

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2012**

**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; one (1) vacancy exists. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

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

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

**Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos**

Visitors:

**John/Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave. Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson - Congressman's Office
Rob Mangus – Munster
Sylvia Vucich - Munster
Imad Samara – Army Corps Project Mgr.
Vanessa Villarreal – Army Corps
Bill Coomes - Munster
Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Steve Caco, Munster
Anthony Collins - Munster
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart
Peter Yackanich - Hammond
Stephen Jadrnak - Hammond
Bob Paulsen - Northcote
Mike Echterling – Lake Co. Fish & Game
Janet Vanerez - Hammond
Mike/Penny Battista - Munster
Lyne Whelan – Army Corps
LuAnn Franklin – The Times
Bridget Bodefled - Munster
John Mulesa - Munster
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Munster
Dorothy Pazanin – River Drive, Munster
Mary Lou Daniels - Munster
Arnold Schmidt – Hammond
Larry Blue – Hammond
Dan Spitale – Hammond
Bill Emerson – Hammond Councilman
T. Ahearn - Hammond
Dave Poltrock - Munster**

Chairman Bill Baker announced that Commissioner Ron McAhron was absent because he was in attendance at the legislative committee hearing today in Indianapolis.

Minutes of the December 14, 2011 meeting were approved by a motion from Tom Wichlinski; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed by a 3-0 roll call vote.

Commissioner Tom Wichlinski made a motion to retain the existing officers for the year 2012; motion seconded by Commissioner Anthony Broadnax; motion passed by a 3-0 roll

call vote. Chairman will be William Baker, Treasurer will be Anthony Broadnax, and Secretary will be Tom Wichlinski.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Baker thanked the other members for their vote of Chairmanship again. He stated that we are at the end of the project construction; our focus now has to be securing the funding for operation and maintenance in order to make sure this man-made system performs as it was designed. He is optimistic that everything is falling into place and that there is strong support for the legislative bill to fund the O&M process. We are doing what we can to assist when requested. No one ever wants to see the flooding event again that we saw in September of 2008.

• **Army Corps Report** – Project Manager Imad Samara stated that the Colonel is attending another meeting on Asian Carp and could not make the meeting but wanted to assure everybody that he is focused on this project and making it the #1 priority at the Chicago District office.

Stage VII – Levee/Wall construction is complete. There are some minor punch list items involving recreation, grading, seeding, etc. that will be finished in the spring. Imad will try to make it early spring.

Stage VIII – A punch list of about 50 items was compiled by the Corps, the Commission, and City reps. List consists of minor items; there will be some dirt work that will take place in the spring. All earth work is shut down now for the winter.

Stage V-2 – Corps has been working with the Architect/Engineer (A/E) regarding the failure of the railroad closure in the area between Indianapolis Blvd. and Kennedy. He stated that the A/E consultant has agreed to take responsibility for the fix. They will do a re-design and correct flaws in the gate and hire a contractor to build it without any additional cost to the Corps or to the Commission. It should be corrected this construction season.

Commissioner Broadnax asked whether the contractor knows what he needs to do to correct the problem. Imad replied that the A/E has already submitted the revised plans for fixing the problem. He is aware of the flaw.

Commissioner Broadnax also asked if the Colonel is doing something different to make sure this project is finished completely and correctly. Imad stated that the Colonel has meetings every week on this project and team members are required to have a report. He has focused the whole team to get this project done correctly. He wants total completion in his 3 year tenure.

• Commissioner Wichlinski asked about the time table for receiving as-builts for Stages VII & VIII. Imad stated that he thought at least by early summer they should be available. He was not sure if they could be completed without the turf work being completed. Mr. Repay added that he attends meetings every 2 weeks with the cities & towns. There are no structural changes in Stages VII & VIII, only minor punch list items, so perhaps the as-builts could be received earlier. The as-builts have to reflect the actual, which includes the final quantities and that information may not be available yet from the contractor. Imad stated that he will get a schedule for the process to get the as-builts to us as soon as they are ready.

Executive Director's Report –Mr. Repay stated that on the walk-thru on Stage VIII, about 60 items were developed from Hammond, Munster, the Corps, the Commission and some members of the public that may become problematic in the future so they require some kind of correction.

• Forest Avenue - Mr. Repay reported that he and Bill Rochford met on site with the landowner's attorney who is the last hold-out for obtaining the needed easement for right-

of-entry. We think we have a compromise that may work and will submit that to the attorney; the issue is fencing but we think we can work around the concerns. If that is the case, we could be ready to go as soon as weather permits. Easements from all property owners must be in hand to commence the work.

- Mr. Repay reported that we have been busy with legislative issues and year-end paperwork. Also, beavers have been very active and have caused many blockages. Munster tried to dispose of a felled tree near Hawthorne but it was too large for their town employees and we had to hire an outside company to clear out the tree.
- Mr. Repay stated that we have put a link on our web site that will take you to legislative services in Indianapolis to track the O&M funding bill.
- Mr. Repay announced that after a year, we have received approval from the Lake County Surveyor's Office to install a monitor at Plum Creek in Dyer to monitor elevations.

Finance Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for January and explained several of them. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$83,395.45; motion was seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Commissioner Wichlinski inquired about the claim from R.A.Oros. Mr. Repay stated it was emergency tree removal work that crossed Hart Ditch from one bank across to the other bank. Since then, R.A.Oros, as well as Wiltjer, has had to remove other trees that have fallen along the system. At times, there is a potential that the power lines will be a problem when trees come down. Once again, it shows how important it is to secure funding for O&M, as we have already spent significant dollars for maintenance work. Motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote of 3-0.

- Mr. Repay referred to past discussions on the drainage problem in the 1000 block of River Drive, within Stage VIII. It has been brought to the attention of the Colonel and he has addressed it with the local office. There will be a resolution to that problem soon.
- Chairman Baker inquired about an inspection report for the pump stations. Mr. Repay answered that Austgen usually does inspections the middle of the month; he will check to see why we did not get the latest report. Mr. Repay stated that the lone pump at Burr Street is still functioning (one pump is still out due to financial constraints).
- Mr. Repay stated that once the new administration in the city of Gary gets settled in, he will plan to meet with them and offer an update and tour of the project.

Legislative Report – Chairman Baker thanked Commissioner McAhron for staying in Indianapolis and being available if needed for the committee hearing on the funding bill, HB 1264. The bill calls for a 9 member board (instead of 5). It has passed out of the Natural Resource committee with a 9-0 vote. We are very optimistic at this time that it will pass the House and move towards providing a perpetual funding source for the project. We will continue to monitor it as it passes through the legislative process.

Other Issues/New Business –

- Mr. Repay thanked those that were in Indianapolis on behalf of the bill. The Commission did not have much notice when this came up. Several residents that went down and showed support in favor of it were Bea and Craig Hanusin, the Dedelows, some elected representatives from Munster, Senator Mrvan, Representatives Soliday, Dobis and Reardon, and others.

Statements from the Floor:

- **John Czulno** from Hammond asked about progress with the tiebacks on State line. Consideration is being given to building up the sides of the detention pond as opposed to sheet pile or blocks. The goal is to be effective but not costly.
- **John Mulesa** from Munster asked what HB1264 allows for. Chairman Baker answered that the cities of Hammond and Gary will get an appointment as well as the Lake County Commissioners having 2 appointments; this will expand the Board to 9 members. Commissioner Wichlinski added that it also allows for an advisory panel that would be a group of individual stakeholders that brainstorm together and make recommendations to the Commission; members would be from each municipality in the watershed. Chairman Baker added that each member must have a real estate, construction, flood control, or management background.
Mr. Mulesa also inquired about the news article saying \$7 million has been provided for the project. Imad Samara explained that this is \$7.1 million of Federal money for Fiscal Year 2012; money will be used for completing the project, i.e. tie backs, Southmoor, recreation, mitigation.
Mr. Mulesa also stated he checked out Chase Street where the culverts were removed; said he was impressed; we got our money's worth. He is still concerned about the low flow control structure at Northcote. Imad assured him that it is operating as designed.
- **Paul Daniels** from Munster – asked if the \$7.1 million federal money can be used for tree removal and access ramps. Imad replied that it can be used for that purpose. It also means that the Commission will have to come up with the 25% cost share.
Mr. Daniels still maintained the concept of having a master plan schedule available on what everyone's responsibility is for removal of residences from floodplain designation.
- **Laurie Czulno** from Hammond inquired about the last hold-out on Forest Avenue. Mr. Repay stated they are hopeful that they can reach a compromise in the very near future with the property owner.
Mrs. Czulno also inquired about the NICTD trestle removal. Mr. Repay replied that Hammond is the entity that is working with NICTD for their trail, which is their priority. Although we have stated we'd like the trestle removed, it is Hammond's decision to work out something with NICTD.
Mrs. Czulno asked about tree removal. Imad Samara answered that one of the items that need to be completed is the channel clearing. It will be a separate contract. Some of the new money can be used for this purpose.
- **Anthony Collins** from Munster expressed concern about the wall/levee in his backyard. Mr. Repay will meet with him at his house and will work with him to resolve the issue. Mr. Repay reiterated that you cannot build anything permanent 15' from the toe of the wall/levee.
- **Rob Mangus** from Munster inquired about the status of the A99. Chairman Baker answered that Commissioner McAhron has been handling that and he will talk to him and have some updated information for him at the next meeting. With the holidays and then tracking the O&M bill, they have not talked about it but will pursue it now.

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, February 8th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.