

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 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
Dave Castellanos
Ron Ware
Robert Ochi
Derek Nimetz

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Vicki Williams – Munster
Laurie Czulho – Hammond
Jeffrey Morden – L.L.D.D.

Commissioners Absent:

Anthony Broadnax

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the minutes from November 15, 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 8-0.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to our meeting and wished everyone Happy Holidays. 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 federal 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 December 2023 claims in the amount of \$738,593.34. 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 payment to the City of Crown Point in the amount of \$432,709.34 for continued progress on the Sauerman Woods Drainage Improvements Watershed Project. This phase of the project is in its final stages. Lake County Parks submitted a claim in the amount of \$41,536.00 for the Three Rivers Watershed Project. This application was for asbestos remediation and the demolition of the existing buildings and fence at the Three Rivers Park. Lake County Parks also submitted a claim in the amount of \$24,591.32 for work completed with the Lake County Conservation Collaborative. Their work centers on improvements to the wetlands along areas such as Cline Avenue, Georgia Street and Martin Luther King Drive. We did a 6th mowing with C&H Mowing for \$27,500.00. We took advantage of the warm weather to do the final cut, and this will put us in a good position for our USACE inspections in March of 2024. \$26,445.09 was paid to the Hammond Sanitary District for continued work on the Southeast CSO Treatment Facility Design Watershed Project. Finally, \$34,108.00 was paid to Austgen Equipment for continued work on Phase 2 of the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project. The 3rd Phase of this project is currently out for bid with bid opening expected next week.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked about the invoice for the Sauerman Woods Project, noting that there were several items that had little or no billing against them. He asked if they were still part of the project that needed to be completed, or were they out of scope? Mr. Repay stated that there were some aspects of the project that were not under the scope of Crown Point's application to us and were being picked up elsewhere.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Executive Director's Report –

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

- As stated in previous meetings, we have employed some off-duty police officers to patrol the levee and provide additional security. The security patrols have encountered issues such as illegal hunting, drug use, stolen vehicles and dumping. There is a meeting scheduled with NIPSCO and DNR later this week to discuss ways to better secure the river.
- During the security patrols, the officers encountered 3 hunters too close to the eagle's nest and advised them to leave the area. As they were leaving, the hunters came across a dead body floating in the water just east of Clark Street. I assisted Gary Police, DNR, and Lake County Coroner as to the best access point to recover the body.
- The Sauerman Woods Drainage Improvements Watershed Project is ongoing. The contractor, Austgen Equipment, is currently installing the infrastructure for the pond.

- The next segment of the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project is currently out for bid. The bids are scheduled to be opened at the Lake County Commissioners meeting on December 13th.
- We recently held an Advisory Board Meeting and heard 5 applications from various communities within the Watershed. The applications will be presented to the Board in early 2024.
- 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.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked for status on the City of Hobart's Stinky Creek Watershed Application. Mr. Repay stated that the goal is to wait until the new Hobart administration is on board and see if the project still fits their priorities.

Chairman Baker stated that we are exploring new office space for the Commission that would be large enough to hold our monthly meetings, so we do not always have to schedule with other municipalities. It would also provide space for Commission events such as our O&M and Advisory Board meetings. Additionally, the space could be used by others, such as the Lake County Drainage Board, if they needed a space different from their Crown Point location.

Other Issues/New Business –

No New Business.

Statements to the Board –

No Statements to the Board.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Ware wished all Happy Holidays and a safe New Year.

Commissioner Wichlinski wished everyone a Merry Christmas and looked forward to a busy 2024 for the Commission.

Commissioner Gozdecki wished all a Happy Holiday Season. He thanked the public for all their input this year and looked forward to a successful 2024.

Commissioner Castellanos wished everyone Happy Holidays. He added that he hoped to get Mayor Melton, the newly elected mayor of the City of Gary, on the Commission's radio broadcast sometime in early 2024.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, January 17, 2024.