

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2021

Location: Munster Town Hall

Chairman Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were eight (8) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Anthony Broadnax
Ron Ware
Derek Nimetz
Robert Ochi
David Castellanos

Visitors:

Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Ruth Mores - Hammond
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Matt Iglesias – Hammond
Kimberly Ehn – Dunes Calumet Audubon
Cookie Ferguson – Dunes Calumet
Audubon

Commissioners Absent:

Levon Whittaker, Secretary

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from June 16, 2021 as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed everyone to our meeting. As a reminder, USACE inspection reports, minutes and audio recording of our meetings can be found on our website at www.littlecalumetriverbasin.org. The Commission is tasked with the maintenance of a \$275 million man-made flood control project. There are numerous issues with the original design and decades of deferred maintenance that we are completing. The yellowing pictures from the 2008 flood event serve as a reminder of what can happen if maintenance on a man-made flood control project is neglected. However, this

Commission is far better prepared than was in the past and we continue to maintain open communication and work with all communities within the watershed.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the July 2021 claims in the amount of \$1,134,175.41. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the July claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims starting with reimbursement to the Town of Merrillville for two watershed projects; \$426,625.00 for the Meadowdale Storage Basin Watershed Project and \$74,572.000 for the Taft Place/Bon Aire Lake Culvert Watershed Project. Earthwerks was paid \$210,244.80 for final payment on the Deep River Rock Riffle Project. This 4.4 million dollar project came in over budget by only \$9,000.00. The National Audubon Society submitted a claim in the amount of \$111,077.28 for final payment on the Little Calumet Marsh Bird Conservation Area. Representatives from Audubon Great Lakes will give a final report on the project later in the meeting. Grimmer Construction was paid \$49,967.00 for repair work needed on several pedestrian bridge decks. \$42,250.00 was paid to Delta III for ditch clearing work near Rosser Lake. Blockages were removed to help facilitate better flow around Rosser Lake. U.S.G.S. submitted claims in the amounts of \$24,910.00 and \$2,666.25 for quarterly temperature monitoring and operation and maintenance of multiple streamgages along the system. Finally, Great Lakes Electrical Maintenance was paid \$14,412.00 for monthly Pump Station maintenance.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Executive Director's Report –

Mr. Repay gave an update on several of the projects:

- We had a large rain event in late June that the system handled well. As with past major rain events, we met with the municipalities after the event to discuss and what we learned and what we can do better.
- The Grant East Pump Station needs to be reviewed for a possible upgrade to its system. The area has had some increased development and may need some updates.
- The Burr Street Pump Station went off line for a short period of time. It may be worthwhile to purchase 2 small pumps that can be used during these significant rain events.
- We received our 408 permit from the USACE for the Burr Street Railroad Closure Project. Once the railroad schedules the project, it should take about one day to complete. This will also eliminate human intervention at another closure in the City of Gary.
- The Spring Park Project is on track to bid out in September.
- We completed drainage improvements at Rosser Lake. Our contractor reshaped the banks of the drainage ditch and removed blockages to help facilitate better

flow in and around Rosser Lake. By lowering the lake, it will also help to alleviate the high water table that is experienced in a nearby neighborhood.

- Our contractor had started the process of blocking Arbogast Tunnel in order to perform an inspection as required by the USACE. Unfortunately, we were forced to reopen the tunnel due to the amount of rain received at the end of the month. We are now in the process of stopping the water again to finish the inspection.
- I took a tour in Merrillville of several projects we helped finance over the past few years. Matt Lake of Merrillville Stormwater Utility described the projects and what they have planned for the future.
- I have had several meetings with the Lake County Surveyor's Office and Christopher Burke Engineering regarding the Hart Ditch Stabilization. There has been some delay in getting the required permits. This year we still plan to get some areas fixed, but larger stretches of work will need to be completed next year.
- We continue to work on scanning our old records from paper to a digital format. We have completed Commission minutes, agendas and state draws. In conjunction with this project, we have contracted with a shredding company to recycle and destroy the old records.

Presentation –

Nat Miller and Jennifer Johnson of Audubon Great Lakes gave a final report on the Little Calumet Marsh Bird Conservation Area Project – Phase I as well as their future plans to restore marsh bird habitats and reduce invasive species along the river.

Craig Zandstra of Lake County Parks gave a presentation on the Phase II Proposal for the Little Calumet River Marsh Bird Conservation Area. The Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative consisting of the Lake County Parks, The Wetlands Initiative, Audubon Great Lakes, The Nature Conservancy and the City of Gary are requesting \$350,000 to help continue this project.

The video presentation can be viewed on our website or at the following link:

<https://youtu.be/O65Nwl6NmUk>

Other Issues/New Business –

No New Business

Statements to the Board –

Ruth Mores, Hammond, commented on the work done by the Commission and the value of saving natural habitat. She commended the Board for their forward thinking.

Kim Ehn, Dunes-Calumet Audubon, commented on the economic value that birding can bring to our area.

Addy, Hammond, spoke in support of the projects presented by the Audubon Society and Lake County Parks.

Samatha Kowalski, Highland, stated she lives near the Rookery and loves the area and is in support of all the work that has been done.

Gary Lee, Gary, requested to read a statement into the record (attached).

Dave Taborski, Gary, commented on grass cutting near his home on Commission owned properties.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Ware thanked all for attending the meeting and thanked the Audubon and Lake County Parks for their presentations.

Commissioner Ochi commented on the great presentations during the meeting.

Commissioner Wichlinski thanked Nat from Great Lakes Audubon for his detailed presentation.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked Great Lakes Audubon for the presentation and their increased communication with the Commission.

Commissioner Nimetz thanked the groups for their presentations and the enthusiasm from the visitors to our meeting.

Commissioner Castellanos thanked the presenters for their time and stated that he appreciated the comments from the public. He also stated that Mayor Prince will be a guest on our August 9th radio show on WLTH AM 1370.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 21, 2021.