

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**HELD AT 6:00p.m., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2015****Location: Munster Town Hall, 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. There were seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski
Tom Gozdecki
David Castellanos
Levon Whittaker
Ron McAhron
Debbie Long

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Visitors:

Col. Drew – USACE
David Nellans – Munster Town Council
Laurie & John Czulno – Forest Ave., Hammond
John Beckman – Izaak Walton League
Judy Knapp – Forest Ave., Hammond
T. Cholipski – River Dr., Munster
Peter Yackanich – Forest Ave., Hammond
Jayson Reeves – Gary
Bill Emerson, Sr. – Hammond City Council
Mark Gordish – Hammond Engineering
Sandy O'Brien – Hobart
Fred Baginski – Friends of the Little Cal
LuAnn Franklin – NWI Times

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Chairman William Baker referred to the minutes from the July 8, 2015 meeting. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker; motion passed with 7 aye votes.

Chairman's Report – Chairman Baker welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of our purpose, the eleven mile, \$275 million dollar man-made flood control project that runs from the state line to approximately I-65. Chairman Baker referred to the now faded 2008 flood pictures as a reminder of what can happen if a project such as this is neglected. Continued maintenance of the flood control project is a priority to make sure we are better prepared and while we cannot control Mother Nature, we are far better off at this moment, then we were in September, 2008. It is important to remember that more than 1,400 properties were removed from the floodplain due to the completion of this federal, flood control, saving residents from the requirement to pay federal flood insurance premiums in the amount of \$4.1 million each year. These dollars are put right back into the community, making this system a real economic development project.

Finance – Chairman Baker referred to the July claims in the amount of \$1,039,780.31. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion; Mr. Repay proceeded to explain a few of the claims, starting with payments made to Garcia Engineering. The payment in the amount of \$9,029.35 represents work completed by Garcia Engineering on the High Velocity Flow Channel Project. This project, located at the confluence of Harts Ditch and the Little Calumet River, is about 95% complete with only a few items such as seeding and gate installation remaining. The entire \$857,500 project comes in at only \$8,000 over the initial budgeted amount. Garcia Engineering received a payment of \$5,883.05, for the Levee Paving Project. This project, which will double the number of recreational trails in Highland and Hammond, is currently under review by the Army Corps of Engineers. Once approval is received the project will be bid out with either a late fall or early start, dependent on weather. The payment to Garcia Engineering in the amount of \$16,405.90 represents continual work on the Ribbon Parcel Mapping project. This project will allow for the transfer of important property documents, currently in paper form, onto an online GIS Map that can be accessed by personnel via the internet and also ensure that all necessary easements for the project are in

place. Mr. Repay next spoke of the payment to the Town of Schererville in the amount of \$427,748.40 that represents a partial payment of the total \$693,750 committed to the Main Street Sinkhole Project. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

Executive Director's Report –

- The Sandbar Modification project, located just west of the Kennedy Avenue Bridge, is starting with the contractor moving equipment into the project area. There is a 60 day window to complete the project, weather permitting.
- The Burr Street North back-up generator project is currently awaiting results of a required soil boring test. Once complete, the installation of the generator will be bid out.
- The Lyman Avenue Manhole Rehab Project, located between Hohman Avenue and Calumet Avenue in Hammond, is currently in the 408 process with the Army Corps of Engineers.
- The final report from the May levee inspections is expected very soon from the Army Corps of Engineers. This is the first year that all segments of the levee have been inspected, once we receive a final report it will be posted on our website.
- The project to raise the Georgia Street Bridge in Gary, which will eliminate the need for a closure during heavy rain events, is in the 408 permitting process.
- The next meeting of the Advisory Board is scheduled for August 19th, they are currently in the process of reviewing the applications and will then be able to give their recommendations to the Commission.
- There are several minor blockages in the river that are being addressed, but nothing of an emergency nature.

Chairman Baker asked that the timeline for 408 submissions be tracked to better understand the process and assist in future submission to the ACOE. Col. Drew of the Army Corps of Engineers, clarified that a formal written request from the board is required to initiate the 408 process.

Commissioner McAhrn asked if the recent rainfall was enough to assess how well the Broadway Avenue Manhole Rehabilitation Project, located in Gary, performed. Mr. Repay responded that, while we did not get enough rainfall to test the project, he was confident it would perform as required. The additional areas with manholes within the river that need to be addressed are Lyman Avenue in Hammond and Chase Street in Gary.

Other Issues/New Business –

- Commissioner Castellanos made a motion authorizing the Executive Director to execute a consulting agreement with Dawson & Associates; motioned seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion and further added that this consulting agreement will help resolve several pending monetary issues with the project, many of which happened prior to 2008, and bring the amounts back in balance. This project grew from a 90 million, 10 year project, to a 275 million, 30 year project, so it is important that all parties are comfortable and in agreement with the allocation and crediting of dollars. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.
- Commissioner Gozdecki presented a motion to approve and execute Resolution 2015-03 relating to the Gary Sanitary District Burr South Pump Station, along with a Memorandum of Understanding (exhibit A) and Warranty Deed (exhibit B) transferring land from the Gary Sanitary District to the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission; motioned seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Chairman Baker called for any discussion on the motion. Commissioner Gozdecki stated that Gary Sanitary District is in control of the Burr South Pump Station and as such is tasked to maintain a certain level of operation at the station in order for the project to meet and maintain the necessary certifications by the Army Corps of Engineers. There has been difficulties in past inspections with that Pump Station not running up to speed, therefore, it was suggested that the best way to handle this ongoing issues was assume ownership and ongoing maintenance of the Burr South Pump Station. Chairman Baker asked if there were any other questions and called for a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Whittaker stated that he is glad to see the initiative the board is taking with the projects in front of us and is eager to see their progress. Commissioner Whittaker also stated that, as we live in a very diverse area, it is important to include all people in our projects and we are moving in the right direction.

Commissioner Castellanos stated he looked forward to working with Dawson & Associates and hoped they would be a great partner in our discussions with the ACOE. Additionally, Commissioner Castellanos expressed his desire to align our minority hiring procedures with that of the State of Indiana.

Commissioner Gozdecki referred to a map of parcels in Hammond, currently still in the flood zone and requiring homeowners to pay mandatory flood insurance. Commissioner McAhrn clarified that the majority of parcels in Hammond were removed from the flood zone, however, these properties sit below the 100 year flood mark. Until the State Line Tie Back is approved by the ACOE, these property owners will remain in the flood zone.

Commissioner Wichlinski commended the contractors that were diligently working on the Main Street Sinkhole Project. This difficult undertaking is progressing smoothly and looks to be completed soon.

Commissioner McAhrn applauded the Commission's action to work with Dawson & Associates, stating they are a professional and efficient organization with a great deal of experience working with the Federal government.

Chairman Baker acknowledged Col. Drew of the Army Corps of Engineers and invited him to speak. Col. Drew stated that the levee inspection reports should be finalized by the end of August after which they will be formally presented and discussed with the Commission. Additionally the Colonel thanked the board for scheduling a working meeting on August 13 to discuss several issues including the State Line Tie Back and the 408 process to ensure that everyone is clear on the requirements necessary to proceed with the process. Further, Col. Drew indicated that his deputy, Roy Deda, had previously detailed to the Commission that the current working estimate for mitigation would be available at the August 13 working meeting and the Corps looks forward to discussion on the matter. Finally, Col. Drew stated his confidence in Dawson & Associates and the expectation to work with them to get where we need to be with the project.

Statements from the Floor –

- Charlotte Military, Chestnut Lane, Munster, stated that since 2007 she has been trying to get assistance from the Town of Munster with erosion issues in her backyard. She expressed great concern with the 7 trees that have fallen into Harts Ditch and is losing property value. Rip rap was installed at the home next door, but not continued to her home.
- Jayson Reeves, Gary, stated that much progress has been made on the project, however, there is still substantial debris in the river that needs to be addressed. Additionally, he would like to see Chase Street in Gary reopened.
- Fred Baginski expressed the need for park benches along the trail. Many elderly people walk the trails and are looking for a place to rest.
- Laurie Czulno, Forest Ave., stated that 26 properties still remain in the floodplain. The closure ability of the State Line Tie Back has been demonstrated to the ACOE and this gives people in her neighborhood a fighting chance. Ms. Czulno feels it is her obligation to remind the commission that people are still waiting for relief from paying flood insurance.
- Sandy Obrien, Hobart said she was happy to hear a working estimate on mitigation would be offered by the ACOE and was pleased to hear that the Commission is working with Dawson & Associates to resolve ongoing issues with the ACOE.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 9th at the Munster Town Hall.