

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 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 seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Dave Castellanos
Ron Ware
Robert Ochi

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Laurie Czulho – Hammond
Luke Sherry - CBBEL

Commissioners Absent:

Anthony Broadnax
Derek Nimetz

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the minutes from October 18, 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.

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. We are an economic development project as we put \$4 million back into the community every year by not requiring mandatory flood insurance.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the November 2023 claims in the amount of \$520,768.22. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with payment to Wiltjer Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$202,385.00 for work clearing blockages and cutting back trees on Hart Ditch. This will likely be the last time for this type of clearing as we continue to upgrade and complete stabilization work on the ditch. \$25,110.00 was paid to the U.S. Geological Survey for the quarterly operation and maintenance of numerous streamgages throughout the system. The Merrillville Stormwater Utility allowed us the use of their Marshmaster to remove phragmites and other weeds near Kennedy Avenue at the cost of \$10,000.00. Several communities participated in our tree program: the Town of Dyer was reimbursed \$14,155.45; the City of Crown Point was reimbursed \$7,926.00 and North Township was reimbursed in the amount of \$10,000.00. Finally, \$10,578.03 was paid to the Hammond Sanitary District for continued work on the Southeast CSO Treatment Facility Design Watershed Project.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Executive Director's Report –

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

- Our contractor cut the grass along the entire system for the final time this year. This was the 6th mowing of the season and we will be in good shape for next year's USACE inspections.
- We are in the process of going through over 100 parcels that are up for tax sale through the Lake County Commissioner. These parcels are mainly located near the levee or near large tributaries such as Deep River. Owning these parcels will help provide us and our partners better access to the river.
- There is no hunting allowed on Commission properties this year. In the past, we allowed people to hunt, with permission. However, due to several ongoing projects, hunting has been suspended for this year. Despite this, we have encounters with over a dozen individuals going around barriers and hunting. To that end, we have employed some off-duty police officers to patrol the levee and provide additional security.
- The Izaak Walton League will be conducting a clean-up off Chase Street on Saturday, November 18th. The Commission will provide the dumpster for their event.
- We are making progress with the USACE Administration and Real Estate Closeout. We are currently in the audit close-out phase of our partnership with the USACE. We recently received final approval on the last 4 parcels that we submitted earlier this year. The USACE has been informed that if we need to engage Dawson & Associates again to assist with the process, we are ready to do that.
- We have 5 new applications for funding from various communities. There will be an Advisory Board meeting the first week of December with presentations to the board in January or February.

- Christopher Burke Engineering completed the study on the Dyer 2-Stage Ditch on behalf of the Dyer Stormwater Board. The Stormwater Board is currently reviewing their options at this time.
- We are in the midst of applying for a Readi 2 Grant for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge. These are funds provided by the State of Indiana for transformational projects. We should know if our application was successful in the Spring of 2024.
- The Commission continues to develop plans to remove the sandbar located off Kennedy Avenue. We have a meeting scheduled with the USACE to review our options.
- Work continues on the Turkey Creek and Beaver Dam Ditch Study. We hope to have the completed study available to us by the beginning of the year.
- The Sauerman Woods Watershed Project is progressing. The contractor is installing infrastructure needed to feed the pond.
- We will be clearing leaning and dying trees along Schoon Ditch. We will be working with the Lake County Surveyor's Office to make sure all residents adjacent to the ditch are aware of our plans. The work is expected to begin before Thanksgiving.
- I have a meeting scheduled with INDOT to discuss the takeover of two of their Pump Stations, one on Kennedy Avenue and the other on Indianapolis Blvd.
- We are working with the City of Hobart and the Lake County Drainage Board on an issue in Hobart. There is a beaver dam located on private property that is holding back a considerable amount of water. The dam is estimated to be four feet tall and a hundred feet long.

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to approve an agreement with Wessler Engineering for the Georgia Street, recently renamed Malcolm X Drive, Levee Design in an amount not to exceed \$62,00.00. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chariman; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that this is an area that was identified over the years that overtops during large rain events. The design will incorporate a berm to hold back the water. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Statements to the Board –

Gary Lee, Gary, IN, expressed concerns on the DLZ study commissioned by the LCRBDC. He stated that the study was severely limited in scope and his questions regarding the study have remained unanswered. He also provided several alternatives for the Commission to consider, as the DLZ recommended option would not work in his opinion. Mr. Lee stated that this is a safety issue as the Wolverine pipeline running alongside the ditch is losing ground cover. Mr. Lee also brought up concerns regarding several Pump Stations, stating that oil and diesel fuel is being pumped though the stations into the Little Calumet River. He stated that this issue puts the recently released swans and other wildlife in danger.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Whittaker thanked the public for attending our meetings and continuing to bring their concerns to the Board. He said that the Commission completed many

good projects this year and he is looking forward to continuing the efforts next year as we work together with the communities in the watershed. He hopes everyone enjoys time with family as we move forward to the end of the year.

Commissioner Ware wished everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Castellanos stated that a theater group has expressed interest in doing an outdoor event at the natural spring and he was approached by some senior citizens who would like to hold a nature walk. He also wished all the veterans a Happy Veteran's Day and thanked them for their service to our country.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 20, 2023. This date may be changed, so please check our website for the most current information.

DRAFT