

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020

Location: Virtual Meeting

Chairman Baker 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:

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

Visitors:

Virtual Meeting

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from September 16, 2020 as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a vote. Motion passed with 8 aye votes.

Chairman's Report –

Commissioner Baker welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting and thanked those who joined. As a reminder, USACE inspection reports, minutes and audio recordings of our meetings can be found on our website at www.littlecalriverbasin.org. The Commission is tasked with the maintenance is a \$275 million man-made flood control project. There are numerous issues with the original design and decades of deferred maintenance that we are completing. However, this Commission is far better prepared than was in the past and we continue to maintain open communication and work with all communities within the watershed.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the October claims in the amount of \$883,798.62. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the August claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims starting with payment to

Earthwerks in the amount of \$376,327.80 for work on the Deep River Rock Riffle Project. This is the first payment on the \$4.4 million dollar project located in Lake Station that was awarded in July of this year. The City of Crown Point was reimbursed \$35,544.16 for continued work on the Sauerman Woods Watershed Project. \$74,879.85 was paid to R.A. Oros for work completed on the 45th Street portion of the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project. We are in the process of purchasing property and/or easements, required by the USACE, from the City of Gary, Gary Parks and Recreation and Gary Department of Redevelopment for the total amount of \$184,500.00. The acquisitions are expected to be complete by the end of the year. \$8,000.00 was paid to Damale Haygood, a local contractor, for tree cutting in the Marshalltown area.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked for clarification on the amount paid to R.A. Oros for the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project. Mr. Repay stated that he would get an explanation from the Project Manager regarding the claim submittal and report back to the board.

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:

- We received the necessary permits for the Deep River Rock Riffle Project. The contractor, Earthwerks has begun work on the project, which was awarded in July of this year.
- A hunter notified us of a large beaver dam in a remote area between Chase and Grant Streets. This dam is one of the largest seen on the river in quite some time. The dam was partially opened, but this will be a constant battle until the beavers are trapped.
- The purchase of 70+ acres of property from the School City of Gary was completed this month. This property located in Lake Station was purchased in partnership with the Lake County Parks. The purchase almost doubles the size of Three Rivers Park and will be used for our Deep River Rock Riffle Project boat launch and pedestrian trail.
- The Hart Ditch Stabilization Project in partnership with the Lake County Surveyor and Town of Munster is progressing. The last remaining segment to be completed this year is 45th & Camellia.
- There are still several outstanding acquisitions and easements with the City of Gary that are required by the USACE. Significant progress has been made over the past few months. We have a verbal agreement with all departments and will continue to work with the City, The Redevelopment Department and the Parks and Recreation Department to secure the necessary acquisitions.
- We have meet with an engineering firm with experience in working with artesian wells. Our hope is to make the spring off Chase street more accessible.
- We are clearing land in Lake Station near the Deep River Rock Riffle Project. We will be creating a 4-acre prairie area, which was required by IDNR as part of their permit.
- We met with the City of Crown recently on some of their upcoming watershed applications.

- 1st Response Maintenance will be our new contractor to exercise our sluice gates in Gary. All equipment has already been transferred to 1st Response from the previous contractor.
- We will schedule an Advisory Board Meeting in the next few months to review any outstanding watershed applications.
- We have the approval of the USGS Water Temperature Monitoring Agreement on the agenda. After discussion, it was agreed to fund 3 gages throughout the watershed.
- A Community clean-up off Chase Street was held over the weekend. We provided several dumpsters for the clean-up.
- Ciorba Group is working with all the communities in the watershed to update the master plan.

Presentation –

Brad Kasberg of Audubon Great Lakes, Craig Zandstra from Lake County Parks and Frank Veraldi from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave a presentation on the Little Calumet Marsh Bird Conservation Area. This project, which began in 2019, includes the restoration of wetlands along the Little Calumet River. The complete video presentation can be viewed on our website at www.littlecalriverbasin.org.

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve a joint-funding agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey for the Little Calumet River Water Temperature Monitoring during the period October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. The combined agreement amount is \$15,330.00, with the LCRBDC contributing \$10,665.00 and the USGS contributing \$4,665.00; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. Mr. Repay stated that this agreement covers 3 temperature monitoring gages throughout the watershed. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Statements to the Board –

Angela Williams, attorney with NiSource, requested information on a lease agreement signed in 1994 with NIPSCO, the Portage Marina and the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission. Mr. Repay will follow-up with Ms. Williams regarding the lease.

Barb Lusco, Portage Marina Harbor Master, also requested information on the NIPSCO, Portage Marina and NIPSCO lease agreement.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Ware thanked everyone for attending another virtual meeting and asked everyone to stay safe.

Commissioner Castellanos thanked everyone who participated in the recent clean-up on the river.

Commissioner Whittaker thanked everyone that attended and participated in the virtual meeting.

Commissioner Wichlinski said positive things are happening within the watershed and he thanked everyone for attending our meeting.

Commissioner Ochi thanked everyone for attending the virtual meeting and added that this is his one-year anniversary on the Commission.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 18, 2020.