

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2001
AT THE COMMISSION OFFICE
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
PORTAGE, INDIANA**

Chairman William Tanke called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Seven (7) Commissioners were present. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Quorum was declared and guests were recognized.

Development Commissioners:

George Carlson
Emerson Delaney
Mark Reshkin
William Tanke
Steve Davis
Bob Huffman
Marion Williams

Visitors:

Bill Petrities – Highland resident
Jomary Crary – IDNR, Div. of Water
Jim Flora – R. W. Armstrong Co.

Staff:

Dan Gardner
Sandy Mordus
Lou Casale
Jim Pokrajac
Judy Vamos

Commissioner Bob Huffman made a motion to approve the minutes of May 3, 2001; motion seconded by Mark Reshkin; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report – Mr. Tanke stated that a meeting has been scheduled with the Chicago COE office and Mark Lopez from Congressman Visclosky's office for the next day, June 1st. Executive Dan Gardner and Chairman Bill Tanke would be going. They will report back at the next Board meeting.

Chairman Tanke also shared with Board members the invitation to Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve dedication on June 8th. Dr. Reshkin stated that he was planning to attend.

Executive Director's Report - Mr. Gardner referred to the letter in the packet to Jeff Viohl, IN Federal Liaison to the Governor's Office capturing the highlights of the meeting at the Governor's Office on May 9th. Mr. Gardner showed the video of the project and was very pleased with the meeting and its outcome. 3 areas of concern were raised in the meeting: (1) that of closing the gap between State appropriations and credits received, (2) methods to impact the COE decision making on cost increases and (3) exploring methods to "cap" State funding limits. After all these years, it appears that we are finally very visible and they understand exactly who we are and what our project entails. Mr. Gardner distributed a report entitled "Proposed Credits Strategy" which was discussed. He will be contacting the meeting participants in the near future as a follow-up.

Mr. Gardner went on to list out some areas of concern that we need to focus on to obtain credit, i.e. Burr Street betterment levee and the highway bridges. Commissioner Reshkin brought up the question of environmental justice concern, which was discussed. Attorney Casale stated that there are 3 levels to be addressed – administrative, political and legal. Staff also met with Mark Lopez, Congressman Visclosky's office, on May 10th to discuss these same concerns.

Land Acquisition/Management Committee – In Committee Chairman Chuck Agnew's absence, Judy Vamos proposed an increased offer on DC-595. Mr. Huffman made a motion to increase the offer to \$43,000 to avoid condemnation; motion seconded by Mark Reshkin; motion passed unanimously. It was then proposed to condemn DC574 (because owner cannot be found). Mr. Huffman made a motion for staff to proceed with condemnation proceedings on DC574; motion seconded by Mark Reshkin; motion passed unanimously.

Staff recently met with LAMAR regarding the leasing of billboards. We have just acquired the right to install 2 new outdoor signs as part of the DC707 and DC816 purchase. LAMAR is proposing 2 more signs on Commission property. Discussion was held on whether it was desirable to enter into any more sign lease agreements. The attorney was asked to review the leases and staff was directed to find out the City's position and explore other sign companies going rates. No motions were made and staff will report back at the next meeting.

An informal neighborhood meeting was held on May 24th at a resident's home on Southmoor Drive in Hammond. 15 neighbors attended as well as staff and Commissioner Curt Vosti. Another meeting is planned later this year when the COE has Stage VIII mapping available.

A letter was received from Professor Kenneth Brock of IU Northwest asking us to consider a bird sanctuary in the 200-acre area of Chase to Grant. Mr. Gardner will follow up with Professor Brook.

The Boy Scouts had their campout this weekend at Riley School in Hammond and worked to clean up and beautify the levees along River Drive. The Commission supplied 25 pizzas to the Boy Scouts for lunch on Saturday.

At the request of Gary Sanitary District, the Commission has installed fencing around the Burr Street, Grant Street and Broadway storm water pumping stations.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the handicapped park development at River Forest Elementary School is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on June 7th. All are invited.

Project Engineering Committee – Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave the engineering report. He reported that a meeting was held with KROSAN and the COE on May 7th at the Griffith COE office. Their building is approximately 3.5' outside of the 75' drainage easement. COE is revising design and specifications.

The planting zone will have to be sacrificed in order to revise the design to allow room for the building and roadway access around the south end.

A pre-construction meeting for North 5th Pump Station was held on May 21st. Construction will start in late summer and should be completed in the summer of 2002.

A utility coordination meeting is scheduled for June 20th and a Technical Review meeting with the COE is scheduled for June 12th. Jim Pokrajac added that when an agenda is completed for the Technical Review meeting, it will be shared with the Congressman's Office prior to the meeting.

With the Griffith levee completion on May 10th, there is now complete flood protection from Cline Avenue to the EJ&E RR.

Legislative Committee – Committee Chairman George Carlson reported that thank you letters were sent to key government officials that really played a key role in helping us to secure the \$5.5 million. Discussion was held on having a joint Finance/Legislative committee meeting for the purpose of devising some kind of plan to work with the Budget Agency and Governor's staff so that it is not such a last minute crisis at budget time. George Carlson suggested that before both committees meet, it may be a good idea for just the committee chairman along with staff and Chairman Tanke to meet first to lay out an outline. Mark Reshkin added that he thought a marketing program plays a very important role in our project – the more communities and people understand the project and what it means for them, the more visible support we can get. Especially the homeowners along the river who will come out of the floodplain can be very persuasive.

Recreational Development Committee – In Committee Chairman Curt Vosti's absence, Jim Pokrajac gave the report. He referred to a letter sent to the City of Gary, Gary Parks & Rec, IU Northwest and the Gary Planning Dept. on May 21st with the proposals for trail locations and a request for their input. The route shown on the map is the least invasive to the areas and an effort is being made to stay away from any development that the City may want to do later. The COE is reviewing the possibility of a shorter route – any changes, according to Imad's letter, would be a betterment. Discussion ensued on crossing at Grant Street. With the amount of traffic on Grant Street, safety of pedestrians is a big concern. Staff will have further discussions with the COE.

A follow-up phone call was held with INDOT to assure that there would be no re-consideration given to cross at the frontage road at Cline Avenue and not further south at Highway Avenue in Highland. INDOT reiterated their position in opposing that crossing because of the high-speed traffic there. Mr. Pokrajac has contacted the towns of Highland and Griffith to help come up with alternative routes for trails. Bob Huffman proposed an alternate route after biking the area himself. If we desire a route other than what the COE has proposed, it will be at our cost.

Marina Committee – Committee Chairman Bill Tanke stated that he plans to set up a meeting with the Mayor of Portage and John Smolnar, head of the Portage Port Authority. Discussion needs to happen to devise a way to build out the 100 marina slips required yet. Mr. Tanke also informed the Commission that consideration is being given to raise the launch fees from \$3 to \$8. The permit is also still pending for the dredging of Burns Waterway. It was also stated that Mike Doyne is no longer the harbormaster at the marina.

Finance Committee – In Treasurer Curt Vosti's absence, Mr. Gardner gave the monthly financial status report and presented the claims for approval. George Carlson made a motion to approve the financial status report and claims sheet totaling \$195,578.15; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gardner then informed the Board members that because we only had a 6-month budget because we did not have enough funds to have a year budget, he presented 2 budget transfers that need to happen. Bob Huffman made a motion approving a budget transfer of \$100,000 from Budget Line 5860 to Budget Line 5840 and a second budget transfer of \$10,000 from Budget line 5882 to Budget line 5881; motion was seconded by Emerson Delaney; motion passed unanimously. A finance meeting will be scheduled shortly to look at a yearly budget. Mr. Gardner then stated that we have asked the COE to request the lowest amount possible for the Burr Street betterment escrow account and they have asked for \$148,000 to keep the contracts only. We will be paying that amount.

Minority Contracting Committee – Committee Chairman Marion Williams reported that monthly minority reports continue to be coming in and they are always available to anyone.

Other Business – Mr. Gardner thanked everyone for attending. There was a potential problem with a quorum but several members went beyond the call of duty when they became aware of this, and attended the meeting.

Statements to the Board – There were none.