

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2013

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

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. Five (5) Commission members were present at roll call. Quorum was declared. Meeting will last only one hour because another meeting is scheduled at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Anthony Broadnax
Ron McAhrn
Tom Gozdecki

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Visitors:

Ruth Mores – Southmoor, Hammond
John/Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Charles Svitko - Hammond
Maureen Garrison - Hammond
Roman Sawczak - Dyer
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart
Barb Runberg - Munster
John/Jean Plusch - Munster
Bill Emerson Sr – 4th Dist Hammond Council
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
David Nellans – Munster Town Councilman
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Keith Halper – I.W.L.A., Griffith
John Broderick - Munster
Craig Hendrix - DLZ
Tony Kenning – S.E.H.
Peter Yackanich – Hammond
Bridget Bodefled – Munster
Erik Sprenne – Highland
Craig Hanusin – WPNA - Munster
Mike Echterling – Friends of the Little Cal

- Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the July 10th meeting. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Tom Gozdecki; motion passed 5-0 with a roll call vote.
- Chairman Baker reminded residents that we're coming up to the anniversary date of the September 2008 flooding event, where this area suffered severe flooding five years ago. The area incurred over \$1 billion expenditure in that flood and we never want to see that again. That is why we're here – to take care of a \$275 million man made levee system. First, this is a flood control project; secondly, it is a recreational/environmental project. Now that the Commission has a perpetual funding source in place, operation and maintenance will be ongoing. Everyone should be proud of the fact that, by completing the final 2 segments of the system, \$4 million a year is being put back into the community since a number of area homeowners have been relieved of the Federal insurance requirements on mortgages.

Chairman Baker referred to Executive Director Dan Repay to provide a report on the activities along the system. Mr. Repay stated that Gary South Levee Maintenance project from Chase to MLK (only the south side of the levee), has been awarded to Grimmer Construction. There have been a lot of tires and debris material to be removed and they are working with Lake County Solid Waste District to dispose of that material. That contract is

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- 60-90 days, contingent on weather. Once completed, that segment will be brought up to “acceptable” status by the Army Corps.
- Mr. Repay reported that annual inspections will begin mid-September. Those inspections will include levees in Munster, Hammond, Highland, and parts of Gary.
 - Contractors are in the process of cutting the grass to meet Corps standards before inspections.
 - There are repairs being made to spot deficiencies along segments located in Highland; work will follow in Hammond.
 - The bridge at Columbia Avenue is currently closed because of a baseball tournament. Once that tournament is over, the re-construction of the bridge will begin. Columbia Avenue Bridge will remain closed at the river.
 - The agreement, between Hammond and Munster, has been finalized to remove the 4 middle columns/piers of the old Monon trestle for the bike trail in the area. This will be a great benefit to the maintenance of the system as debris removal from this area has occurred numerous times because trees/material gets hung up with the piers.
 - About half of the tree removal within the levee system is completed. There will have to be some grading/levee repair work by the contractor. Work has been suspended until the baseball tournament is over.
 - Stateline design is completed. It has been changed to “one” block. That project should hopefully commence shortly after Labor Day. It will go down State Line, working from the south end going north.
 - Mr. Repay gave a Power Point presentation showing “before” and “after” pictures of the areas where trees, in between the levee walls, are being cut down in the western segments of the system. Slides showed how trees were damaged, leaning into the river, or actually had fallen into the river.
- Tony Kenning from DLZ and Craig Hendrix from S.E.H. gave a presentation on the draft plan for the Lake County Watershed Plan. One of the goals of the plan is to formulate all the projects that the individual municipality would like to see done within their community. Meetings have been held with over 17 government entities to gain this knowledge. Those projects have been categorized into “opportunity categories” consisting of (a) regional opportunities; (b) semi-regional opportunities; (c) local opportunities; (d) maintenance opportunities’ and (e) operational opportunities. A total of 101 watershed opportunities exist and are identified on a map. The watershed opportunities consist of 70 projects in the “concept phase”; 28 projects in the “study phase”; and 3 projects in the “design phase”. A “priority” list of projects could be developed, with the aid of an Advisory Board that will be formed consisting of representatives from each of the individual watershed municipalities. Copies of the plan were distributed to Board members for their review and comment. Chairman Baker thanked DLZ & S.E.H. for their presentation. He added that the State Statute that established the maintenance funding called for this comprehensive report of the watershed be completed and efforts are being made to deliver results based on some of these findings.
- Mr. Repay presented the claims for approval for the month of August in the amount of \$400,198.37. He discussed several of the large claims. Mr. Repay added that the engineering work performed is capped at a dollar amount for the individual projects. Commissioner McAhron made a motion to approve the claims; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.
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Statements from the floor:

- **Mike Echterling**, Friends of the Little Calumet River, stated that he would like to see the policy changed on removing trees. There are endangered species to consider. He distributed a letter to the Board.
 - **Laurie Czulno** from State Line, Hammond asked how long for the completion of the State Line project if it starts Labor Day. Mr. Repay replied it would probably take 1 to 1 and ½ months to complete. The project would start at the south end of Forest Avenue levee and work north. He will talk to Mrs. Czulno after the meeting. Mrs. Czulno also stated that grass cutting would be made much more difficult with the tree stumps left.
 - **Eric Sprene** from Highland expressed concern about working contractors doing damage to the trails. Mr. Repay stated that any damage a contractor may do will have to be repaired by them before any payment is made to them and they are aware of that.
 - **John Czulno** from Hammond asked whether the cement blocks are completed and will begin to be installed after Labor Day. Mr. Repay answered that the blocks will be completed in about 4 weeks. Work needs to be done in the area prior to the blocks being laid. There will be small openings in some areas to allow for pedestrian/bike traffic. As you proceed north, the blocks will be “stepped” down, as needed.
 - **Maureen Garrison** from Hammond expressed her concern for the wildlife, the many different species of birds and plant life, and the beauty of the area that is now gone because of the removal of the trees within the levee system.
 - **Sandy O'Brien** from Hobart commented on the tree removal and asked if there was a maintenance plan for the land within the levee system. Her concern was the possibility of fragmites consuming the area. She emphasized the fact that the area needed to be managed. Mr. Repay also told her that the stumps were sprayed.
- Col. Drummond introduced the Army Corps' new Deputy Director Kevin Lovell, who knows the area having grown up along the river in Lansing IL.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Chairman Baker announced that the next meeting is scheduled for the third Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, September 18th at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.