in Illinois. She inquired about the O&M funding bill. Chairman Baker replied that, as far as the Commission knows at this point, it was pulled from a vote. Several officials opposed it so it was pulled for further discussion/alternatives. Without a doubt, funding is needed so we are hoping an alternative form of funding can be found.
- **Craig Hannusin**, representing Wicker Park Association, stated that residents have worked hard writing many emails supporting the bill. He applauded the sponsors of the bill and hopes that all leaders come together. He offered whatever help the residents can give, let them know.
- **Mike Echlerling** from Lake County Fish & Game reminded the audience that this project is also recreation. With that in mind, he announced a Little Calumet River Festival to be held May 21. It will entail walking trails, canoeing, kayaking, fishing. All are invited and encouraged to attend; flyers are available. They will meet at Cabela's and travel to Lake Etta.
- **John Mulesa** from Munster thanked the Purdue Cal students for their presentation. He appreciates the hard work they have put in and thinks they deserve an A!

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, April 13 at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.