

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING
HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2009

Held at
Commission Office,
6100 Southport Road
Portage, IN

Chairman Dan Dernulc called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. Roll call indicated that seven (7) Commissioners were in attendance. I call Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Development Commissioners:

Dan Dernulc
William Baker
Kent Gurley
Mark Gordish
William Biller
Arlene Colvin
Ron McAhron

Visitors:

Elizabeth Johnson – Congressman’s Office
Tina Kutkoski - Hammond
Mike Zarantonello - Hammond
Ruth Mores - Hammond
Wayne Dertz - Hammond
Brian Poland – City of Hammond
Stephen Stofko – McMahan
Jody Melton - NIRPC

Staff:

Lou Casale
Sandy Mordus
Jim Pokrajac
Judy Vamos

Chairman Dernulc reported that a 5:00 Executive Session was held prior to this special meeting. Several pertinent real estate issues were discussed. Chairman Dernulc referred to Attorney Casale who explained that Hammond City Planner Brian Poland asked the Commission to join in a petition with them to sub-divide the property known as Oakbrook Metro; modify the property lines as an exchange to accommodate an existing access ramp that was installed in the VI-1N project, which extended past our work limits; also to transfer an uneconomic remnant to the LCRBDC that is undevelopable land. Bill Biller proceeded to make a motion authorizing the Commission to join in the petition with the city of Hammond; motion seconded by Mark Gordish, motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote of 7-0.

Attorney Casale referred to a property easement known as DC-1363. The property is in continuation now and scheduled for a hearing. The property owner is willing to sell for an increase of \$2,000. Attorney Casale recommended that the additional monies be paid to him to continue condemnation. The cost would be higher than that. Bill Biller made a motion to increase the offer by \$2,000 more than the appraised price; motion seconded by Arlene Colvin; motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote of 7-0.

Chairman Dernulc announced that action on DC1303 is deferred at this time.

Chairman Dernulc read a letter of resignation from Robert Huffman. Bob was a Governor’s appointment and with his resignation, we now have two Governor appointments vacant and a Porter County Commissioners’ vacancy.

Discussion was held regarding the advertising of the Commission's excess land for farming. Jim Pokrajac asked if we could roll over last year's farm leases because of the massive crop damages due to fall flooding, allowing very little crop revenues to be generated. Attorney Casale stated that the land should be advertised for farming and not just rolled over with the existing lessees. The farmers have been calling staff to see if we are planning to farm those lands again this year. Discussion was held on whether we were receiving enough money for the current farm crops. Jim Pokrajac was asked to research the farming market to see what crop values are in this area. Mr. Pokrajac was also requested to share maps of the farming areas with the Commissioners. It was decided to go ahead and advertise. When bids are received, a motion will be presented to the Board for approval. Kent Gurley made a motion authorizing staff to advertise the farm lands at the same procedure we have done in previous years; motion seconded by Arlene Colvin; motion passed unanimously.

Statements from the floor were received by Ruth Mores and Mike Zarantello of Hammond. Ms. Mores expressed her concern about the drainage system design proposed by the Corps for the Southmoor area and the flooding that would occur because of inadequate design. She feels that when a floodwall is built, the water will not be able to get to the river. She opposes the floodwall because her property, as well as some of her neighbor, are already out of the floodplain and they would not benefit from the installation of the line of protection. She wants a second engineering opinion regarding the necessity of the line of protection as well as the adequacy of the Corps design for landside drainage, and has not received that. She asked again about the Corps leaving them out of the project and using the money saved by not constructing in this area to the Munster line of protection. Mike Zarantello asked the Commission to ask the Washington branch of the Army Corps to do an independent review of the Corps plans. He knows the Commission has the authority to do this and encouraged them to do so. He and his neighbors are not satisfied with current plans. They have consulted with Roy Evans and R W Armstrong, who both indicated it should be reviewed.

Commissioner Mark Gordish stated that the Hammond Engineer's Office has received the preliminary FEMA floodplain revision maps. He will review them and see what classification the Southmoor area has. A lengthy discussion was held. Commissioner Ron McAhron offered to have some IDNR people and himself meet with several of the homeowners to discuss this issue.

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 6:50 p.m.