

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2002
6100 SOUTHPORT ROAD
PORTAGE, INDIANA**

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

Development Commissioners:

George Carlson
Curt Vosti
Mark Reshkin
William Tanke
Steve Davis
Bob Huffman

Visitors:

Bill Petrites – Highland resident
Liz McCloskey – U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Don Ewoldt – Lake Erie Land
Imad Samara - ACOE
Sandy O'Brien →Hobart
Jim Flora – R.W. ARMSTRONG CO.
Mark Lopez – Congressman Visclosky's office
Deb Lawrence - IDNR
Glenn & Pat Stotts – Black Oak residents

Staff:

Dan Gardner
Sandy Mordus
Jim Pokrajac
Judy Vamos
Lorraine Kray
Lou Casale

Commissioner Bob Huffman made a motion to approve the minutes of February 7, 2002; motion seconded by Steve Davis; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Tanke distributed sheets outlining committees and their members. The first person listed under each committee is the interim chairman. He asked that the committees meet and select their own chairman. Commissioner George Carlson made a motion to approve the committee structure as presented; motion seconded by Curt Vosti; motion passed unanimously. Chairman Tanke referred to the Press Release contained in the agenda packet that was sent to the media from the last meeting.

Executive Director's Report - Executive Director Dan Gardner stated that credits documentation is ongoing. In regard to highway/bridge credit, Mr. Gardner stated he has received a letter from the Federal Highway Administration that approves granting credit of the funds that were spent by INDOT in our project area and should be eligible to receive credit on behalf of the Commission. After forwarding that letter to the COE office, we were informed that the COE office did not agree with FHWA on this crediting issue. The COE sent a letter to the Federal Highway Administration stating that they did not agree with the crediting ruling because the FHWA did not satisfy the requirement of having it stated in statutory authority that authorizes Federal funds to be used as part of the Commission non-federal share. Mr. Gardner will still pursue this matter.

Mr. Gardner referred to the letter in the packet that was sent to Denarie Kane from the city of Hobart regarding any plans that the city may have planned for the Hobart Marsh area. He is meeting with Ms. Kane and Mayor Buzinec of Hobart.

Mr. Gardner then shared the draft letter to Surveyor George Van Til requesting that he would do a survey to locate the 75' drainage easement. The letter will be sent out the following day.

DG – referred to Brian Poland letter. Have hear nothing yet.

Old Business – Commissioner Vosti stated that he accompanied Jim Pokrajac to view the area where the drainage ditch lies between Colfax and Calhoun and saw firsthand what the problem is. Staff wrote a letter to the COE giving them the situation and asking for direction. Mr. Vosti asked Imad Samara if this situation could be resolved by the next meeting. Mr. Pokrajac went on to say that reseeded had been done and once nice weather gets here, you will be able to see if the planting was successful. As it stands now, there is a lot of standing water in the ditch, the slopes are eroding into the ditch, the area is very wet and the residents cannot get to the other side to complete the mowing of their property. The ditch will be cleaned this spring and then we will be able to see how the area looks and how the water is flowing. The idea of planting native grasses on this strip of land was discussed. One of the problems is that we do not own the strip and even if we maintained it, we would need an agreement to that effect from the residents. At any rate, Imad stated he would try to have a solution by the next meeting.

Mr. Gardner referred to the letter to the Hammond Planning Dept. in which we've asked them to officially include the Little Calumet River project in their master plan

Land Acquisition/Management Committee – In Committee Chairperson Arlene Colvin's absence, Commissioner Curt Vosti gave the committee report. He made a motion to approve an increased offer on DC 752 (\$680 for an easement to be increased to \$1700 for a fee take); motion seconded by Steve Davis; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Vosti stated that land owned by the Commission at 35th & Chase (about 145 acres) would be going out for bids to farm next week. The Bult brothers have been farming this area for the past 4 years.

Regarding the right-of-entry for the in-project mitigation lands, there is a discrepancy on the ROE maps versus the original mitigation plan. Staff has been working with the COE office to resolve. Imad brought revised maps tonight and Jim Pokrajac stated they appear to be correct but he will review them closer to make sure.

Project Engineering Committee – Committee Chairman Bob Huffman gave the engineering report. He reported that an Engineering committee meeting was held on February 15th. The main topics were the GSD issues, V.E. cost savings items and outstanding issues.

Mr. Huffman stated that a meeting would be scheduled very soon with GSD/WREP/Greeley & Hansen and the COE to resolve the GSD concerns.

A utility coordination meeting and a follow-up meeting on V.E. cost savings need to be scheduled. Mr. Vosti and Mr. Huffman asked to be notified when scheduled.

Mr. Huffman referred to the letter from INDOT indicating they are not intending to install a pump station in the area of Indpls. Blvd. in Highland. Residents have a concern regarding drainage in that area once the road widening takes place. INDOT plans to divert the water flow to the 81st St. Pump Station instead of building a separate pump station.

Legislative Committee – Committee Chairman George Carlson spoke on the state dealing with the tax restructuring situation and the state's budget deficit. He shared some information with the Commission in regards to budget figures. Even if the budget crisis is resolved, he still sees the Commission having problems in securing future funding. Dan Gardner added that he will try to contact a few of our local legislators to see if there is anything we can do.

Commissioner Reshkin added that there are a few issues before the legislators in regards to storm water and drainage issues. He asked Mr. Gardner to verify that this Commission does not have a role to play in regards to stormwater management.

Recreational Development Committee – Committee Chairman Curt Vosti referred to a letter from the COE dated February 7th indicating that the remaining east reach recreation features will be incorporated into the next recreation contract.

Marina Committee – Committee Chairman Bill Tanke stated the Commission has received a financial accounting of monies taken in and disbursed from the Portage Public Marina and staff is trying to set up a meeting with John Smolnar and Felix Kimbrough for a clarification of these figures.

Chairman Tanke proceeded to present a marina claim payout of \$28,643.84 for the April 1, 2002 bond payment (monies were received from the city of Portage). Commission Curt Vosti made a motion to pay the claim; seconded by Mark Reshkin; motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Vosti inquired about the interest rate of the bond loan. Attorney Casale was directed to look into refinancing the bond payment to a lower finance rate.

Finance/Policy Committee – Treasurer Curt Vosti gave the Finance report. Mr. Vosti made a motion to approve the March claims; motion seconded by Steve Davis; motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Vosti reported that the State Board of Accounts is in the process of auditing our financial records for the years 1997 through 2000. The Chairman and Treasurer will be notified when an auditing exit interview is scheduled.

Mr. Vosti stated that the Finance & Policy Committee met on March 5th and he proceeded to distribute their recommendations for adoption to the members. The 1st issue was the adoption of a travel policy. Mr. Vosti made a motion to adopt the Revised Travel Policy as presented; motion seconded by George Carlson. Commissioner Bob Huffman recommended a change in the wording on #3 under D. Particular Travel-Related Expenses – to substitute “taxi fees” to “local transportation fees”. Mr. Huffman made that change in the form of an amendment to the motion; motion seconded by Curt Vosti. Mr. Vosti proceeded to make the motion approving that amendment; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed. Commissioner Huffman then recommended a change in the wording on #6 under D. Particular Travel-Related Expenses – to delete the words “business-related phone charges” to simply read “phone charges”. He felt that there may be occasion to call home once you have arrived at your destination and did not feel the situation would be taken advantage of. Mr. Huffman made that change in the form of an amendment; motion seconded by Curt Vosti. Mr. Vosti proceeded to make the motion approving that amendment; motion seconded by Bob Huffman; motion passed. Commissioner Huffman inquired whether this policy covered the question of authorized travel for contractors or legal help. Mr. Vosti answered that if majority vote at a public meeting authorized such travel, then it would be approved. He added that if the future Policy Committee wanted to make any changes to any item that was adopted, they can make whatever changes they want.

Mr. Vosti proceeded to make a motion to reaffirm the goals of the officer and committee rotation policy as adopted by the Commission at its May 1, 1997 public Board meeting; motion seconded by George Carlson. It was stressed that it is a goal and intent to rotate the officers and committee chairmen but not an obligation to do so but it attempts to treat all members equal. Motion passed. Mr. Vosti then made a motion to adopt "The policy of this Commission shall be that the presiding officer, or Chairperson, shall not appoint the Nominating Committee. Instead, a Nominating Committee is to be chosen by the full Commission at its November meeting, by secret ballot. Each Commissioner can vote for three candidates (not more than one vote for any candidate) with the top three vote getters (plurality, not majority) from all Commissioner votes becoming the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is to meet and, considering the reaffirmed Goals of Officer and Committee Rotation Policy, report to the full Commission at the December meeting a slate of candidates, with additional nominations available from the floor." Motion seconded by Steve Davis; motion passed. (Mr. Vosti continued to make a motion stating "the policy of this Commission shall be that the presiding officer, or chairperson, is a non-voting ex-officio member of all committees. Furthermore, salary per diems for committee work be allowed only for voting members of committees." Motion seconded by George Carlson. Mr. Huffman asked if this is just for committee meetings or any other type of meeting. Since it was declared that it was for committee meetings only, it was recommended that "committee work" be substituted with "committee meetings". It was further stated that all committee meetings are open to all Board members and they can attend but just will receive no per diem.) The Finance Committee felt this was fair and Finance committee members Arlene Colvin and John Mroczkowski were both in support. Motion passed with 1 negative vote from Bob Huffman. Mr. Vosti then made a motion to combine #5 & #6 stating that the committee assignments will be chosen by the Chairperson from the preferences indicated by individual Commissioners and then committee members will choose their own committee leader; motion seconded by Mark Reshkin; motion passed. Mr. Vosti thanked all members for their support. #6

New Committees: Environmental; Policy; Public Relations – Chairman Tanke referred to the committee structure lists. He stated that the first name under each Committee is the interim chairperson. He asked that all committees meet and select the permanent chairman of each respective committee.

New Business – Curt Vosti stated that the debris and log jam at the NICTD bridge in the river in Hammond/Munster will be cleaned out. Bids have been received by the city of Hammond and a contractor has been selected. Since it was declared an emergency, a DNR permit was not needed.

Mr. Gardner stated that a meeting with NICTD in regard to engineering/recreational design concerns in that area will be held on March 11th.

Commissioner Bob Huffman thanked the Finance Committee for resolving some of these policy issues that have been around for a long time but never officially addressed before.

Statements to the Board – There were none.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 4th at 6:00 p.m.

/sjm