

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2013**

**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. Five (5) Commission members were present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski  
Anthony Broadnax  
Ron McAhron  
Tom Gozdecki

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

Dave Wickland

**Staff:**

Sandy Mordus  
Judy Vamos

**Visitors:**

William Emerson – Hammond Council  
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council  
LuAnn Franklin – The Times  
Col. Frederic Drummond – Army Corps

**Visitors:**

John & Laurie Czulno – Forest, Hammond  
Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond  
David Nellans – Munster Town Council  
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster  
Charles Svitko - Hammond  
Judy Knapp - Hammond  
Bridget Bodefeld - Munster  
Steve Caco - Munster  
Bonnie Vavrek - Hammond  
Gregory Sanchez – Lake County Surveyor's  
Office  
Fred Baginski - Hammond  
Jeff Yatsko – Garcia Consulting Engineers  
Peter Yackanich - Hammond  
Steve Jadrnak - Hammond  
B. Hanusin - Munster  
Karen Lorenz – Southmoor, Hammond  
Dorothy Pazanin – River Drive, Munster  
Dave Wellman - RDA  
Elizabeth Johnson – Congressman's Office  
Natalie Mills – Army Corps

A motion was made by Tom Wichlinski to approve the minutes as presented from the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Chairman Baker added that he has made some minor clarifications to the minutes. Tom Wichlinski made an amendment to the minutes approval; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

Election of Officers – Ron McAhron made a motion to nominate the following as officers for 2013 – William Baker as Chairman, Tom Gozdecki as Vice Chairman, Anthony Broadnax as Treasurer and Tom Wichlinski as Secretary; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed unanimously with a 5-0 roll call vote.

**Chairman's Report** – As in past meetings, Chairman Baker pointed out the pictures of the 2008 flood, citing this is the reason we are here every month. As stewards of the project, we have been doing everything possible to prevent a flooding situation like that again. The \$275 million man-made structure must perform as a system and as we move into the maintenance portion of the project, it becomes more important to not lose sight of this fact. The continued progress of the project has brought the construction phase to almost 90% completion of the plan established by the Army Corps. As the most populated segments have been turned over by the Corps, it has eliminated the Federal mortgage requirement that



homeowners along the river carry mandatory flood insurance. By meeting this high priority goal, the Commission, as well as everyone who has assisted, has generated an economic impact of approximately \$4 million annually on our community. That is a real example of Regional Economic Development.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for both January and February and explained several of the large line items. Ron McAhron made a motion to approve the January claims in the amount of \$63,926.74 and the February claims in the amount of \$81,119.80; motion seconded by Tom Gozdecki; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Mr. Repay reported that the existing two farm leases the Commission presently has will be renewed for the 2013 farming season under the existing terms.
- Mr. Repay reported the pumps at Burr Street are both back up and running. Pump 1 has been down for a couple of months but has been repaired at no charge to us. Both pumps are currently under warranty.
- The collective municipal group, who has been meeting for about 3 years, will work in conjunction with the Town of Highland to have a closure drill on Kennedy Avenue; currently scheduled for midnight on March 20. The City of Gary is also scheduled to host a closure exercise, presently scheduled for April 12; street yet to be identified.
- At the last meeting, Mr. Repay was authorized to seek a contractor to identify those trees that would require removal from within the levee system in the area from Kennedy to State Line. Trees that are dead, have damage, no stability, or leaning have been identified with a pink dot. Pictures of some of areas with the trees are displayed for public viewing. The trees were counted by segments and will seek proposals on a segment by segment basis. Chairman Baker added that it makes no sense to spend millions of dollars to build floodwalls and levees and then leave the damaged trees standing inside. The Commission's primary objective is flood control and it would be much more expensive to remove each tree as it falls into the river and blocks water flow during a flood event. Removal will not be easy because access is very limited.
- The Lake County watershed study, a statutory requirement as part of the funding legislation, is progressing with introductory letters having been sent out to all 15 watershed communities. DLZ will be scheduling individual meetings with the communities. Several public meetings will also be scheduled. We will be working with the Surveyor's Office, as well as the Corps, gathering available information in order to eliminate a lot of duplication. Communities will be requested to identify key issues they have, in their respective city/town, relative to the watershed and/or storm water management. Chairman Baker asked when we would be receiving the first report from DLZ. Mr. Repay estimated about 90 days; they will keep him informed and he, in turn, will inform the Commission.
- Mr. Repay reported that he is working with Hammond and Munster relative to the bike path near Manor Drive by the railroad trestle. The Commission would be supportive contingent upon the removal, from the water, of the trestle piers. These have caused ongoing problems due to the debris that gets held up with limited access for removal and maintenance. Additionally, the maintenance of any future structure as well as liability will still need to be discussed by the involved parties.
- Mr. Repay requested that a resolution be passed relative to the Commission's participation in the cost of the Columbia Avenue Bridge raising.
- Ron McAhron inquired about the implementation of the maintenance fee. Mr. Repay replied that he has been working with the Surveyor's Office, Treasurer's Office and Auditor's Office in regard to the identification of parcels in the watershed in which the maintenance fee will be included on the property tax invoices. We have confirmation that the fee will be made part of the tax bills.

- Mr. Repay stated that there is not a definite tie-back plan for State Line at the present time. The Commission authorized Mr. Repay to engage a firm to do a tie-back design for State Line tie-back due to time delays and lack of detail in the Corps plan for the tie-back. There was extensive discussions with the Corps as to what was to be considered as an acceptable plan between the Commission members and Col. Drummond. The Corps contends our plan must meet Corps criteria. The Commission contends that the Corps has no defined set of criteria and, with spring rains coming soon, something needs to be in place at State Line sooner than next year. The Corps stated that sandbagging (local flood fighting) would need to occur if no tie-back was installed along State Line.
- Chairman Baker inquired whether or not we were ready with sandbagging machines, if needed. Mr. Repay answered that we have moved sandbagging machines from Crown Point to Highland; Hammond has a machine; Gary will share a machine as needed; Munster will be using water bladders. Mr. Repay added that each month, an emergency response meeting is held with the communities of Hammond, Gary, Griffith, Highland, and Munster and Mr. Repay is confident that communities are all ready in case there would be a threat of a flood event.
- Anthony Broadnax asked whether or not we were receiving full cooperation with the city of Gary. Mr. Repay stated that there was and added that he just took the Mayor and her key staff members on a tour of the levee system. In Gary, if there was a flood event, 33,000 sandbags would need to be put up in Gary. Manpower may be an issue but everyone is working together and cooperating with each other. Key location points within the city are identified as needing immediate attention in a flood event.
- Mr. Repay replied to the question from Chairman Baker on what work is scheduled this construction season with the new funding by listing the Gary South levee improvements to the channel as recommended by the Corps so water will flow in the direction we want it to flow, and the island west of Kennedy Avenue will be removed. These will be dependent on weather and permitting. Also, we need to pay back the RDA loan. Finally, we will continue to partner with watershed communities for smaller projects.
- Tom Gozdecki inquired whether dates of public community meetings for the watershed study would be publicized. Mr. Repay said these public meetings would be held throughout the watershed area so that residents can gain information and ask questions. We will post dates on the web site, announce on WJOB radio show, and issue a press release to the newspaper. We will also make sure that the community's leadership has time to let their respective residents know the dates.

Army Corps Report – Project Manager Natalie Mills reported:

- Stages V-2, VII and VIII contracts are closed out and have been turned over to the Commission.
- Ms. Mills stated that there is an issue with one of the Corps' contractor, Garner Services, on the possibility of the company billing fraudulent invoices for work done on the Pump Station 2B contract. The legal case has not been resolved at this time although Garner has pleaded guilty. Since the company did the work on behalf of a Corps contract, it needs to be determined whether the Corps, as well as the Commission, which has to match all Federal dollars, overpaid for the project. A lengthy discussion ensued and Col. Drummond offered to secure more information and pass that onto the members once the settlement occurs.
- Ms. Mills reported that the V-2 railroad closure exercise took place on January 16 and it went well. It took less than 15 minutes to close the gate. They have given the Commission a turn-over letter for the railroad closure.
- The Corps Southmoor design is complete and has been given to the Commission. It is not determined, at this time, what work will be done at Southmoor.

- Ms. Mills reported that they have submitted comments back to the Commission on the preliminary tie-back design provided by the Commission's consultant. A lengthy discussion ensued on the calculations contained in the design. The Commission focused on there being no defined specs and they would be drafted concurrently with the review of the design. The Colonel stated that it does not meet Corps specs and disputed some of the calculations used in the design. Col. Drummond stated that he wants this issue resolved as much as the Commission and he will support and sign off on a design as long as it meets Corps specs.
- Ms. Mills stated that the cost share is out of balance based on the good faith estimate. A meeting must be scheduled soon. Everyone wants to keep moving forward but the Corps says they cannot unless more cost share is received from the Commission.
- No work has been done on the Hobart Marsh mitigation.
- A final report on the periodic levee inspections in September has been given to the Commission.
- Ms. Mills asked if there were any questions and Tom Wichlinski asked what exactly is needed by the Corps as far as an easement regarding the Griffith portion of the levee. The Commission's Land Acquisition Agent, Judy Vamos, stated the area is 59 acres and the Corps has requested a flowage easement on the entire area. Natalie Mills stated she will confirm this with the Corps Real Estate Division and will report back to the Commission.
- Ron McAhron questioned Ms. Mills on the length of time a contract can have pending claims under their system. She indicated that the contract would be open until resolved. After discussion back and forth, the Col. stated he would consult his legal team and get back to the Commission within 24 hours.
  - Lengthy discussion on duration it will take the Corps to put their design in place at State Line versus the Commission's design. With the Commission being concerned about spring rains, they felt that time was of the essence. Tom Gozdecki questioned the Corps design plan of 830 blocks that would be put down, allowing 1 minute per block and added that the time frame did not seem reasonable. With that, Ron McAhron made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to move forward with the structural analysis in the preparation of a bid package to get the material costs for the tieback for Stateline. Mr. Repay added that we will work in cooperation with the Corps. Motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Col. Drummond added that he will not sign off on a design that is not structurally sound and it must meet Corps specs. Chairman Baker asked the Col. what the Corps plan is for this part of the system if something is not installed and there is an event this spring; the Col. replied they would use sandbags. He added that he wants to see this tieback done just as much as the Commission. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

**Other Business –**

**Motions:**

Tom Gozdecki made a motion approving Resolution 2013-1 which authorizes the Executive Director to enter into an inter-local agreement between Lake County Highway Department, City of Hammond, and the Town of Munster to rebuild the Columbia Avenue Bridge. Agreement sets forth the responsibilities and will meet Corps approval and authorizes the Executive Director to enter into the agreement on behalf of the Commission; motion seconded by Ron McAhron; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

**Statements from the floor:**

• **Dorothy Pazanin** from River Drive in Munster stated she was one of the 5 people still in flood zone in Munster and inquired about the status. Mr. Repay replied that the Town Council has hired an engineering firm to overlay data surveying the properties to see if you

are above the 100 yr flood elevation so they are pursuing it. The town will keep you informed; town engineer Jim Mandon, can answer any questions you have.

- Laurie Czulno from Forest Avenue in Hammond thanked the members. She is hopeful that she and her neighbors will come out of the flood plain when tiebacks are in place. She expressed disappointment in the length of time it has taken to come up with a suitable plan for the tiebacks. Ron McAhron answered that the Commission has come up with a plan and they are ready to implement it.

- Bill Emerson, 4<sup>th</sup> District Hammond City Councilman, complimented the Commission and the Army Corps for doing a good job. He remembers what it was like back years ago and then where we are today. He also asked what impact the national sequester would have on the project.

- Karen Lorenz from Southmoor in Hammond asked where we were at with the Southmoor issue. Ron McAhron stated that some measure of flood protection between Lyman and Hohman is needed. The financial portion of the easements need to be settled regarding this portion of the system. There are alternatives available but nothing will be done this summer. H suggested that a meeting needs to be scheduled with the residents on Southmoor to see how we can move forward.

- Ruth Mores from Southmoor in Hammond agreed that a meeting needs to be scheduled with the residents. The Colonel stated he would like to be in attendance also.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Chairman Baker announced that the next meeting is scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.