

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2010

Held at
Munster Town Hall,
1005 Ridge Road, Munster, IN

Chairman Dan Dernulc called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session and Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. A roll call vote confirmed all five members present. With a correction to the minutes on page 2, the minutes of the May 5th meeting stand as posted.

Development Commissioners:

Dan Dernulc, Chairman
William Baker, Vice Chair
Anthony Broadnax, Treasurer
Tom Wichlinski, Secretary
Ron McAhron

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Visitors:

R. Trotter - Hammond
Doug Anderson – Army Corps
John Plusch - Crestwood
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster
Ruth Mores – Southmoor Road, Hmd.
Paul Roch - Hammond
Larry Blue – South Hammond
Stephen VanderWoude – South Hammond
Charles/Donna Elrod - Hammond
Donna Elrod - Hammond
John Harrigan - Hammond
Tom DeGiulio – Town of Munster
Paul Taylor – Forest, Hammond
Craig/Bea Hanusin – Munster
Martin Wagner – Hammond
James Wismeasle – Hammond
Karen Lorenz – Southmoor, Hmd.
Louis Chavez Sr. – Hammond
Kathleen Hill – Hammond

Visitors:

Ann Schmidt - Hammond
Jeff Burton – The Times
Fred Bagriski - Hammond
Leon/Alice Kozlowski - Munster
Tim Miller – South Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson-Congressman's Office
Imad Samara - USACE
John Mogle – Baring Avenue, Munster
Vanessa Villarreal, USACE
Lynne Whelan - USACE
Kathrin Knapp - Hammond
Judy Knapp - Hammond
Sam Dimopoulos - Hammond
Frank Mrvan - Senator
Tina Kutkoski - Hammond
Mike/Pat Morris - Hammond
Linda Cook - Griffith
Bill Petrites – Highland
Peter Yakanich - Hammond
John Mulesa – Munster
Stephen Jadrnak - Hammond
Leanne Sandrick – Forest, Hammond
Jim Renwick – Forest, Hammond
John/Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Phil Gralik – R.W.Armstrong Co.
Harold Gibson - Hammond
Roberto Peredes - USACE
William Rochford - USACE
Bridget Bodefelf – Crestwood
Evangeline Stanford - Hammond
Terry/Pam Ahearn – Forest, Hammond
Brendan Ahearn – Forest, Hammond
Frank/Gina Cece – Munster
Kim Poland – Hammond Councilwoman
Paul Dombrowski – Forest, Hammond
Bob Paulson - Munster

Chairman's Report – Chairman Dernulc announced that, as of June 1, 2010, Jim Pokrajac's contract with the Commission was not renewed. The contact person will be Mr. Repay.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay reported that he has been working with OMMYX in regard to adding an additional six monitoring stations. Because Dyer and Hart Ditch come into the Little Calumet River, he is attending the meetings of the Dyer Stormwater Management Board.

- Mr. Repay also reported that he is currently working on the development of an official website for the Commission. He has a meeting this Friday with the company; he is hoping it will be up and running by July 1.
- Mr. Repay announced that he has a tour/riding the levees scheduled for June 14 with Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce.
- Mr. Repay continued on to say that he has put together a power point presentation to explain what is happening and why the decision was made to not pursue the floodwall in the Southmoor area. Presentation followed. Questions were taken from the floor.
- Kathleen Hill from Hammond questioned why trees could not be on the levees. Bill Rochford and Imad Samara both stated that trees weaken the integrity of the levee, same as burrowing animals. Trees also fall into the river and cause obstructions. Trees must be 15' from the toe of the levee or floodwall to remain.

Sam Dimopoulos from Hammond expressed distress that, at this point in time as the project completion is nearing, the Commission is making the statement that Illinois will not be upgrading their levees and therefore leaving the homes on Forest Avenue vulnerable to flooding. Residents do not want sandbagging. Mr. Repay is working with Hammond officials in looking at options and will select the best option for everyone by the end of June.

- John Mulesa questioned if residents on Southmoor have filed lawsuits. Attorney Dave Wickland answered that the lawsuits filed are on the value of easement taking only.
- Laurie Czulno from Hammond expressed concern that her area on Forest Avenue will become the low point in the project if nothing is done to rebuild the existing Hammond levee and therefore, that area would receive water. Commissioner McAhrn said that the levee was built in the 80's and does need improvement. There has never been any maintenance on this levee. The Commission is gathering information to see what needs to be done to bring that levee up to code. Whether it can be done this year or next year, we do not know at this point. We cannot mandate Illinois to do anything. The Chicago Metropolitan Reclamation Water District said it would be \$400 million to re-build their system; the Army Corps cost our portion out at about \$20 million. We do not have \$20 million. In the interim, residents on Forest Avenue have a levee and the elevation is higher there than other areas. We are working with the city of Hammond and we will come up with a plan, agreeable to all parties. Mrs. Czulno expressed dissatisfaction with using sandbags.
- R. Trotter from Forest Avenue expressed concern about that levee portion on Forest not being adequate; another foot or so in the 2008 flood event, he thinks the water would have come over the top of the levee. Commissioner McAhrn agreed that some kind of improvement needs to happen.
- Paul Dombrowski from Forest Avenue put focus on the maintenance of the levee. If the gate is kept closed in that area, it should be OK. He hopes that the gate will become part of the maintenance issues addressed. Chairman Dernulc added we are working hard at it. He asked Councilwoman Kim Poland to give Mr. Repay a phone call to talk about it.

Army Corps Status Report:

- SV-2 – Roberto Peredes from the Army Corps informed the Board members that the contractor is near completion; all flood control work is complete; seeding and anti-graffiti coating is complete, except at southwest utility corridor; only fencing remains.
- SVII – Contractor is continuing to drive sheetpile on both sides of the river; rip rap installation is continuing. BP crossing is complete.
- SVIII – Earth fill for conventional inspection trench is continuing between Columbia and Calumet. Sheet piling installation is continuing between Monroe and Frederick.

Discussion ensued on current strike going on. It has affected other projects in the area as well. Labor agreements are being discussed; Corps is monitoring it. It has affected Stage VIII. Some work can continue on some parts of the levee; just cannot do any iron work. Iron workers have threatened to picket the project but that has not happened yet. The Commission stressed the emphasis on meeting the December 2010 deadline for levee completion to the Army Corps.

Action Required – Chairman Dan Dernulc presented items for action.

- He referred for the claims for June to be approved in the amount of \$82,616.68. Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve the claims; seconded by Bill Baker; motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0.
- Commissioner McAhrn then made a motion to approve the O&M claims in the total amount of \$3,454.66; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0.

Finance – Chairman Dernulc referred to the April Financial Statement and the April NIRPC invoice.

Land Acquisition/Land Management – No report. Any action on the Gary Positive Action Group requesting 3 acres of land for farming was deferred.

Engineering - No report.

Operation & Maintenance – Chairman Dernulc stated that the water levels at the culverts on Chase Street have not gone up to the level it was because the Commission had the culverts cleaned out.

Legislative – Commissioner McAhrn stated that the State Budget Committee would be meeting on July 7 which is the same day as the next meeting. Chairman Dernulc suggested we postpone the meeting until the following Wednesday, July 14 (instead of July 7). Commissioner McAhrn went on to say the Commission would be requesting a portion of the remaining funds still being held down state. With the State's financial situation, there will be at least a 10% cut back of the original amount of approximately \$8.5 million.

Other Issues/New Business – Commissioner Baker stressed to the audience that the Commission is actively looking at options for O&M and how to fund it. That is a priority of this Commission.

Chairman Dernulc added that we are not receiving any more money from the State bienniums; we are on our own for a funding mechanism. Any ideas are welcomed. Bill Baker added that they are trying to quantify what needs to be done and assign a dollar amount to it. We are taking into consideration a lot of catch-up that needs to be done on maintenance.

Ron McAhron stated that the current contract we have with Austgen Electric for pump station inspections has expired. He proceeded to make a motion to empower Dan Repay to review/renew the contract and the frequency of it (may be that only once a month inspections are necessary); motion seconded by Bill Baker; motion passed with 5-0 roll call. Chairman Dernulc set the next meeting date at July 14 (instead of the normal first Wednesday of the month).

Statements from the Floor -

- John Mulesa from Munster asked whether the Corps has a map on their web site showing what elevations were for the 200 year flood. Bill Rochford replied that they do.
 - Kathleen Hill from Hammond inquired what the plan is for maintenance of the levees. Commission Baker replied that maintenance of the levee system does not get turned over to this Commission until levee is built. In those areas not turned over yet, the municipality should be maintaining it. Once it is turned over to us, that is when we will take it over. That is the plan we are working on – identification of maintenance areas and the funding mechanism to pay for that maintenance. Bill Rochford added that the levee on Forest Avenue has already been credited to the Commission. Although the city of Hammond built it back in the early 80's, it was built to Army Corps specs. However, the Commission, nor the city of Hammond, has done any maintenance on it. Commissioner McAhron added that the Commission will deal with it. They are looking at what they can do for a long term and short term solution, should a flooding situation arise.
 - John Harrigan from Hammond complimented the members and Mr. Repay for the work they are doing. He emphasized the importance of the members listening to what the residents have to say. He asked that future meetings be scheduled with the residents to listen to their ideas. Chairman Dernulc informed him that the Commission will meet any time at the residents' request.
 - Bob Paulson – Disappointed that no one from Hammond went down state to support the project and obtain funding. Ron McAhron added that all communities need to pull together and work together. Out of that will come a better project.
 - Craig Hanusin from Munster asked for an update on the pump stations. Imad Samara stated that he will put the location of each pump station on their web site. The pump stations are a critical part of the project.
 - Karen Lorenz from Hammond stated she has been attending meetings for this project for many years. She is just trying to make sure that what is done is done properly so she will not be flooded. She has been concerned about what was proposed by the Army Corps; she didn't agree with it and she fought against it.
- Commissioner Anthony Broadnax stated he appreciated the comments from the residents. He emphasized working together, in the time frame given and the monies that have been given, to set a goal to get this project completed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 14, 2010 at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.