

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2015**

**Held at  
Munster Town Hall, Munster, IN**

Chairman William Baker called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. There were seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski  
Ray Kasmark  
LeVon Whittaker  
Tom Gozdecki (Nexuses only)  
Dave Castellanos  
Anthony Broadnax  
Ron McAhron

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

Dave Wickland

**Staff:**

Sandy Mordus  
Jodi Lambert

**Visitors:**

Roy Deda - USACE  
Dave Nellans – Munster Town Council  
John Beckman – IWLA - PCC  
Joe Simonetto – Munster Town Council  
Charles Svitko – Munster resident  
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Little Cal  
Mary Tanis – Town of Dyer  
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster  
Erik Sprenne - NWIPA  
Dan Plath - NWIPA  
Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave, Hmd  
Rick Eberly – Town of Dyer  
Craig Hendrix – S.E.H.  
Sandy O'Brien – Izaak Walton, Hobart  
Brian Ralstin – American Structurepoint  
T. Ahearn – Forest Avenue, Hammond  
Craig Zandstra – Lake County Parks  
Mike Hawkins – Munster, HSD Board Rep

• Chairman Baker referred to the minutes from the March 11 meeting. LeVon Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with 8 aye votes.

**Chairman's Report** - Chairman Baker stated that he opens the meeting each month referring to the flooding pictures from September 2008. This is a \$275 million manmade project that has been designed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Now that funding has been secured for the maintenance of the levee system, deferred maintenance is ongoing as well as new projects in the entire Little Calumet River watershed. We are much more prepared than we were in 2008. Water flows downhill and will eventually end up in the Little Calumet River so maintenance of the entire watershed is necessary. Over 1600 parcels have been relieved of paying mandatory flood insurance and, as a result of that, ± \$4 million have gone back into the community.

• **Finance** – Chairman Baker referred to the April claims in the amount of \$151,554.31. Ron McAhron made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax. Mr. Repay proceeded to explain some of the claims – the general liability property insurance in the amount of \$38,475.43; Hasse's claim of \$50,176.70 for the ongoing rehabilitation of the Gary North levee; \$8,696.80 from Garcia Consulting Engineers for oversee of the Georgia Street levee crossing; a claim of \$4,996 for the directors and officers insurance renewal; the remaining claims being the usual administrative and everyday office claims. He added that claims will probably increase as the weather becomes nicer and more

construction/maintenance will be happening. Motion passed 6-1 with Tom Wichlinski abstaining on the invoices from On-Site Computers.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay made several reports:

- Contract work has begun on the high velocity flow channel with some tree removal. It is still a little wet in the area but work has begun.
- Sweeny Electric has been engaged to perform monthly pump station inspections to make sure they are up to speed. We will be receiving monthly reports from them.
- Army Corps inspections start on Monday, May 4 and will take several weeks. There are 3 separate teams: a levee inspection team; pump station inspection team; and a sluice gate inspection team. Inspections will take place from May 4 to May 8 and then from May 18 to May 21. This is the first time that all levee segments are being inspected. Schedule of inspections will be posted on the web site.
- We have hired Weed Patch to spray weeds, riprap, and outfalls throughout the levee system. They will start on the 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The first grass cutting will be the first week of May.
- R. A. Oros is the contractor that will be working on the manhole extension project. Material has been ordered and they should be starting within a week or so.
- Work on Gary North is basically complete. They will be removing their dumpster and we will be adding Commission locks so all is properly secured.
- A closure exercise is scheduled for 10 a.m. on April 24 at 35<sup>th</sup> & Chase in Gary. Weather cooperating, it should take about 3 hours to perform.
- Mr. Repay attended a stakeholders meeting for the Hobart Marsh area to update interested parties as to the status of the mitigation process.
- The interlocal agreement for the sewer collapse/sink hole situation on Main Street is in the process of being revised/signed by respective attorneys. The involved municipalities (Dyer, Schererville, and Munster) have verbally committed to sharing the remaining cost of the repair, with the Commission committing to \$693,750 of the total projected cost of \$1,450,000.
- Commissioner Wichlinski asked for an update of the pump station back-up generator project previously discussed. Mr. Repay answered that he has several companies (Patten and Superior) that will be submitting proposals to us to add a natural gas generator at Burr Street.
- Chairman Baker inquired whether we have any current blockages that have been caused by the beavers. Mr. Repay replied that he saw several blockages behind the Visitors Center and behind the BMV in Hammond. He has engaged Wiltjer Excavating to remove those blockages. It is tricky getting into the area because of the pipelines involved. There are currently no big blockages east of Cline Avenue.

Craig Zandstra from the Lake County Parks & Recreation Department gave a close out presentation on their watershed project that the Commission partially funded. The project consisted of the Phase I Beaver Dan Wetland Hydrology Restoration and the Commission funded the project at \$ 194,468 and project was successfully completed. The project consisted of additional flood storage, water quality improvement and habitat improvements at Deep River in Crown Point. Phase II is now underway to complete the project but the Commission is not participating in this phase.

Other Issues/New Business

• Mr. Repay reported that the interlocal agreement is moving along between the respective town attorneys to make sure that the document is done correctly and all points are covered adequately to protect everyone's interest. For public safety, we need to move quickly on this so the contractor, Gatlin Plumbing, can begin to work. Once the other municipalities have agreed to and signed the agreement, we will schedule a special meeting to approve the Commission signing a resolution and the agreement. Dyer representative, Rick Eberly, thanked the Commission for their participation in the project and is looking forward to its completion.

Statements from the Floor –

• Laurie Czulno from Forest Avenue in Hammond was happy to hear at the last meeting that Col. Drew said there was limited opportunity to work in 3 areas: mitigation, tieback levee, and cost share. She still has concern that the certification of the tie back in her area has not been approved by the Corps and she asked that they please look at it as it is the most vulnerable piece of the flood control project that has not been finalized. She feels that this tieback closure is even more effective than the closure at Northcote in Munster.

• John Beckman, Izaak Walton in Porter County distributed a memorandum to Commission members asking for support for a controlled burn along I-80/94 to be performed by Gary Fire Dept to get rid of the invasive phragmites. INDOT would be also play a role in the controlled burn. Chairman Baker expressed concern how the burn would affect the motorists on the expressway. Mr. Beckman replied that the burn would be done by professionals and done under no/low wind conditions. He asked for our consideration to participate in a working group to see if it is a feasible project that the Commission would want to move forward on.

• Fred Baginski, Friends of the Little Calumet, announced that there will be a Little Calumet River Festival again this year on May 16<sup>th</sup> at Carlson/OxBow Park with a canoe trip starting at 9:00. Volunteers are needed. Chairman Baker also asked that they try to utilize the help of the Lake County Visitors Bureau.

• Erik Sprenne, Northwest IN Paddling Assoc, distributed a paddling guide to Commission members. He has been working with Fred Baginski on the Little Calumet River Festival to promote paddling. One of the group's main focus is improving paddling conditions within the river. He thanked the Commission for clearing out debris/log jams and encouraged additional access sites be placed throughout the river system. Originally, the overall project called for a recreational component and now that the actual levee system is in place, the Commission should focus on recreation.

Sandy O'Brian, from Hobart and Porter County Izaak Walton League stated that phragmites have taken over a lot of the Little Cal land and supported the controlled burn to try to control them. She thanked Dan Repay for his attendance at the Hobart Marsh summit meeting that was held. She confirmed with the Corps that they would be working on updating mitigation plans. Army Corps Deputy District Director Roy Deda replied that they will be going back to the 2010 mitigation plan and re-working it and doing a new cost estimate. The process will probably take several months; there is no time schedule available. They are also coordinating with IDEM.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at the Munster Town Hall.

