

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 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
Col. Frederic Drummond – Army Corps

Visitors:

John & Laurie Czulno – Forest, Hammond
Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
David Nellans – Munster Town Council
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart
Judy Knapp - Hammond
Bridget Bodefled - Munster
Jim Sweeney – Porter Cty. Izaak Walton
Bonnie Vavrek - Hammond
Mike Echterling – Friends of the Little
Calumet River
Fred Baginski - Hammond
T. Cholipski – River Dr., Munster
Peter Yackanich - Hammond
Tony Kenning - Munster
B. Hanusin - Munster
John Beckman – Porter Cty. Izaak Walton
T. Ahearn – Forest Ave, Hammond
Dave Wellman - RDA
LuAnn Franklin – The Times

A motion was made by Tom Wichlinski to approve the minutes as presented from the February 20th meeting; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Baker pointed out the pictures of the 2008 flood, citing this is the primary reason we are here every month. With spring coming, the season for rain also comes. Now that the majority of the flood control structure is in place, we need to make sure we take care of it. The new funding will initially be directed to correcting the deferred maintenance issues throughout the system as we continue to finalize the projects along the western segments of the system. Executive Director Repay will continue to identify and prioritize additional challenges as they arise.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for March and explained several of the large line items. Anthony Broadnax made a motion to approve the March claims in the amount of \$51,459.53; motion seconded by Tom Gozdecki; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Mr. Repay stated that it was time to address the farm leases and he would be requesting a motion regarding renewals. The farmers need to know so they can purchase seed.

- Mr. Repay reported that the Burr Street pump station building is over 20 years old and the roof is leaking. The estimate for a new roof is approximately \$4,000. Commissioner Wichlinski asked whether this is an emergency situation and was told by Mr. Repay that the water leaks onto the electrical panels and warranted immediate action.
- Design work is ongoing for Gary South (from Clark to Martin Luther King). The goal is to have the design completed by May 1 so the project can go out to bid. The Gary North segment is a longer project area and it will be addressed after Gary South. Gary North runs from Griffith golf center to Martin Luther King.
- Engineering on channel clearing is about 85% complete.
- Bids on the tree cutting project are due on March 25.
- The Little Calumet River watershed study is ongoing. Meetings are being held with the 15 communities and the Lake County Surveyor's Office. The goal is to listen first hand to the concerns of the individual communities regarding their storm water issues.
- Mr. Repay reported that an exercise drill of the Kennedy Avenue road closing will take place at 11 p.m. Wednesday, March 20. It will take about 3-4 hours. He is coordinating with both Hammond and Highland officials, as well as INDOT. The ramps off the expressway will also be closed, simulating the emergency response that would occur during an actual flood event.
- The City of Hammond, town of Munster, Lake County Commissioners and the LCRBDC have all executed the agreement for the reconstruction of the Columbia Avenue Bridge.
- Progress is also being made on an agreement to remove about 5-6 piers in the middle of the Monona railroad bridge (old Monona line trestle) to allow for the extension of the bike trail. The complete span of the bridge from bank to bank is about 175'. Commissioner Broadnax asked how you take out the middle spans of the bridge successfully. Mr. Repay replied that the Hammond engineer believes it can be done. The bridge has been designed to support trains so taking out a few piers, the bridge will remain sturdy enough to support a bike trail. Town Councilman Dave Nellans added that the middle will be all new and engineered for a bike path.
- Commissioner McAhron thanked Mr. Repay for staying on top of things, like the leaky roof, the tree cutting project which is a large undertaking, and the scheduling of the Kennedy Ave. road closing. Chairman Baker agreed and stated that Mr. Repay has excelled at coordinating the efforts of all the required authorities and is continuing to establish this project as the benchmark for regional cooperation in NW Indiana.
- Mr. Repay added that the town of Munster also conducted an exercise in assembling the water bladders in their public works building. Munster will use water bladders instead of sand bags, where needed, along their segments of the system.
- Mr. Repay also reported that a similar road closing exercise will be held on April 12 at Harrison Street in Gary. He is currently arranging that exercise. Chairman Baker added that these drills aren't just good for the flood fighting aspect, but also in coordinating all the emergency services including traffic control. Mr. Repay is working with a new administration person at INDOT as well as a person from IUN who is their designated emergency contact.

Army Corps Report – Colonel Frederic Drummond reported:

- They had a good discussion with the federal contractor who was convicted of fraud and were able to resolve the Pump Station 2B contract issue. A claim of \$1.26 million was submitted to the Corps; the settled award was around \$400,000, of which the Commission is responsible for 25% per the Local Cooperation Agreement.
- The Corps, as well as the Commission, continues to work through crediting issues.
- The Colonel applauded the efforts of the Commission and communities in their exercise drills. In case of a flood event, practice makes readiness and he feels everyone will be ready.

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- The sequestration has affected the Corps office and they will be having days cut starting on March 26.
- The Colonel emphasized the need to press ahead for the State Line tie back and Southmoor flood fighting measures.
- The Colonel asked if a Corps rep would be attending the road closure exercise. Mr. Repay answered that Bill Rochford would have someone there or be there himself. Commissioner McAhrn complimented Bill Rochford in that he has been a tremendous help to the Commission.

Other Business –Motions:

Tom Wichlinski made a motion to authorize renewing the annual farm lease contracts; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Commissioner Gozdecki questioned whether signing a yearly lease limits the Commission in what else they can do with the property if they want to change direction. Mr. Repay replied that it is only a 1 year lease and the Commission can decide to take a different approach if they wish. Motion passed with a 4-0 roll call vote, with Commissioner Gozdecki abstaining.

Statements from the floor:

- Craig Hanusin, representing the Wicker Park Neighborhood Association, announced that they had held a meeting this last Thursday. He inquired about the backup generator at Northcote & Baring but was told that it is Munster's jurisdiction, not the Commission. He also expressed concern about blowing dust at the north edge of the Wicker Park subdivision and asked if any plantings could be done there. Mr. Repay stated that trees can be planted as long as they are outside the 15' from the levee. He would not be opposed to helping plant trees there. Chairman Baker added that the area needs time to establish itself. He advised waiting to see if the grass seeding takes hold and then revisit the issue at that time.
- Dave Nellans, Munster Town Council, thank the Commission for their help. In the 90 day period to submit appeals to FEMA regarding floodplain designation, there were no objections. All LOMARS from the town of Munster were accepted. Everyone worked together and this was the result of that.
- Ken Vavrek from Hammond asked the status of the tieback. Director Dan Repay replied that we are working with the Corps to make sure the Commission's design is acceptable to their standards. Once that is worked through, the design will be shared with the residents. We are continuing efforts with the engineering to do this quickly. The proposed blocks will be temporarily stored on the site; not permanent.
- Laurie Czulno, Forest Ave in Hammond, advised residents that if they have received a letter that they are out of floodplain, they need to call their lender for any adjustments to their rate. She also pointed out that there is a very narrow spot on State Line for blocks to be placed. Dan Repay is aware of the spot and agreed that it is very close there but doable.
- John Beckman, Lake County Fish & Game, reminded the Commission of a resolution passed a while back supporting upland water storage. He referred to the letter we received from Lake County Solid Waste asking for some of the farm land to do a compost operation. He encouraged the Commission to reconsider their request and work with them in this endeavor.
- Fred Baginski from Hammond represented the Friends of the Little Calumet River. He stated they are having an organizational meeting on March 26 and encouraged those interested to attend. They will also be working on the Fest this summer.

- **Mike Echterling**, representing the Friends of the Little Calumet River, also asked the Board to reconsider working with Lake County Solid Waste District. He feels it is a valuable project for us to consider.
- **Jim Sweeney**, president of the Porter County Izaak Walton League, asked about required mitigation of the Commission. Chairman Baker stated that when the new Commission was established, the completion of the flood control construction was the first priority along with obtaining a perpetual funding source. The completion of the deferred maintenance, which dates back decades, along with establishing the ongoing maintenance and operation program will remain the focus with everyone fully aware that there is also a recreational component to this project. Mitigation is also on our list of things to do as we move forward and the Commission is aware of these outstanding issues and will work towards addressing these concerns.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Chairman Baker announced that the next meeting is scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, April 17th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.