

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2014**

**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 with Ron McAhron on conference phone. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Tom Gozdecki
Anthony Broadnax
Ron McAhron (on phone)

Visitors:

Bill Emerson Sr. – 4th Dist. Hamd Council
John/Laurie Czulno - Hammond
James/Kalliope Dedelow - Munster
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart
Craig Hendrix – S.E.H.
Fred Baginski – Hammond
T. Ahearn – Forest Avenue, Hammond
David Nellans – Munster Town Council
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek – State Line, Hamd
Mike Echterling – Friends of the Little Cal
Bob Fulton – City of Hobart
Peter Yackanich – Forest Ave, Hammond
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster
Don Oliphant – Christopher Burke Eng.
Rob Mangus – Munster

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

- Chairman Baker referred to the minutes of the January 15th meeting. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski; motion passed 5-0 with a roll call vote.

Chairman's Report - Chairman Baker stated that viewing the pictures of the flooding event of 2008 reminds us why we are here and it's taken a lot of people in this room to help us get to this point of completion of the entire flood control system for the Little Calumet River. A funding source is in place to accomplish maintenance needed, not only on the flood control system but also in the entire Little Cal watershed. This is a regional effort. Being able to save monies on flood insurance requirements has brought about \$4 million back into the economy, especially for economic development.

Executive Director's Report –

- **Finance** - Mr. Repay referred to the claims for the months of February and March. Anthony Broadnax made a motion to approve the February claims in the amount of \$61,975.82 and the March claims in the amount of \$84,487.95; ; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski. Mr. Repay proceeded to explain some of the claims. Garcia Engineering's charges consist of engineering oversight on various projects, especially Gary North, which is a large portion that requires repair before the Corps will certify it. They also invoiced for engineering oversee on Hobart Marsh mitigation, access ramps, and Grant Street culvert removal. There are various reimbursements that were made to entities that paid the maintenance fee with their property taxes before realizing they were mistakenly billed.

There is also a claim to IDNR, Dept. of Forestry, where we are participating in a State grant partnering with Wicker Park to purchase over 200 trees to be planted. We have a quarterly payment being made to USGS as the local share for gage stations that we are responsible for as part of maintenance.

Chairman Baker inquired about the Gary North segment. Mr. Repay explained that this section of the levee system was in a failed state when Corps inspection took place in 2010. Since this segment was “decertified”, that would mean any repair during a flood event would be 100% our cost. As long as the levee segments are “certified” by the Corps, a repair cost would be only be 25% of the total cost. That is why it is important to keep all levees maintained and in “acceptable” condition by the Corps. The Gary North segment is from the Griffith Golf course area to Martin Luther King Drive, north side of the levee. Anthony Broadnax asked why there were several claims from Garcia for this work and Mr. Repay explained that it is continuing work they are doing for us. With the survey work and then identifying the repair work, they will be putting together a bid package that will be advertised for this work. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

O&M/Engineering -

- There are plans to close off the Belmont gate, which is in a very low lying area, on River Drive. Since work has been done on River Drive, this structure is no longer needed. We will also be building up the bike bath there.
- Grant Street culvert on the old access roads originally built and used by INDOT is no longer needed. They serve no purpose so we are having them removed. The permit has been approved and that removal will happen this summer.
- We are fixing the bike trail on Kennedy Avenue at the river; it is a safety issue because it does not lead to the light. Once fixed, people can use that trail.
- The access road from Highland public works building to the RR by the golf course is now going thru permitting.
- Mr. Repay announced that he was in Indianapolis meeting with IDNR and IDEM relative to the permitting process.
- Relative to the large build-up of silt at Kennedy Avenue and the River, the permit for channel clearing has been submitted. It will increase a better flow downstream once removed. We are hoping to do that project in early summer.
- Relative to the high flow channel area off Hart Ditch – when it rains it doesn’t flow to east and backs up. The design has been approved but there are a few regulatory issues; we’re making some changes. It affects Hammond, Highland and Munster.
- INDOT will probably be going for bid in May to replace the culverts under Martin Luther King Drive. Replacing the culverts will help with issues of flooding at I-65 and the Borman corridor. They may also be looking at a fix on the south side of I80/94.
- We expect to bid out in May for the Gary North rehabilitation project with an award anticipated for June. This is the last area in Gary that the Corps considered “unacceptable”.
- To make up for lands needed for project use, we are required to do mitigation in Hobart Marsh. We will be putting together a plan for the mitigation and hope to start in the fall.

Other Issues/New Business – Anthony Broadnax made a motion to authorize staff to close out the Chase Bank and BMO Harris Bank accounts and transfer those monies into a Centier Bank account; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski. Mr. Repay explained that this is a housekeeping issue and the banking transactions just need to be in the minutes. Centier Bank has offered the highest interest rate and is a local bank so it was the bank chosen for the best return on our money. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0. Tom Gozdecki made a motion to purchase a CD at the highest paid percentage rate available at local banks

in the amount of \$500,000 as an emergency “Rainy Day Fund” for a period not to exceed six (6) months; to be repurchased at each 6 month period at highest rate of return. Motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski. Mr. Repay explained that with 24 pump stations in the project area, we should have some emergency money available at all times in case an immediate repair was necessary. Mr. Broadnax questioned why we couldn’t have a money market fund. Mr. Repay answered that the interest would probably not be much higher and we would want immediate access if necessary. Motion passed 4-0 on a roll call vote, with Anthony Broadnax voting against.

- Tom Gozdecki made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the city of Hobart for a Deep River study in the amount of \$259,960; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay explained that Hobart has a lake at their disposal and water flows into it from the southern cities and towns. Hobart is equivalent to Hammond, Highland, and Munster with the southern communities flowing into the Little Calumet River. This study will allow us to study Lake George if dredging is necessary. Using a dam as a flood control measure, it ultimately affects the Little Calumet River. We may need to use this area for storage and it would prove helpful to all communities. This study will be utilized for other projects also; Deep River has never been studied before. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Tom Gozdecki made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the town of Winfield for maintenance of Hidden Creek Ditch at a cost not to exceed the projected estimate of \$25,000. Motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay explained that Winfield assumed this property when they annexed. The problem is a serious issue with blockages in the ditch. They definitely need help as there are over 200 residents in that sub-division. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote. Chairman Baker added that any community in the Little Calumet River watershed can fill out an application (application form on our website) and submit it to us for evaluation and prioritization.

- Tom Gozdecki made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to move forward and acquire lands from the Commissioners Sale that would be critical to access in the Little Calumet River watershed for an amount not to exceed \$25,000. Motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay explained that there are opportunities available that some lands sit next to certain areas that would allow better access into these areas and it would be very helpful to the project. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Tom Gozdecki made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the town of Griffith for 2014 funding for the operation and maintenance of Cady Marsh Ditch at a cost not to exceed \$50,000. Motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay explained that when we received a funding source, Griffith went through a similar process for flood control funding at the same time. As part of us receiving the funding, it was decided we would help Griffith fund the project. The Cady Marsh tunnel brings water to the Little Calumet River and away from Deep River. Helping them pay for maintenance is equally important. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote.

- Tom Gozdecki made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with Earth Source Inc. for the development and design of a project plan for the Hobart Marsh mitigation at a cost of \$25,875. Motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay explained that the Hobart Marsh mitigation needs to be done to finish this project off. Contracting with Earth Source will allow us to utilize documents already in place (i.e. Robinson Lake plan, the Army Corps plan). Plan must comply with IDNR and

IDEM permits. It will bring all the lands in that area to come together as one and it is what the community wants. Plan will take about 3 months and the project mitigation may be able to start in the fall. Motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote. Chairman Baker added that as part of the overall project, there is a recreational component to the project, besides a flood protection component. The entire completed project will be an asset to the entire region.

Chairman Bill Baker welcomed attorney John Reed, who is filling in for attorney Dave Wickland in his absence.

Statements to the Board

- Sandy O'Brien from Hobart thanked the Board of Commissioners for moving forward on the mitigation project at Hobart Marsh, as well as the Deep River plan.
- Mike Echterling from Friends of the Little Cal thanked Board members for their donation to the upcoming Little Cal festival on May 17th. The donation will aid in making the rental of boats less costly to the public and will encourage greater participation. Mr. Repay added that the paddling club members will be marking blockages with GPS, which will be a great help to us. Mr. Echterling also informed everyone that the eagles are back sitting on a nest again this spring.
- Laurie Czulno from Forest Ave in Hammond asked what the temperature needs to be for the contractor to start laying the blocks down State Line. Mr. Repay answered that we are waiting for the snow to melt; the trucks are now even unable to access the area. She stated that there are mounds of snow that will take awhile to melt; Chairman Baker assured her we are watching it and the contractor wants to finish the project off also.
- Fred Baginski from Hammond inquired about the proposed South Shore extension running down the Monon tracts and expressed concern that the trail would be at the same location. Mr. Repay answered that the plan is that the extension is supposed to be next to the trail.
- Bob Fulton from Hobart, partnering with the Mayor, just wanted to say thank you for moving forward with the study of Deep River. This will aid in managing the runoff and flow and to understand the river that they have lived with for a long time. It will be very helpful to the City.

There being no further business, the next meeting date is Wednesday, April 9 at the Munster Town Hall. Chairman Baker thanked all for their interest and attendance.

