

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023
Location: IU Northwest, Bergland Auditorium, Gary, IN

Chairman Baker presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were nine (9) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

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

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Dr. Spencer Cortwright – IUN
Harry Kuttner – The Wetlands Initiative
Daniel Suarez – Audubon Great Lakes
Dorreen Carey – Gary
Carolyn McCrady - Gary
Alex Dalton – Post Tribune

Commissioners Absent:

None

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from May 17, 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. (Commissioner Broadnax abstained)

Chairman's Report -

Chairman Baker thanked the IUN for generously offering to host our monthly meeting. He further added that the yellowing pictures from the 2008 flood event are shown at every meeting as a reminder of what can happen if maintenance on a man-made flood control project such as this is neglected. He stated 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 then we were before the flood of 2008. The Commission's work has resulted in over 1,000 parcels being removed from the mandatory flood insurance requirement. This puts 4 million dollars back into the local economy, making this an economic development project.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the June 2023 claims in the amount of \$1,099,235.59. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with payment to Dyer Construction in the amount of \$45,682.46 for final payment on the Stage 7 Sealant Project. \$27,500.00 was paid to C&H Mowing for mowing the entire levee system. Great Lakes Electrical Maintenance submitted a claim in the amount of \$12,152.00 for their monthly pump station inspections. \$14,400.00 was paid to Encap Inc. on their contract for maintenance of the Chase Street and Black Oak Mitigation sites. The maintenance plan includes selective herbicide application and mowing to prevent the establishment of non-native invasive species. The City of Crown Point was paid \$777,381.19 for the Sauerman Woods Drainage Improvements Watershed Project. \$13,365.86 was paid to Delta III for work on the Dyer Ditch/Hart Ditch Streambank Stabilization Project. This payment completes the LCRBDC portion of the project. Martin Mechanical submitted claims totaling \$11,167.59 for repair work on Pump 1 at the Burr North Pump Station. \$14,602.97 was paid to Northern Indiana Mechanical for clearing blockages at the Kennedy Avenue Bridge and Clark Road.

Commissioner Gozdecki requested further information on the ID stenciling project. Mr. Repay stated that our contractor has been labeling the structures per USACE requirements. The project has recently been completed.

Commissioner Gozdecki also asked for an update on the Kennedy Avenue Sandbar Remediation. Mr. Repay stated that we have the plans for the project and soil testing is being done now.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any further questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0.

Executive Director's Report –

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

- Inspections for Hammond, Highland and Munster took place earlier this month. Some issues noted were animal burrows and erosion at the toe of the levee. Additionally, a gate in Hammond will need repair, but there were no significant deficiencies noted.
- The drills recently purchased worked out well during our annual inspections. We will go through a full review at our O&M meeting next month.
- Our contractor, Dyer Construction, was able to complete the Stage 7 Caulking Project prior to our annual inspections. USACE expressed their approval of the completed work.
- We did not receive payment for this year's license agreement with Maya LLC. Our attorney has sent them notice of their default. Maya LLC has until August 31, 2023 to make their payment of \$100,100.00

- Every few years we go through segments of Hart Ditch to clear trees that have fallen or are leaning into the waterway. We recently completed the segment between 45th Avenue and Fran-Lin Parkway. The plan is to continue north to Schoon Ditch. Some of this area will be a part of our next phase of Bank Stabilization work through our partnership with the Lake County Drainage Board. The stabilization work is expected to begin this fall.
- We had the opportunity to clear blockages at both the Kennedy Avenue Bridge and Clark Road Bridge earlier this month.
- We are continuing discussion with INDOT representatives regarding the takeover of the Indianapolis Blvd. and Kennedy Avenue Pump Stations. Both were built after 2008 and are not a part of the project but do provide protection for the area.
- Currently the parts needed to repair Pump 1 at the Burr North Pump Station are on backorder. It is anticipated that the parts will be in and the pump put back into service the first week of July.
- The levee was mowed prior to the June USACE Inspections. We will watch the weather in the upcoming weeks to determine if a cut is needed prior to the 4th of July holiday.
- Work continues on the Sauerman Woods Drainage Improvements Project. Per the contractor's schedule, excavation of the pond area will continue into the next month.
- The City of Hammond has scheduled a ribbon cutting for the Calumet Avenue Pedestrian Bridge on June 29th at 2pm.
- Superior Engineering will be providing the Commission with an assessment of the Gary Pump Stations.
- The Commission holds an O&M meeting every month. This month representatives from the communities of Hammond, Highland, Munster and Griffith were present.

Commissioner Castellanos asked for an update on the electricity at the Natural Spring. Mr. Repay stated that NIPSCO is waiting for approval from the railroad to run the lines over the tracks.

Commissioner Whittaker asked about the nature of work Superior Engineering will do at the Pump Stations. Mr. Repay stated that they will be assessing the PLC's at the stations, adding that some are 25 years old.

Commissioner Whittaker asked for clarification on how Encap Inc. was chosen for the maintenance of the mitigation site at Chase Street. Mr. Repay stated that Encap was the original contractor that performed the restoration of the site. Commissioner Whittaker further asked if Encap Inc. had minority participation.

(Commissioner Broadnax left the meeting)

Presentations –

The following updates were presented at the meeting. The links to the video presentations are included below:

- Little Calumet River Prairie and Wetland Preserve

Presenter: Dr. Spencer Cortwright, IU Northwest

Video: <https://youtu.be/ag-hGo3t2Kc>

- Lake County Parks Conservation Collaborative
Presenters: Harry Kuttner, The Wetlands Initiative and Daniel Suarez, Audubon Great Lakes
Video: <https://youtu.be/eju9bzF9vZU>

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to table action on the Town of Merrillville's Hickory Ridge Flood Control Improvements Watershed Application until a later date; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Statements to the Board –

Carolyn McCrady, Gary, stated thanked the Commission for holding their meeting in the City of Gary. She stated that she is impressed with the level of work that is occurring to restore the natural beauty to the area, but the Maya project still haunts us. She further added that Maya Energy is a contradiction to the restoration work the Commission undertakes. The City of Gary opposes Maya Energy, and the development is not something that is wanted or needed by the residents of the City of Gary.

Doreen Carey, Gary, IN, noted her opposition to Maya Energy. She stated that part of the Commission's role is to improve the environment as shown in the presentations this evening. The City of Gary is an environmental justice community and that IDEM raised their concerns as well. The Maya project would be located in an area close to the Steel City Academy and Spring Park. Maya Energy raises environmental justice and Civil Rights concerns, and she urges the Commission to rescind the license agreement.

Gary Lee, Gary, IN, spoke in support of the previous speakers and added that the public needs to hear positive messages from the Commission. He stated that the Commission should pass a resolution opposing Maya Energy. He further added that he feels the Commission should expedite overpasses along the bike trails so that people could bike all the way to Marshalltown and see the environmental progress made by the Commission.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Castellanos complimented the speakers on their presentations this evening. He further added that he is looking forward to working together with the City of Gary and Town of Griffith in their efforts to get the LOMR approved.

Commissioner Ochi thank IUN for hosting our monthly meeting. He thanked the speakers for their very educational presentations and the public for their comments.

Commissioner Nimetz thanked the speakers for their informative presentations.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked IUN for allowing us to hold our meeting on their campus. He complimented the speakers on their presentations.

Commissioner Wichlinski commented on the great presentations this evening and thanked the public for their comments.

Commissioner Whittaker thanked the staff for their hard work on taking our monthly meetings on the road. He added that the presentations this evening were very informative. He thanked the public for their comments and stated that he continues to oppose Maya Energy. He further added that he is hopeful we can do a better job with minority participation. He stated that we spend a lot of money in communities in the watershed and hopes that due diligence is being done with regards to minority participation.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, July 19, 2023.

DRAFT