

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2011**

**Held at
Munster Town Hall,
1005 Ridge Road, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session and Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Four (4) Board members were present; one (1) vacancy exists. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Secretary
Ron McAhron
Anthony Broadnax

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Visitors:

John/Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave. Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson - Congressman's Office
David Nellans – Munster Town Councilman
Colonel F. Drummond – Army Corps
Imad Samara – Army Corps Project Mgr.
Vanessa Villarreal – Army Corps
Bill Coomes - Munster
Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
Fred Baginski - Hammond
John/Jean Plusch - Munster
B. Runberg - Munster
Sandy O'Brien – Izaak Walton League
Brian Grskovich – River Drive, Munster
Stephen Jadrnak - Hammond
Mike Molnar - IDNR
Mike Echterling – Lake Co. Fish & Game
Janet - Hammond
Colin Highlands - IDNR
John Grskovich – Munster
LuAnn Franklin – The Times
Bridget Bodefled - Munster
John Mulesa - Munster
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Munster
Dorothy Pazanin – River Drive, Munster
Kalliope Dedelow – Munster
Craig/Bea Hanusin – Munster

Minutes of the November 16, 2011 meeting were approved by a motion from Ron McAhron; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed by a 4-0 roll call vote.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Bill Baker stated that a lot of hard work has been going on to get his project completed so this community never sees flooding pictures like those of 2008 again. We are still working on a maintenance funding plan so maintenance money will be available to take care of this \$250 million man-made project. We are hopeful that a plan will be in place by the beginning of the year. He thanked the Colonel who has been very helpful and instrumental to the project since he's come on board with the Chicago District.

Army Corps Report - Colonel Drummond thanked the Commissioners and proceeded to give a project update. In V-2, he reported that a final inspection was held in November. As committed by him at an earlier meeting, the area by Wendy's has been completed to Commission's satisfaction. He is committed to resolve the railroad closure issue. The Corps will put some pressure on the A&E firm to resolve this issue. A few remaining items will be addressed soon, i.e. the ramp closures and some inspection items.

- In Stage VII, Ceres is the contractor. A few punch list items remain; will close out in the spring (so plantings can be assured they are OK).
- In Stage VIII, the Corps will do a final punch list on December 19 with the contractor, Walsh. Some small items will remain until spring but he is committed to getting it all done. The Colonel viewed the area about 3 weeks ago and there are some noticeable changes in that time. With a little bit of pressure on the contractor, he did perform well.
- Colonel Drummond also stated that mitigation will begin in Hobart Marsh in FY13. It will take about 5 years to implement. He will continue to work with Commissioner McAhrn until the mitigation project is complete. Delay incurred because money was re-directed where it was needed when 2008 flooding happened. The Corps has not forgotten about mitigation; it is their responsibility to complete it. He complimented both Commissioner McAhrn and Director Dan Repay for working with him to accomplish all that is pending. Mr. Repay stated that once the punch list is finalized, he will share it with Board members.

Executive Director's Report –

- Mr. Repay reported that the walk thru on Stage VIII will take place this week. Land side drainage may still present a problem that will need to be addressed. Although the town of Munster tried to correct it at one point, it is still an issue. We will also be talking to the contractor about some ponding areas.
- He reported that there was some vandalism at the Ironwood pump station. No damage was done to the station itself but some grates are missing. It is an issue that will need to be fixed. Chairman Baker asked if the Corps has to approve any other type of grate material we would propose using. Mr. Repay replied they do not have to approve; it is an O&M issue.
- There was a 30 day continuance with a homeowner who has not signed a right of entry yet on the Forest Avenue area. Mr. Repay and Bill Rochford visited the area and met with their attorney; they are trying to resolve the issues presented by him. They are hopeful that they will know more by the January meeting.
- The city of Hammond has reviewed the inspection report and they are also having their own inspection next summer before the Corps comes out. Since no maintenance funding is in place at this point, the city is stepping up to take some responsibility in some areas.
- Although we are in favor of the bike trail, there are some issues presented as it crosses over the NICTD tracks. We believe the trestle should be removed as it presents maintenance problems. He will be working with Hammond trying to reach a mutual resolution.
- Corps has approved the Kennedy Ave. modification that the town of Highland has asked for. Instead of just sandbagging, modification would include jersey barriers, visquine, and sand.
- The bike trail will need to be compressed better in the spring. Right now it is too difficult because of wet sod.
- Chairman Baker inquired about the billboards. Mr. Repay reported that we are making progress on completion. Of the 6 sites previously approved, 3 are in the process. Corps will make sure they meet Corps approval. Regarding the copper wire that was stolen from the billboard sites, it has been replaced but with utility poles feeding electricity to the billboards; they previously had copper wire underground. There are 2 additional billboard

sites that the Gary Parks is requesting our approval for because they may impact the levee system. That is being looked at and will be addressed.

- The contract for Chase Street culvert removal has not been closed out yet. There are some signs that remain to be installed; we will be receiving that invoice shortly.
- Mr. Repay reported that although we had ordered new grates to replace some that were stolen, it appears that a Good Samaritan has put their own grates in and they are working. Since they are remaining in place, it does not make sense to replace them with the new ones yet. We will keep an eye on the area.

Finance Report – Mr. Repay presented the claims for December. Since the gage stations were not working during the heavy rain we just had, he asked that the claim for OMMYX in the amount of \$2,536.63 be pulled from the claims for approval. The revised total claim amount becomes \$36,206.11. A motion was made by Commissioner Broadnax to approve the revised claims in the amount of \$36,206.11; motion seconded by Commissioner McAhron; motion passed with a 4-0 roll call vote.

- There were no separate O&M claims for approval.

Other Issues/New Business –

- Mr. Repay reported that areas of the river are relatively clean. There is one area by the Northcote bridge that will be cleared out very soon, probably right after the holidays.
- Commissioner McAhron confirmed the balance in the Corps construction escrow account to be \$87,848.53.

Legislative Report – Commissioner McAhron stated that he has been working with many people in trying to identify all the costs associated with the completion of this project. We have supplied those numbers to the legislature. Bills were filed last Friday; they most likely will be posted on the web after the start of the session. He did receive an inquiry from the Legislative Services. There may be 2 bills that emerge in dealing with the funding for the maintenance. When bills are posted on General Assembly website, hearings are usually now on the webcast. We can link up to that once they are being heard. It is very important for this project to have a funding mechanism in place this year.

Statements from the Floor:

- Bridget Bodefeld from Munster inquired about the punch list items being completed relative to the FEMA process of flood insurance relief. Mr. Repay stated that all punch list items have to be addressed. Some segments still remain to be completed, i.e. to Stateline, and the funding issue still needs to be in place for FEMA to accept. Commissioner McAhron added that the normal route in obtaining a LOMAR would probably take about 12-18 months for completion. The Commission is looking at alternatives for quicker relief, with the A99 being one option. Ms. Bodefeld offered the help of the residents to go to Indianapolis to support a bill, if needed by the Commission. Mr. McAhron agreed that the residents were very helpful in helping them to secure the \$14 million earlier.
- Laurie Czulno from Hammond supports the removal of the NICTD train trestle but asked who would pay for the removal. Mr. Repay replied that it he thinks NICTD should incur all costs. He supports the bike trail and the removal of the tracks but, for maintenance purposes, would like to see the trestle removed also. It appears that the city has approached NICTD regarding this issue but there is no resolution at this point. Mrs. Czulno also stated some unsightly issues near Manor that still remain. Mr. Repay answered that the contractor is still working on the fencing there. The only issue he sees in that area is the slight shift at the retaining wall but he has been assured that it is guaranteed to work.

- **John Mulesa** from Munster expressed appreciation for the work done at Chase Street. A discussion followed on how best to secure the grates so vandalism does not happen again. Mr. Mulesa also stated that he feels that Munster and Hammond should support and begin the process for flood insurance relief from Harts Ditch to Hohman. He supports the individual towns and cities maintaining the levee system; it is their responsibility. A lengthy discussion followed on how best to proceed, be it in piecemeal sections or as a whole. It was emphasized that the areas that recently came out of floodplain were because they were self-contained and completed. The remaining areas are not at that point yet. The entire process has been made more difficult since Katrina. FEMA has been forced to change some of their requirements and money is a problem for them also. Regardless, legislation is still needed to allow us to go forward with local funding to maintain this levee system.
- **Sandy O'Brien** from Hobart stated that Hobart Marsh mitigation site is an exceptional recreation area and is a good mitigation site. It encompasses 1000 acres of protected land that she supports as the Commission's mitigation site and supports the mitigation staying at Hobart Marsh and not going somewhere else. Commissioner McAhron stated that the property is presently owned by DNR. If DNR had developed the mitigation, it probably would have been completed by now with some grant money that had been available. With the Corps now doing the mitigation, it will be a longer process, as the Colonel stated earlier. After a lengthy discussion, it was reiterated that there is a commitment to go forward with a mitigation contract.
- **Ms. Gegle** from Munster inquired about a flooded area by Kennedy Ave exit to the Borman expressway. She was assured that it was a temporary situation in which a water main had broken but was repaired.
- **John Grskovich** from Munster was told at last month's meeting that drainage issues were addressed in the Corps' project documents. He visited the town engineer's office and found that drainage was not part of the plans. Imad Samara stated that the contractor is using the existing drains to tie in to the system. He assured Mr. Grskovich that if a situation has been made worse by the Corps/ contractor, it will be corrected. There does appear to be a problem in the 1000 block of River Drive and it will be addressed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, January 11th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00. Chairman Baker thanked the audience for their continued support and wished everyone Happy Holidays.