

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1997
AT THE COMMISSION OFFICE
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
HIGHLAND, INDIANA

Chairman Bob Huffman called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Ten (10) Commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Quorum was declared and guests were recognized.

Development Commissioners:

Robert Huffman
Marion Williams
Roger Chiabai
Steve Davis
Robert Trelo
Charles Agnew
George Carlson
Arlene Colvin
John DeMeo
William Tanke

Visitors:

Jim Flora - RWArmstrong
RaeAnn Rockhill - Portage Times
Pete Zak - South Shore Marina
Mary Jane Zak - " "
Larry Evans-Gary Business United
Milton Ward- " " "
Lamar Taylor- " " "
John Hannon - Portage Engineer
Mike Doyne - Portage Marina
Harbormaster

Staff:

Dan Gardner
Lou Casale
James Pokrajac
Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

The minutes of the October 2, 1997 meeting were approved by a motion from Roger Chiabai; motion seconded by Bob Trelo; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Bob Huffman referred to the newspaper article on George Carlson and how he was the main proponent in getting the OxBow park area to be developed into a park. He congratulated George for his perseverance in accomplishing his goal. He also announced that the city of Hammond is going to be naming the OxBow park area after him.

Executive Director's Report - Mr. Gardner informed the Board that he met with the COE and INDOT on October 10th to discuss the Grant Street project. This reconstruction of Grant St. is set for December letting. There are a few items still remaining to be worked out. Wetland land mitigation is still needed. There is a MOA in the works but Attorney Casale is making some changes to it. The project will consist of new lanes, safety improvements and the raised roadway. Off ramps will be reconstructed; most of the work will be on the south quadrant. Mr. Gardner gave a brief description of the project.

Mr. Gardner reported that he is still trying to coordinate a meeting between the Colonel and Mayor King to discuss minority participation in project construction. It has been determined that the previously set goal of 40% is not being met. This is not acceptable to the Commission so we need to discuss what constitutes "good faith efforts" by the contractors.

Mr. Gardner referred to a meeting held October 28th with Gary officials relative to the Clark/Chase borrow site being used as a potential clay source for the city so they can use it for the landfill closure. We are hoping a public joint venture can be worked out between the Commission and the City that would benefit both entities. Senate Engineering is currently doing a design study for the COE due in December.

Land Acquisition Committee - Committee Chairman Chuck Agnew made a motion authorizing the increase of offers on DC439 to \$5000 from \$3850 and DC455 to \$7000 from \$5500; motion seconded by George Carlson; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Agnew stated there were no condemnation motions this month.

Mr. Agnew referred to an agreement presented to us by N.W. Engineering calling for a 5.3 acre donation of land needed for mitigation for the Burr Street bridge reconstruction project. Attorney Casale explained that since we cannot sell our property or donate it, a motion was made by Mr. Agnew for him to re-draft the agreement deleting the word "donate" and still draft it to allow the property to be used for the mitigated purpose; motion seconded by George Carlson; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Agnew stated that the groundbreaking ceremony for recreation at Lake Etta took place. Staff was there, as well as several county councilmen, Lake County Parks officials and media. There are a number of improvements that will go in at Lake Etta, some being a new parking lot, canoe launch and fishing pier. (Gleason Park will have a ceremony in the spring)

Project Engineering Committee - Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave Mr. Carlson an opportunity to discuss the newspaper article in which he is featured as being instrumental in making the OxBow area into a park. As a past Councilman for 32 years, Mr. Carlson was a proponent in getting the dike built in that area and purchasing the land. At present, construction is ongoing. The boardwalk is being built and roadway stoned. The road will be paved next spring.

Chairman Bob Huffman once again congratulated George on having the park site named after him. A dedication ceremony will happen in the spring.

Mr. Gardner informed the Board that he and Attorney Casale has been attending numerous meetings with the Gary School Corp. in order to obtain the flowage easements needed for the project area. On October 28th, the easements finally passed at the School Board meeting.

Legislative Committee - Committee Chairman George Carlson informed the Board members that Portage is hoping to have the \$2 million for Portage Marina released to them on November 12th, the next time the State Budget Committee meets.

Marina Committee - Committee Chairman Bill Tanke reported that the city of Portage has gone ahead with Phase II of marina development. City Engineer John Hannon made a presentation to the Board to let Board members know where the project stands now. He reported that plans and specs have been completed for Phase II. Bids were let in five separate areas (Contract #1 is for the completion of utilities; Contract #2 is for electrical utilities available to the slips; Contract #3 site development contract including parking lot, retaining walls and storm sewer; Contract #4 is the boathouse and Contract #5 is for two piers on the west wall of the basin for larger boats. Phase II would include about 40 new slips. Bids were received in all 5 areas and Abonmarche has determined they are all in compliance with the specs. If the money comes through on Nov. 12, it appears that they can still be bid for construction to accept new boaters in the spring. The city has a verbal commitment from the Budget Committee. They will hold a special meeting to award the contracts and begin construction immediately.

Mr. Tanke questioned the Mayor's position to only spend \$1.4 million on marina development to add on only 40 slips and not the entire \$2 million. Since the Commission's obligation to the Federal government is for 205 slips, it would seem the entire amount should be spent on the marina development. Mr. Hannon responded that the Mayor is looking beyond just the marina itself - but looking at a whole marina district. They are pursuing the purchase of additional property. (The marina site at present is landlocked in at 18 acres).

Mr. Tanke asked about an additional \$150,000 that was previously available for the marina. Mr. Hannon stated that the \$150,000 is available to Portage through the Lake Michigan Marina Commission and will be used for engineering services. The budget for actual construction now would be \$1,264,000. Mr. Hannon stated that there is not a demand for 205 slips at present. They are confident that they can market an additional 40 slips next spring and they would rather add them on slowly and fill them than have them sit empty.

The city is developing a list of serious potential boaters. The marina is presently operating basically at a break even capacity. Adding 40 more slips should actually make a profit. With those extra profit dollars, the marina can be further developed down the road. Engineer's estimate to complete marina is \$2.2 million.

Mr. Tanke questioned where the remaining \$600,000 would be spent. Mr. Hannon explained how the Mayor wanted additional marina district development such as a public golf course, restaurant, and waterway access.

Mr. Tanke reiterated his concern about the entire \$2 million not being spent on marina development. He proceeded to make a motion to draft a letter to the Mayor requesting him to complete the marina with the total \$2 million; motion seconded by Arlene Colvin; further discussion ensued. Commissioner Colvin withdrew her second. The motion died for lack of a second to the motion.

Finance/Policy Committee - Treasurer Chuck Agnew gave the financial report. Mr. Agnew made a motion to approve the financial status statement for September and approve the claims for payment totaling \$62,875.71; motion seconded by Bob Trelo; motion approved unanimously. Mr. Agnew referred to 2 COE letter - one letter withdrawing \$400,000 out of the construction escrow and the second letter withdrawing \$100,000 out of the design escrow account.

Other Business - Mr. Tanke stated that the committee formed to oversee the video making met and he presented a letter from the video company, PLANET BLUE, presenting some revised figures that include preparing a written script, having a professional narrator read the script and editing the aerial footage to narration. \$3,700 had previously been committed to this project. This additional work would cost \$2,800 for a total of \$6,500. Mr. Tanke made a motion to enter into an agreement with them for the total amount of \$6,500; motion seconded by John DeMeo; motion passed unanimously. Flying the river would probably be done within a few weeks. This video would be public information and could be used for presentations. Still photographs will be taken at the same time. Digitizing was also discussed.

Statements from the floor - There were none.

There being no further business, the next regular Commission meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Thursday, December 4, 1997.