

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2023
Location: Munster Town Hall, Munster, IN

Chairman Baker presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were eight (8) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Derek Nimetz
Dave Castellanos
Anthony Broadnax (via zoom)
Robert Ochi

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Laurie Czulno – Hammond
Vicki Williams – Munster
Kalliope Dedelow - Munster
James Dedelow - Munster

Commissioners Absent:

Ron Ware

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from September 20, 2023, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0 (Commissioner Whittaker - abstained).

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to our meeting. He stated the yellowing pictures that are seen at every meeting are a true reminder of why we are here. He added that the Commission is tasked with the continued maintenance of a \$275 million man-made flood control project. There are numerous issues with the original design and decades of deferred maintenance that we are in the process of addressing. Despite this, the project has been constructed to

manage Mother Nature and at some time there will be an issue when we get 10 gallons of water for our 5-gallon bucket – but we are better prepared today for that situation than we were before the flood of 2008. Moving forward, we continue to evolve and are starting to focus on some of the tributaries and areas that are not as high profile, while we remain dedicated to working with all the Communities in the Watershed. This is an important and ongoing project that will be with us as a region for a very long time.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the October 2023 claims in the amount of \$1,337,002.93. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with several reimbursements for Watershed Projects. The Town of Winfield was reimbursed \$300,000.00 for the Hidden Creek Drainage Improvements Watershed Project as per our Interlocal Agreement with the Town. \$222,500.00 was paid to the Town of Schererville for the Eagle Ridge Culvert Watershed Project. This project is now complete, and the road is now open. Lake County Parks submitted a reimbursement in the amount of \$113,500.00 for continued work on the Three Rivers Park Watershed Project. The Division of Nature Preserves submitted a claim in the amount of \$97,092.00 on our Agreement with the Indiana DNR for maintenance of the Hobart Marsh Area. Hasse Construction submitted three claims for various maintenance projects throughout the system including a claim in the amount of \$28,784.63 for pedestrian bridge deck repairs. These repairs are being completed prior to the USACE bridge inspection that we are required to complete every five years. A claim in the amount of \$13,482.63 was submitted for repairs to a sluice gate located off Indianapolis Blvd. in Hammond, and finally a claim in the amount of \$23,062.89 was submitted for repairs to a retaining wall near Harrison Street in Gary. This was an issue noted in our last USACE Inspection. Finally, \$19,742.00 was paid to Christopher Burke Engineering for continued work on the Deep River Watershed Modeling project.

Commissioner Gozdecki noted that the total amount of the contract with the Department of Natural Resources is \$200,000.00 and asked if that was an annual amount. Mr. Repay stated that the contract covers two years of maintenance at Hobart Marsh.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any further questions and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioner Nimetz stated that as the DNR Representative appointed to the Commission, he would recuse himself from voting on the claims which include payment to the DNR – Department of Natural Resources. Motion passed 7-0 (Commissioner Nimetz – recused).

Executive Director's Report –

Mr. Repay gave an update on several of the projects:

- Our contractor, Wiltjer Excavating, has completed clearing of trees that have fallen or of concern in Hart Ditch. The ditch was cleared from 45th Street to just shy of the confluence with the Little Calumet River. This will likely be the last time we will need to do a full clearing of the ditch so long as we continue to do the bank stabilization work.
- The Town of Winfield has completed the work on the Hidden Creek Culvert Replacement Project. The LCRBDC contributed \$300,000.00 towards the project.
- The Sauerman Woods Watershed Project keeps moving along. They are moving to the infrastructure side of the project. Some of the recent rainstorms have slowed them down. I have asked for a revised schedule from the contractor.
- We contracted with Merrillville Stormwater Utility to use their Marsh Master to clear overgrowth at the Kennedy Avenue Sandbar. We are now able to better access the area and develop a plan to remove the silt and sediment that has accumulated.
- The Cady Marsh Raker Project continues to move forward. The Raker has been installed after some small field modifications. There was a slight delay while NIPSCO placed a pole to service the new equipment. We hope to have the rake fully operation sometime in November.
- We were notified earlier this week about a beaver dam in the City of Hobart that is located on private property. The dam is causing a 4 foot differential in the water level. There are currently no easements on the property that would enable us to access and remove the dam. We are working with the City of Hobart and the Lake County Drainage Board to find a solution to this issue.
- Humane Indiana requested our assistance in finding a location to release six Trumpeter Swans they rehabilitated. The swans were released in a marsh area earlier today with the assistance of Humane Indiana and NIPSCO. We will continue to monitor the birds and their progress.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked if there was an update on the damage from the truck that drove on the levee. Mr. Repay stated that we are still waiting for the Police Report before we move forward, but the USACE was on-site to assess the damage.

Update from the USACE –

Mr. Repay stated that our Project Manager, Imad Samara, sent his status report via email. The report indicated that the USACE continues to work on the close-out for the project and anticipates having that task completed by the end of October.

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-13 establishing the Policy by which Members of the LCRBDC may Participate by Electronic Means of Communication, subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. Attorney Wickland stated the state law regarding electronic means of communication has changed recently and this Resolution is in compliance with the new requirements. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Statements to the Board –

No Statements to the Board.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Whittaker thanked the public for attending our meeting. He said that the Commission completed many good projects this year and he is looking forward to continuing the efforts next year.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked the public for continuing to engage with the Commission and attending our meetings.

Commissioner Castellanos thanked everyone for attending our meeting. He also offered prayers to those people effected by the conflict in the Middle East.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 15, 2023.