

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 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. Four Board members were present (one vacancy exists). Quorum was declared.

Development Commissioners:

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

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Visitors:

Bill/Bev Coomes - Munster
Elizabeth Johnson - Congressman's Office
Dave Murtaugh - Senator Coats' Office
Dave Nellans - Munster Town Councilman
Imad Samara - Army Corps
Kim Poland - Hammond Councilwoman
John Harrigan - Hammond
Ruth Mores - Southmoor, Hammond
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Ronald Albin - Munster
Diane Kowalski - Munster
**Joe Simonetto - Candidate for Munster
Town Council**
**Robert Leary - Candidate for Munster
Town Councilman**
John/Laurie Czulno - Forest Ave, Hammond
Mike Echterling - Lake Co. Fish & Game
Elaine Fay - Munster
Peter Yackanich - Hammond
Karla Hunt - Munster
LuAnn Franklin - The Times
Bridget Bodefled - Munster
Kalliope/James Dedelow - Munster
Joe Uzubell - Munster
Col. Frederic Drummond - Army Corps
Roy Deda - Army Corps
Bill Rochford - Army Corps
Vanessa Villarreal - Army Corps
Ron Svetic - Munster
John Beckman - Lake County Fish & Game
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
Stephen Jadrnak - Forest, Hammond
Craig/Bea Hanusin - Munster
Dorothy Pazanin - River Dr. Munster
Kristen, Kathleen Hill - Hammond
John Mulesa - Munster
George Janiec - Hammond
Marc Campagna - Munster
Jim Premeske - Hammond

Minutes of the August 10, 2011 meeting were approved by a motion from Anthony Broadnax; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed by a 4-0 roll call vote.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Bill Baker stated that it was three years ago today that the flooding event happened. The Commission is continuing to work so an event like that one is significantly minimized. The Commission has met with the new Colonel and staff and we look forward with the partnership working together to resolve issues to move forward. Our focus is to have all communities as a whole protected. We are continuing efforts to address the O&M funding issue.

Army Corps Report - Colonel Frederic Drummond spoke. He reiterated that his commitment is that residents do not see flooding like that again. He has been working closely with the Commission for the last 1-1/2 months since he has come to the area. He understands that this is a complex project with many issues but his duty and personal commitment is that they do the best they can possibly do to get this project completed successfully. We will all move forward together.

Project Manager Imad Samara continued on to say that there are still three contracts open. Stage V-2 is basically complete; the contractor is working to correct the rail road gate closure and to shore the banks of a pipe outlet along Kennedy Avenue.

In Stage VII, the contractor, CERES, has hired a sub-contractor. Most of the remaining work will be done in 4-6 weeks and be totally completed by the end of December.

In Stage VIII, a lot of activity is going on by the contractor, WALSH. Total completion should be by January 4, 2012.

- Col. Drummond added that he has talked to the contractor in Stage VII and he is confident that the sub-contractor will be just as committed to completing the work scope. They understand our expectations. The Colonel heard the residents loud and clear at last month's meeting and he is determined to meet their expectations. Discussion ensued on the two catch basins that need to be completed on the Munster side. Imad said they awarded a separate small contract for that work; some grading remains to be done. If more material is needed, they will bring it in. Imad said he would share a map identifying the grading area at the next meeting.

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

- Mr. Repay reported that the last 2 condemnations have been filed. A few changes are currently being made to the plan. Once all properties are acquired, it will be bid out.
- Mr. Repay stated that the Gary Board of Public Works will allow the Commission to replace the culverts at Chase Street.
- Mr. Repay also reported that some of the road grates at Chase & 35th have been removed again. It is a safety issue that they are now open; the Commission will purchase some plastic grates that cannot be recycled so there will be no motive to steal them.

Finance Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for September in the amount of \$34,696.73. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the claims; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed with a 4-0 roll call vote.

- Mr. Repay then presented the claims for Operation & Maintenance in the amount of \$6,169.76. Mr. Repay explained the claims were for beaver dam and debris removal, cleaning of culverts on Clark Road, installing concrete runway at Manor Drive, and pump

station inspections. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the O&M claims; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a 4-0 roll call vote.

O&M/Project Engineering Report - Commissioner Wichlinski asked if we were current with the pump inspection results. Mr. Repay stated that the only pump out is the second pump at Burr Street. If we had to bring in another pump, it would run around \$3-4,000 per week; this would only be done in an emergency. Assessments of all the pumps will be done next week. Commissioner McAhrn confirmed that Austgen has a master list of all pumps with their capacity. Mr. Repay also stated that Attorney Wickland will be writing a letter to NICTD asking for some reimbursement from them because they have a duty to keep their property clean.

- Mr. Repay also reported that at their emergency preparedness meeting, it was decided to have a simulation closing of Kennedy Avenue on 9/28.
- Mr. Repay reported that we have received the official copy of the State Board of Accounts auditing of 2008, 2009 and 2010. There were no comments. All documentation was in order.

Mr. Repay proceeded with a power point presentation showing before and after pictures of areas that had been cleaned of beaver dams. It depicted the challenges that the Commission has to deal with on a daily basis; maintenance entails much more than just storm fronts.

Legislative Report – Ron McAhrn informed Board members that there is a Federal piece of legislation proposing flood insurance changes. FEMA will be establishing a new policy that will address flood insurance requirements. Floodplain mapping and floodplain issues are a big national issue right now because the national flood insurance is at a big deficit. The Commission has not received an answer from FEMA regarding the A99 letter that we had filed with them that would provide some flood insurance relief at a reduced rate. He continued to explain how some areas in Hammond and Highland were able to come out of the floodplain.

Other Issues/New Business – Commissioner Wichlinski read a resolution given to us by the Lake County Fish & Game regarding upland watershed storage and asked that we sign on as an endorsement of the concept. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Wichlinski to endorse the policy of the upland water storage as presented in the resolution; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed by a 4-0 roll call vote.

- Chairman Baker welcomed back Land Acquisition Agent Judy Vamos, after an extended leave. She will continue to acquire some of the remaining easements needed to complete the overall project.
- Commissioner Anthony Broadnax referred back to the flood event 3 years ago today. We have come a long way since then and there have been some very trying times and frustration has run high at times. He committed to being a positive contributor in the community as we move forward.
- Commission Tom Wichlinski reflected on the flooding situation going on right now on the east coast. With residents here that experienced that same flooding 3 years ago, it is hard to watch. Our focus will be to get to the end date of completion of this project.
- Commissioner Ron McAhrn stated that, although he lives in Indianapolis and has never personally experienced a flood, he is totally committed to this area to get flood protection

for all the residents. He thanked Director Dan Repay for doing a tremendous job of organizing and overseeing all the daily challenges we are faced with.

- Attorney David Wickland thanked the Commission for a job well performed these past 3 years. He has been a resident of Munster for 50 years and is 100% committed.
- Director Dan Repay stated that we will continue to move forward under this leadership working with the communities, volunteers and residents. Although Mother Nature always has the final say, we will continue to have monthly emergency planning sessions and be on top of any situation that arises.
- Chairman Bill Baker announced that it is all about the project and getting to the end of it so we never see a flooding event like that again. It is unfortunate that it took such a disastrous event to bring residents and communities together but with working together, we have accomplished a lot in these past 3 years. He thanked the residents for being supportive and participating at the meetings.
- Imad Samara explained the chart/graph he provided as to the 100 year flood level of the river west of Hart Ditch. It will be posted on the Army Corps website, which can be reached at www.lrc.usace.army.mil.

Statements from the Floor:

- John Mulesa from Munster questioned why there was no difference in water level observed after the beaver dams were removed and was told that they were just removed today and it sometimes takes several days to notice a drop. Mr. Mulesa questioned whether we will now install the new culverts at Chase Street. Mr. Repay replied that we will take out the old culverts and design & place the 3 new culverts, according to Corps standards.
- Mike Echterling told the audience that although the beavers pose a real problem, we will persevere in getting rid of them. Commissioner Wichlinski asked if we have considered some Boy Scout troops to help us out. Mike said that it is too hard and dangerous for kids to do. Chairman Baker thanked both Mike and Fred Baginski for all their volunteer hours they have given to the project to perform these beaver dam removals.
- Town Councilman Dave Nellans thanked the Commissioners for their leadership. He went on to say that there are still some problems with the drainage issues behind residents' homes. Imad stated that it will be addressed. Mr. Nellans thanked Mr. Repay for the tour of the project area.
- Laurie Czulno from Hammond expressed concern about the time line for the remaining stages and suggested adding a penalty clause in future contracts. She is also concerned that there will not be funding in place to do the work needed at Forest Avenue. Commissioner McAhron stated that although Forest Avenue will not be done this fall; the project will get done.
- Beverly Coomes from Munster expressed concern about the area around Cabela's now being out of the floodplain and whether that would pose an increased level of water in other areas. Commissioner McAhron explained that it would not.
- Fred Baginski from Hammond added that when the beaver dams were removed, they were removed from a wet area adjacent to the river so you would not see a significant water level change in the river itself. He suggested that Eagle Scouts could "adopt" a stretch of the river, just to keep the area cleaned up.
- Kathleen Hill from Hammond expressed concern about the Cabela's area and asked whether their levee tie into our levee. Mr. Repay stated that it ties into the expressway and they built it to Corps specifications. She also expressed concern about the limited funding we have and how we can get the levees certified if we don't have funds for maintaining.

• Karla Hunt from Munster expressed concern about taking out the trees within the levees. She thinks that the trees provide some stability and slow the water down. Chairman Baker stated that he understands her concern; they will need to compromise and doesn't foresee all the trees coming out. Commissioner McAhron added that the project calls for no trees within 15' of the toe of the levee or the project will not be certified. We will work toward a happy medium.

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, October 12th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.