

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION****HELD AT 6:00p.m., WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2015****Location: Munster Town Hall, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. There were seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski  
Tom Gozdecki  
Anthony Broadnax  
Levon Whittaker  
Ron McAhron  
David Castellanos

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

John Reed

**Staff:**

Jodi Lambert

**Visitors:**

Roy Deda – USACE  
Ruth Mores – Southmoor Ave., Hammond  
Dave Nellans – Munster Town Council  
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council  
Charles Svitko – Munster  
Judy Knapp – Forest Ave., Hammond  
John Beckman – Izaak Walton League  
Paul Daniels – Munster  
Mary Jane Green – Munster  
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart  
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Little Cal.  
Craig Hendrix – SEH Engineering  
T. Cholipski – River Dr., Munster  
Janet Venecz – Hammond City Council  
Mark Gordish – Hammond Engineering  
T. Ahearn – Forest Ave., Hammond  
Lu Ann Franklin – The Times

Chairman William Baker referred to the minutes from the June 10, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed with 7 aye votes.

**Chairman's Report** – Chairman Baker welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke of the continued rain events in the month of June as a great reminder of why we are here. The Commission is charged with maintaining an eleven mile, \$275 million dollar man-made flood control project that runs from the state line to approximately I-65. Chairman Baker referred to the 2008 flood pictures as an additional reminder of why this project is so important. Continued maintenance of the \$275 million man-made flood project is a priority to make sure we are better prepared to deal with events, such as the 2008 flood. This was the first year that the Army Corps of Engineers covered the entire levee system as part of the mandatory annual inspection. It is important to remember that more than 1,400 properties were removed from the mandatory floodplain due to the completion of this federal, flood control, saving residents from having to pay federal flood insurance premiums in the amount of \$4.1 million each year. These dollars are put right back into the community, making this system a real economic development project.

**Finance** – Chairman Baker referred to the July claims in the amount of \$1,016,040.03. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion, Mr. Repay proceeded to explain a few of the claims, the first of which was the payment to the RDA in the amount of \$920,000.00 which is the third of five state mandated loan repayments to the RDA per state statute. After this payment, the remaining obligation to the RDA will total \$1,190,000.00. Additionally, the claim in the amount of \$20,262.50 to C & H Mowing covers the cost of mowing the 22 miles of levee. The significant amount of rainfall over the past months, the levee may need to be cut more often. The next mowing is currently scheduled for later in the week. Mr. Repay stated the importance of keeping the grass on the levee trimmed in order to properly monitor the river and conduct inspections and maintenance. The Garcia Consulting Engineers claim for \$13,844.15 represents a partial payment on the ongoing Ribbon Parcel Mapping project. Mr. Repay stated the Commission currently has interest in several thousand parcels, whether in-fee or easement, along the entire length of the project. The Ribbon Mapping will allow for the transfer of important property documents, currently in paper form, onto an online GIS Map that can be



accessed by personnel via the internet. Mapping from State Line to Kennedy Avenue is currently in development, after which the Commissioners will have an opportunity to review the progress. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

**Executive Director's Report –**

- Mr. Repay reported that, due to the abundance of rain, the majority of our projects are delayed or on hold, however, all of the system pump stations are working properly.
- The High Velocity Flow Channel project, located where Harts Ditch meets the Little Calumet River near Wicker Park, is about 50% complete. The remaining seeding work will be completed when there are r drier conditions.
- The Sandbar Modification project, located just west of the Kennedy Avenue Bridge, is on hold due to the continued rains.
- The Main Street sinkhole project has experienced dewatering issues due to the inclement weather. The last update indicated that the project was underway with the projected 35 day closure of Main Street expected to begin on July 20.
- There are several projects in the permitting process including work on a recreational trail, it will include paving the tops of the levee from Cline Avenue to Kennedy Avenue in Highland as well as from Oxbow Park to the railroad tracks in Hammond. This project will also address several parking lot issues near the pump stations and create a hub to connect bike trails from Lyman Avenue to Calumet Avenue.
- The project to raise the Georgia Street Bridge in Gary, which will eliminate the need for a closure during heavy rain events, is also in the final permitting stage.
- There are several trees down in Harts Ditch and in the Little Cal that need to be removed but with the volume of water in the system, it is unsafe for people and equipment to enter at this time. The situation is being monitored, and the trees will be removed as the conditions are safe.
- The commission was contacted by the Kankakee River Development Commission and Lake County Emergency Management to offer assistance near Shelby, Indiana. We were able to provide them with 40,000 sandbags and our sandbag machine to help in their efforts to prevent further flooding. Mr. Repay explained that we have over 300,000 sandbags on hand, with only 55,000 needed for our entire system. We would not have been left unprotected in a heavy rain event, and were able to offer much needed assistance to our south County neighbors.

Commissioner Whittaker inquired about the likelihood of an extension for the Main Street Sinkhole project due to recent weather conditions. Mr. Repay offered that, according to the latest update by the towns of Munster, Dyer and Schererville, they were to be given an extension up to two weeks. The next concern with this project is the actual closure of the street and rerouting traffic, which will now include busses, as local schools will be back in session during the street closure.

Chairman Baker requested clarification of this being the first year the entire flood control system was inspected by the Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Repay explained that since 2010, we have been diligently working on repairing vast amounts of deferred maintenance within various segments of the levee including Marshalltown, Gary South, Gary North, Burr Street and Forest Avenue. Additionally, the actual construction of the levee in Stages VII, VIII and V-2 has been completed thus bringing the system up to specifications. This is the first year all segments of the project, including the INDOT Tie Back, located at the I-65/I-80/94 Interchange, were inspected by the ACOE. It is anticipated that the final report will be complete by next month.

Commissioner Wichlinski inquired about the status of permits for the Levee Paving project. In response, Mr. Repay stated that we have submitted our plans to the Army Corps and are awaiting their approval and that he does not anticipate any issues with approval.

Chairman Baker requested an update on the monthly meetings held with local municipalities. Mr. Repay indicated they discussed the Army Corps inspection and any blockages or issues observed this past month due to large amount of rainfall. Additionally, a closure exercise of the Northcote Bridge is planned, due to the fact that the new Siphon

Bridge is in place, and it is necessary for the local community to demonstrate their ability to close the Northcote Bridge to the ACOE.

The Advisory Board is in the process of reviewing the watershed applications submitted by various municipalities according to Mr. Repay, with the next meeting slated for August, schedules permitting. Commissioner Broadnax inquired about the protocol for the Advisory Board and whether any delays in project approvals were anticipated. Mr. Repay did not foresee any time lag with the projects and expected recommendations from the Advisory Board in the fall, with the hope that the members will spur their communities to submit additional applications.

Mr. Repay confirmed, in response to Commissioner Gozdecki's question, that the 408 Process is only needed for the Federal portion of the project and not the entire watershed. It was noted that the Little Cal projects are the first to have to meet the 408 Process in the USACE Chicago District and may cause unanticipated delays.

Several issues were reported on by Roy Deda of Army Corps of Engineers, the first being the inspections completed in May. Mr. Deda stated the report will be finalized in August and a briefing between the Army Corps and Commission will be scheduled. He congratulated the Commission on all their hard work with the project.

Mr. Deda indicated that the Army Corps is working on updating and revising the Hobart Marsh Mitigation Plan and preliminary cost estimate and expects to have the plan available for discussion prior to the August meeting.

Mr. Deda next spoke about the 408 Process, indicating the Army Corps is intending to address the State Line closure utilizing this process. According to Mr. Deda, the 408 Process is an Engineering Circular that issues policy and procedural guidance for processing requests to alter U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works projects. It is a longstanding regulation within the Army Corps that has been recently updated. Over the past year, the Chicago District has been putting into place their own policies and procedures necessary to utilize this process. Mr. Deda further stated that the State Line Closure will be one of the first projects in the Chicago District earmarked to use the 408 Process, and that this process gives the Army Corps a method to move forward with the Tie-Back issues. It was indicated by Mr. Deda that the 408 Process could encompass a time line of anywhere from two months to a year, depending on the data submitted to the Army Corps and the level of approval needed. A discussion ensued regarding the length of time necessary for approval using the 408 Process and how it would affect the Little Cal projects. As an example, Mr. Deda explained that a project such as the Levee Paving would, in his estimation, only require 30-45 days for permitting and could be completed at the district level. However, a significant change that would affect the performance of the project could require additional approval and a much longer timeframe for approval, according to Mr. Deda. With potentially up to a year waiting for proper approval and permitting, Chairman Baker asked Mr. Deda how we incorporate these new procedures into our project planning. In response, it was suggested by Mr. Deda that a pre-plan meeting be held with the Army Corps to address any potential issues and acquire some initial guidance before moving forward. Mr. Deda expressed the Corps willingness to working with the Commission on all projects, including those utilizing the 408 Process.

#### Other Issues/New Business -

- Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion authorizing the Executive Director to move forward with the purchase of the Burr Street North Pump Station back-up generator, not to exceed \$150,000; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion and Mr. Repay, as requested by the Commissioners, identified the pump stations that are the responsibility of the Commission: Ironwood, Marshalltown, Broadway, Grant Street, 32<sup>nd</sup> & Cleveland and Burr Street North. Burr Street North, located north of the river and east of Burr Street, was the pump station identified by Mr. Repay as one of the most critical in the system, and therefore the most logical choice for the initial back-up generator. Further debate was held regarding the installation of the generator, fuel choice of diesel over natural gas, and the timeline for delivery of the equipment. Additionally, the 408 Process was discussed and whether any delay in installation of the generator, because of the potential length of the process, would affect the equipment in any manner. Mr. Deda with the Army Corps of Engineers, expressed his opinion that, if the installation of a back-up generator would

require the 408 Process, it would be permitted within 30-45 days. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

- Commissioner McAhron presented a motion stating that the Little Calumet River Basin Commission acknowledges and agrees that the project authorization is at the 200 year flood event level. The Commission commits to flood fighting at the State Line Closure to the 200 year level, consistent with the project authorization; motion seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion, Commissioner McAhron further stated that this motion would put the Commission on record as committed partners in maintaining the State Line Closure at the 200 year flood level. Mr. Repay suggested that the reasoning behind this motion was prior statements from the Army Corps indicated that any significant changes as a result of the project authorization would necessitate approval at higher levels within the Army Corps of Engineers. He further stated by acknowledging and demonstrating that it is possible to go to the 200 year flood level at State Line, there would not be any issues with the project authorization. Commissioner Whittaker clarified that the use of sandbags on top of the existing block wall at State Line would bring this section to the 200 year flood level protection mark. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Whittaker announced that he had the opportunity to meet with community members in the Burr Street South area and expressed to them that their environmental concerns or issues with flooding have not fallen on deaf ears. Commissioner Whittaker further added that the Commission is on the right track in providing the necessary services to the communities we serve.

Commissioner Castellanos wanted the public to know that the work we are doing, and the equipment we are purchasing for the Burr Street project will affect residents and businesses in a positive way. Additionally, Commissioner Castellanos requested status on the Commission's position/compliance with minority hiring and contract bidding procedures. Attorney Reed stated that the legislation is currently being reviewed to ensure the Commission is compliant and an update should be available by the August meeting.

#### Statements from the Floor –

- Dave Nellans, Munster Town Council, applauded the Commission's decision to purchase back-up generators for some of the Pump Stations. He offered some advice on maintaining the diesel generators and further expressed his appreciation of our efforts.
- Judy Knapp, Forest Avenue, expressed her thanks and appreciation for all that the Commission has accomplished, even though she is still required to pay flood insurance.
- John Beckman, Izaak Walton League, would appreciate the Commission working proactively with INDOT regarding the invasive fragmities taking over and driving out native plants.
- Mary Jane Green, Munster, inquired about erosion and downed trees in and around Harts Ditch. Mr. Repay explained that, while the Commission is not responsible for Harts Ditch, it still affects our project. He further explained that development in the south end of the watershed is causing the water to flow through the ditch at a greater velocity. The areas experiencing eroding will be identified and certain areas will be stabilized. When the water level recedes, crews will be able to address the downed trees.
- Sandy O'Brian, Hobart, thanked the Commission for coming to Hobart for their June meeting and was hopeful the Hobart Marsh Mitigation would be progressing.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at the Munster Town Hall and the meeting was adjourned by motion.

