

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

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

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Chairman Baker introduced a new member, Ray Kasmak, nominated by the Lake County Commissioners and appointed by Governor Pence. There were six (6) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Ray Kasmak
Anthony Broadnax
Tom Gozdecki
Dave Castellanos

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus

Visitors:

Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
Roman Sawczak - Dyer
Dave Nellans – Munster Town Council
Judy Knapp – Forest Ave, Hammond
Dorreen Carey - Gary
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Lit Cal
Craig Hendricks – S.E.H.
Roy Deda - USACE
Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave, Hmd
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council
Bonnie Vavrek – Stateline, Hammond
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart
Zeta Allen - Hobart
Laura White - Hobart
Darlene Vassil - Hobart
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Oakwood, Munster
Bill Emerson Sr – Hammond City Council
Bob Allen - Hobart
P. Yackanich – Forest, Hammond
Pete Mendez – Hobart
Suki Martinez – Hobart
Terry McCloskey – Izaak Walton
Bill Iltzsche – Izaak Walton
Jim Sweeney – Izaak Walton
John Brezik – Hobart City Council

- Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the August 13th meeting. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed 6-0.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Baker referred to the 2008 flooding pictures that are displayed each month as a reminder as to what happens when a \$275 million man-made structure is not maintained. Flooding of that magnitude never wants to be seen again so we have to be ready to deal with Mother Nature at any time and do everything we can to insure we never see flooding of that magnitude again. We are coming up to the six year anniversary of the 2008 flood. It incurred over \$1 billion in damages. We are far better prepared now than we were in 2008. As time passes, you tend to forget but this is the reason we are here. We are doing deferred maintenance and looking at all the tributaries in the watershed in addition to the river itself.

LCRBDC Minutes – September 10, 2014 – Page 2

• Chairman Baker also announced of passing of Judy Vamos this last week. Judy had been the Land Acquisition Agent for the Commission for about 20 years. She had just recently retired and she will be missed by all.

• Finance - Mr. Repay referred to the claims for the month of September. Anthony Broadnax made a motion to approve the September claims in the amount of \$144,992.22; motion seconded by Tom Gozdecki. Mr. Repay proceeded to explain some of the claims - C&H Mowing has just completed a 3rd cycle of mowing of the levees; Wiltjer has completed the cutting down and removing of trees north and south of 103rd in Winfield; Wiltjer also did an emergency cleanup of debris in Briar Creek retention area caused by the sinkhole in the area. Motion passed with a 6-0 roll call vote.

Executive Director's Report –O&M/Engineering -

Mr. Repay reported the following:

- Gary North levee rehabilitation project is currently underway. Hasse Construction just started their contract a couple of weeks ago.
- Grant St culvert removal is complete except for the area by the NIPSCO power line.
- As a part of the watershed component of the project, there will be a boat tour down Hart Ditch in Munster to identify any concerns/problems caused by overgrown trees, erosion, etc. There will eventually be a similar boat tour down Deep River.
- Chairman Baker added that another reason that maintenance needs to be kept up, along the river, is to be in compliance with Army Corps specifications established for all the segments. It is critical that each segment pass the Corps inspections as it has a direct impact on reducing the required flood insurance for homeowners with federally back loans. The annual inspection reports received are important for that reason. Gary North levee rehabilitation, which is currently underway, is the last segment of the system that does not get inspected annually by the Corps due to deferred maintenance. Once the Gary North project is completed, the Army Corps will authorize the segment to be a part of the annual inspection process.
- Chairman Baker asked how many mowing cycles were planned for this year and Mr. Repay replied that we had 4 mowings budgeted; 3 mowings have been completed with the last one scheduled for the fall. With the rainy weather we have had, it is possible that we may need a 5th mowing.
- Commissioner Gozdecki inquired about the backup generator for the pump station at Burr. Mr. Repay replied we are working with Superior Engineering on a proposal for a backup generator that would turn on automatically in the event that power would go out during a rain event. At present, we have to physically check the pump stations to make sure they are working. Burr Street pump station is the first station we are considering as part of a back up generation plan for the pump stations controlled by the Commission.
- Mr. Repay added that he worked with Judy Vamos for the 4 years he's been with the Commission and will miss Judy's great stories she had to tell regarding land acquisitions she completed for the Commission. We will miss her.

Other Issues/New Business

- There was none.

Statements from the Floor

- Laurie Czulno from Forest Avenue in Hammond was concerned that we have had 2 heavy rain events this past month and she is concerned about the openings in the tie-back block levee built on Stateline. Mr. Repay stated that there are several closure drills that will take

place so that everyone is ready to close off those openings if necessary. In addition to Stateline, there is a practice drill scheduled for Hohman Avenue as well.

- Bonnie Vavrek from Stateline in Hammond expressed concern about her segment not being approved by the Army Corps. Mr. Repay answered that the issue is with the Corps requesting additional money from the Commission; monies that the Commission does not feel is due to the Corps. Until this issue is resolved, the Army Corps will not sign off on Stateline; and therefore, FEMA cannot remove/reduce floodplain or flood insurance status since the first step in that process is the Corps approval of the work. The Commission has sent a letter regarding this subject, to the new Colonel and is awaiting a response letter. Mr. Deda, representing the Army Corps, stated that a response will be sent very shortly.

- Sandy O'Brien from Hobart, asked whether or not the mitigation plans issue for Hobart Marsh has been resolved yet. Mr. Repay stated that the holdup on the mitigation plan was also outlined in the previously mentioned Commission letter to the Corps. Once again, the money issue needs to be resolved before the Corps can move forward with any approvals along the system.

- John Brezik, Hobart City Council, supports moving ahead with the Hobart Marsh mitigation plan. Hobart Marsh is in his district and they cannot move forward with other plans in the area until this is resolved. If there is anything the City of Hobart can do, he offered his help.

- Terry McCloskey, originally from Hessville and now residing in LaPorte, currently represents the Izaak Walton League, appreciates the frustration in not getting business done quicker. He has been involved in following the Commission for decades. He gave a brief history of the project in the mid-80's and how we got to where we are today and how recreation, as well as mitigation, has always been outlined in the legislation.

Chairman Baker added that this has been a frustrating project since he has come onboard the month after the flood of 2008. However, the flood control portion of the system has been completed and new legislation has been passed that outlines a method to fund the operation and maintenance as well as expanding the area to include all the Little Calumet River watershed. Unfortunately, we don't live in a perfect world and as those in the audience have heard before, this Commission and the community as a whole, have worked together in order to continue the process of completing work that was neglected for decades. We have seen significant progress and we're taking care of the long list of items to finish in the most efficient and economical means possible.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 8th at the Munster Town Hall.