

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2014**

**Held at
Munster Town Hall, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. There were six (6) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Ray Kasmak
LeVon Whittaker
Tom Gozdecki
Debbie Long

Visitors:

Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
Roman Sawczak - Dyer
John Beckman – IWLA - PCC
Dave Nellans – Munster Town Council
Charles Svitko – Munster resident
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Lit Cal
Natalie Mills - USACE
Craig Hendrix – S.E.H.
Bill Emerson Sr. – Hammond Councilman
John/Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave, Hmd
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council
T. Ahearn – Forest Avenue, Hammond
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart
Eric Wolverton – Town of Schererville
Jeff Dekker – Town of Dyer
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus

- Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the October 15th meeting. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Kasmak; motion passed 6-0.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Baker wished all a happy holiday and thanked them for coming to the meeting. He referred to the 2008 flooding pictures that are displayed each month as a reminder as to what happens when a \$275 million man-made flood control project is not maintained. Maintenance of the levee system is the high priority so a flooding event like we had in 2008 never happens again. Through the General Assembly, funds are now in place to address the watershed, which is any water that flows into the Little Calumet River; funds will cover the entire Little Cal watershed. More than 1,400 homes came out of the mandatory floodplain which saves residents \$4 million every year and those are dollars that go back into the community. We will continue to move forward.

Executive Director Dan Repay proceeded to show a power point presentation of pictures he has taken of ongoing projects. They included the ongoing construction at Gary North that Hasse Construction is working on; closure gate replacement at Burr Street; pictures of the farm land at 35th & Chase that we have leased out; the leaf farm that we have leased to Lake County Solid Waste District.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay announced that permits have finally been received for the Kennedy Avenue channel clearing, west of Kennedy Avenue - dirt will be pushed to the south side of the levee to allow for better flowage; and the second permit received is for the high velocity channel at Hart Ditch. When in a high flow situation, it will channel the

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water to a storage area. The permits were received from IDEM, IDNR, and USF&W. Only the ACOE has to approve now.

- INDOT will be letting a contract this spring for the replacement of the culverts at Martin Luther King Drive. Water back-up there affects not only the expressway but also affects Gary, Lake Station and Hobart so the project will correct this situation and benefit everyone.
- The collapsed culvert at Main Street has caused a huge sinkhole in the area. We have been asked to facilitate the repair. It will cause serious problems if not addressed. At this point, there are about 1100 structures in jeopardy. The area affects Dyer, Schererville, and Munster.
- Commissioner Wichlinski questioned whether we should wait until the Corps signs off on the channel clearing and high velocity channel projects or begin the process now.
- Chairman Baker questioned whether or not Stateline was complete. Mr. Repay answered that the mock drill that took place was successful. They do plan to put some stop logs in that are being designed now. That is just a matter of making it more acceptable to FEMA so they may sign off so that residents can obtain reduced flood insurance.
- Discussion was held on the study being done on Deep River in Hobart. Areas along Deep River suffered flood damage as well in 2008. This area will be challenging; study should be completed soon. S.E.H. is doing that study of Lake George in Hobart.

• **Finance** - Mr. Repay referred to the claims for the months of November and December. Ray Kasmark made a motion to approve the November claims in the amount of \$255,281.30 and the December claims in the amount of \$977,962.32; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski. Mr. Repay proceeded to explain some of the claims – the largest claim of \$350,000.00 to the Lake County Highway Department for the Commission's share of the Columbia Avenue bridge in Hammond and Munster; \$332,207.26 to Hasse Construction for ongoing construction cost of Gary North levee rehabilitation; \$142,988.87 to Lake County Parks Department for partial cost of the Beaver Dam hydrology restoration project; and \$84,132.45 to Hammond Sanitary District for reimbursement of repair/upkeep of pump stations in Hammond. Discussion followed. Mr. Repay stated that we are working on interlocal agreements now with Lake County Parks Dept. and Hammond Sanitary District but some additional documentation is needed before we go forward with them. Both agencies have meetings tomorrow; they will pass their respective resolution at their meetings. Documentation is needed as part of our application process. Commissioner Gozdecki amended the motion to read that proper documentation is to be received from the Lake County Parks Dept. and the Hammond Sanitary District before payment is made; motion seconded by Commissioner Kasmark: motion passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

• Relative to the Kennedy Avenue channel clearing project and the high velocity channel project, Mr. Repay expects the final Corps sign-off to be received in a couple of weeks. Rather than wait those 2 weeks, Commissioner Gozdecki suggested we begin the bidding process now so that time will be saved once everything is approved so we can steadily move forward.

• Mr. Repay explained the projects that have just been permitted: (1) sediment buildup west of Kennedy Avenue in Highland will be removed and placed on the levee to the south side of the river, thus creating a more direct channel so water will flow better. Native grass will then be planted on the south side. (2) with the high velocity channel diversion, once a prescribed elevation is hit, this project will activate and let water go to the east storage area. A diverter restrictor has already been built as part of the project but this additional project will assist that. Water rises rapidly at Hart Ditch and this will help alleviate flooding. Chairman Baker added that the engineering is done and permits received. The Corps has to

review and then sign off. We expect that to happen very soon. Commission Gozdecki made a motion to start the process for advertising these two projects. By starting the process, it will save several weeks of time. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Mr. Repay added that no award would be made; only the advertising could be done prior to Corps sign-off. Motion passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Other Issues

- Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve two resolutions: Resolution 12-10-14A will allow the Commission to enter into an agreement with Hammond Sanitary District for the maintaining of certain pump stations with the city at a cost not to exceed \$85,000. Resolution 12-10-14B will allow the Commission to enter into an interlocal agreement with the Lake County Park and Recreation Department for the Beaver Dam hydrology restoration project at a cost not to exceed \$194,468. The Chairman will execute these agreements. Motion seconded by Commissioner Kasmark; motion passed with a 6-0 roll call vote. Chairman Baker added that a resolution has to be passed at a public meeting when we enter into an interlocal agreement. By passing these 2 resolutions, it will enable us to go forward. On future watershed projects, we will use this procedure.

New Business

- Chairman Baker introduced LeVon Whittaker as a new Commissioner. He is the city of Gary's appointment through the Governor's Office. We now have a full 9 member Board of Commissioners.
- Commissioners wished all Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Statements from the Floor

- Ruth Mores from Southmoor in Hammond attended a talk/presentation where author Cynthia Ogorek talked about the history/development dating back to 1930 of the Little Calumet River and Grand Calumet River. She said the talk was very informative and worthwhile and encouraged the Commission to have her as a speaker at a future meeting. She presented a signed copy of the author's book, Images of America along the Calumet River to Chairman Baker.
- Fred Baginski representing Friends of the little Calumet River commented that this same author was at the last Little Calumet River festival where she signed books. He informed the Board members that, at this point in time, he did not know whether or not there would be a festival this summer. He'll keep us informed.
- Laurie Czulno from Forest Avenue in Hammond reminded the Commission that the Stateline tieback neighborhood is still waiting for Corps approval/sign off so that about 20 homeowners can be relieved of high flood insurance.
- Sandy O'Brien from Hobart inquired whether or not the money situation with the Corps was getting resolved so we can move forward with Hobart Marsh mitigation. She inquired whether we could start some preliminary work, like getting rid of the invasive species fragmites. Mr. Repay replied that he meets regularly with the Corps and although he feels progress is being made, we cannot start anything at Hobart Marsh, as well as the 20 homes at Forest Avenue, until the issue with the Corps is resolved; he could not give a timeline.
- John Beckman from the Izaack Walton League in Porter County stated there are miles and miles of the invasive species. He has talked to the Gary Fire Department and they are very supportive of doing the prairie burns; a perfect time would be in May. He also stated that INDOT has the resources to do burns also.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 14th at the Munster Town Hall.