

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2011**

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

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session and Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Three (3) Board members were present; one (1) absent and one (1) vacancy exists. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Secretary
Ron McAhron

Absent:

Anthony Broadnax

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Visitors:

Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave. Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson - Congressman's Office
Steve Caco – River Drive, Munster
David Nellans – Munster Town Councilman
Imad Samara – Army Corps Project Mgr.
Peter Yackanich - Hammond
Ronald Albin – River Drive, Munster
Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
Fred Baginski - Hammond
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster
Diane Kowalski – Jackson Ave, Munster
Sandy O'Brien – Izaak Walton League
Joe Simonetto – Munster Councilman Elect
Robert Leary – Munster
Tom Anderson – Izaak Walton League
Mike Echterling – Lake Co. Fish & Game
Hon. Frank Mrvan – IN State Senator
Colin Highlands - IDNR
John Grskovich – Crestwood, Munster
LuAnn Franklin – The Times
Bridget Bodefled - Munster
Sylvia Vucich - Munster
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Munster
Bill Emerson – Hammond Councilman Elect
James Dedelow – White Oak, Munster
Bea Hanusin – Munster
Dorothy Pazanin – River Dr. Munster
John Mulesa – Munster
Tom DeGiulio – Town Manager, Munster

Minutes of the October 12, 2011 meeting were approved by a motion from Tom Wichlinski; motion seconded by Ron McAhron; motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Bill Baker referred to the pictures of the flooding that reflect that is the reason why we are here. He thanked everyone for continuing to come to the meetings on a consistent basis. This is the third winter since the 2008 flood and we will continue to look forward. Our goal is to get the overall flood control system certified. Things can always move faster but we are doing the best we can. He has learned that the public sector is much different than the private sector when it comes to getting things done quicker. We have to make sure all our investments over the years are working like they are

suppose to in the overall watershed system and we need to be able to manage it for generations to come.

Army Corps Report – Project Manager Imad Samara informed the Board members that Colonel Frederic Drummond could not attend the meeting because he is out of town.

- *Stage V-2* is basically complete; outlet has been completed by Wendy's on Kennedy Avenue.

- In *Stage VII*, a walkthrough was held today. In attendance with Mr. Repay, were the field Corps people, some of the communities, and the contractor. Some small items need to be addressed. A punch list will be developed and shared with Commission. The Corps will make sure everything is done satisfactorily before the contractor leaves the area.

- In *Stage VIII*, work is quickly moving along. Final grading, recreation trails, asphalt placement, and final seeding are near completion. The weather slowed down completion but they are back at work. Some work near Manor needs to be completed. Contract completion date still should be close to the end of the year.

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

- Mr. Repay reported that he and Chairman Baker met with the State Budget Committee and gave an informal presentation update to them on how we have been spending the State funds previously allocated to the Commission and also how we need to plan for the operation and maintenance of the system now. The Budget Committee met in northwest IN and had requested several agencies update them. He added that they appreciated the residents who came out to support them at the presentation. What was presented to them will be added to the web site. Chairman Baker added that although we weren't asking for money, the more people that are educated, the better it is. He thanked Mr. Repay for doing a good job in presenting. He emphasized that this Commission are solid stewards of the State's money. We put together a plan and we're implementing that plan. Overall they were received in a positive manner. We are encouraged as we go to the next session that they will see the results and accomplishments in the last 3 years.

- There is one remaining condemnation pending on Forest Avenue. The landowner has asked for a change of venue. A hearing is presently scheduled for December 7. We have exchanged items and corrections regarding the design of the Forest Avenue levee.

- In *Stage VIII*, some seeding has been placed near Lyman and Manor. The drainage issue on River Drive will be addressed by the contractor. At this point in time, there is no walk thru scheduled for *Stage VIII*. The weather did present a delay because the machinery could not be used because of rainy conditions.

- On the walk-thru for *Stage VII*, it was noted that the trail needs to be compressed better; items with outfalls with sluice gates are impacting the bike trail. It was found that the contractor overbuilt on River Drive so that will have to be corrected. All items will be on the punch list. Both Hammond and Munster had a couple of items also. It was noted that the gates worked; they are fully functional. He asked that if any of the homeowners have issues, please let us know.

- Regarding Chase Street culverts, the contractor, Wiltjer Excavating, removed the three culverts last week. He put rip-rap in place; erosion control put in place. He also built a small boat ramp so access will be easier; it will help with access to the river from Grant Street to the train trestle at Manor in Munster. Mr. Repay stated that the contractor has done a good job.

- Mr. Repay reported the awards were made to the billboard companies. Three of the six billboards have received approval from the city and the Corps. Vandalism is still an issue, even in regard to the billboards. Copper was removed and stolen out of the ground that brought power to some of the existing billboards.

- Mr. Repay reported that he has been working with NIPSCO and INDOT to figure out a solution for the drainage problem that exists by Martin Luther King Drive. A major culvert for draining some of Gary and Lake Station was exposed at MLK and cleaned out. INDOT also helped with traffic control on I80/94. Fixing the drainage/culvert problem there will provide extra water storage for the area. Chairman Baker complimented Mr. Repay on his good working relationship with NIPSCO and INDOT and facilitating this work.
- Mr. Repay reported that the Colonel toured the project with him and Commissioner McAhron from MLK to State Line. The talking tour provided a lot of information to the Colonel.
- Chairman Baker asked about the pump inspections. Mr. Repay replied that they were all inspected; all passed; nothing in failure mode. Of course, that excludes the one pump that was pulled at Burr Street that we are aware has not been fixed yet.

Legislative Report – Commissioner McAhron reported that he has been working on putting revised numbers together to have a bill being introduced in the short session. He may have additional information for the next meeting.

- Commissioner McAhron talked about the A99 letter we had sent to FEMA. A response was received from FEMA Region V Administrator. It will be posted on the web site, as well as the mapping. Mr. McAhron went on to explain that the entire floodplain remapping process is up in the air since Katrina. FEMA is under a lot of pressure to come up with a solution and develop some guidance. The letter and mapping was shared with the audience in a power point presentation. County by county updating of the floodplain maps is ongoing. He went on to say that the process described in the A99 letter that would greatly reduce flood insurance premiums, will probably take about a year, which is longer than we had hoped for. FEMA has listed out conditions in their response letter, all of which are doable. Conditions include naming a person who will be responsible for implementation; provide modeling that will identify interior drainage issues; confirmation that there is no litigation before Federal, State or local courts; and we need to update construction completion dates. Mr. McAhron explained the floodplain mapping of the system. Each community would need to sign off on the mapping and obtain the community's approval to continue down this path.
- Mr. Repay gave a picture presentation that he shared with the State Budget Committee showing before and after pictures. Pictures showed how Chase Street area was opened up. Chairman Baker commented that this was a deferred maintenance project. There are no blockages there now; water will move faster. The ramp will help access to the remote area also.

Finance Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for November. A motion was made by Commissioner Wichlinski to approve the claims in the amount of \$51,573.81; motion seconded by Commissioner McAhron; motion passed with a 3-0 roll call vote.

Other Issues/New Business – Attorney Wickland stated that we have received a check from Chicago Tower, reflecting an increase in the monthly rental amount and some back payment that was due us.

Statements from the Floor:

- **Dave Nellans**, Munster Town Councilman, thanked the Commissioners for their efforts on getting Chase Street culverts removed; persistence paid off. He added that he wants to keep the pressure on as far as getting the as-builts as soon as we can and get the residents paying less flood insurance. Commissioner McAhron added that there was no coordination

between INDOT/NIPSCO during the flood. He thanked Mr. Repay for doing a tremendous job on establishing cooperation/coordination with all entities.

- Sandy O'Brien, representing the Izaak Walton League, gave a letter and press release to Commissioners. The letter expressed their concern about the delay in the mitigation project at Hobart Marsh. Commissioner McAhron stated that the mitigation will be done but not in 2012. The permit has been extended to allow for the delay. Monies that were originally spent to acquire the Hobart Marsh properties outside of the project area, were monies that should have gone toward levee construction cost. That commitment was made years ago and there is nothing that can be done about it but, at this point in time, there are no funds to proceed with the mitigation.

- John Grskovich from Munster asked if there were site drainage plans prepared for the 1000 block of River Drive. Imad Samara replied that were plans and that is what was built. Plans are available for viewing at the Munster Town Hall and the Griffith Corps office.

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, December 14th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00. Chairman Baker thanked the audience for their continued support and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.