

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION HELD AT 6:00 P.M. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2010

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

Chairman Dan Dernulc called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. Minutes of the July 14th stand as posted.

Development Commissioners:

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

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Staff:

Sandy Mordus
Judy Vamos

Attorney:

Dave Wickland

Visitors:

Roberto Peredes – Army Corps
Doug Anderson – Army Corps
John/Jean Plusch – Crestwood, Munster
T. Cholipski – River Drive, Munster
Ruth Mores – Southmoor Road, Hmd.
Bill Rochford – Army Corps
Paul Dombrowski – Hammond
Paul Taylor – Forest Ave, Hammond
Craig/Bea Hanusin – Munster
Col. Quarles – Army Corps
Lynn Whelan – Army Corps
Stephen Jadrnak – Forest Ave, Hmd
Kristen Hill - Hammond
Kathleen Hill – Hammond
Mike Zarantonello – Southmoor, Ham'd
John Hluska – Hammond
Tula Kavadias – Oakwood, Munster
Leon/Alice Kozlowski – Munster
C. Kreisl – Forest Ave, Hammond
Tom DeGiulio – Town of Munster
Bill/Bev Coomes – River Drive Munster

Visitors:

Don/Josie Seagraves - Munster
Jeff Burton – The Times
Fred Baginski - Hammond
Patricia Piekarczyk - Munster
Lisa Miller – Forest Ave. Hammond
Elizabeth Johnson-Congressman's Office
Karla Hunt - Munster
John Mogle – Baring Avenue, Munster
Vanessa Villarreal, USACE
Gary Zacok - Munster
Kenny/Bonnie Vavrek – Stateline, Ham'd
Judy Knapp - Hammond
John Beckman – Lake Co. Fish & Game
Kim Pastrick - Hammond
Tina Kutkoski - Hammond
Jim Linstrom - Hammond
Jim McLean – Army Corps
Bill Petrites – Highland
Peter Yackanich – Forest Ave, Ham'd
John Mulesa – Munster
Susan Miller - Hammond
Leanne Sandrick – Forest Ave, Ham'd
Janet Venecz -Hammond
John/Laurie Czulno – Forest Ave, Ham'd
Rich Kumericich - Munster
Irene Behling – Baring Ave, Munster
David Nellans – Munster Councilman
Karen Lorenz – Southmoor, Hmd.
Kim Poland – Hammond Councilwoman
Mike Echterling – Lake Co. Fish & Game
Liz Howard - Munster
Bridget Bodefeld – Crestwood, Munster
George Janiec
Allen Blocker – Munster
H. Cleland – Dyer
Bill Kovanico – Jackson St.
Bob Paulsen - Munster
Elaine Fay – River Drive, Munster

Visitors (Cont'd)

Rick Bryant – Forest Ave, Hammond

Larry Blue – Hammond

M. Campagna – Munster

Arnold Schmidt – Hammond

Barb Hargrove – Hammond

T. Ahearn – Forest Ave., Hammond

Chairman's Report – Chairman Dernulc welcomed Colonel Vincent Quarles of the Army Corps.

- Chairman Dernulc referred to the rain event last week. The Colonel, as well as some of the Corps engineers, was on site during the event to make sure everything was working as it was intended to work. The ongoing emergency plan that the Commission is developing did work. Everyone took an active role in monitoring the river. Chairman Dernulc asked Mr. Repay to extend his thanks to Bill Timmer, Chief of the Highland Fire Dept., who did a great job coordinating out in the field during the event.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Repay reported he met this morning with some of the communities regarding O&M of the rain event. They discussed what went right; what went wrong; what can be done better the next time. Overall, the emergency plan worked very well. We will soon be posting something on the web site. The Army Corps is also doing a review on how well the plan worked.

- Mr. Repay and Commissioner Baker attended a Chase Street closure demonstration that went very well. Also involved in the demonstration was Hasse Construction, INDOT personnel, and city of Gary personnel. The main concern is keeping the area clean so the panels can be easily installed. Mr. Repay, as well as Chairman Dernulc, attended the demo on the railroad closure. There are some existing problems here that still require some work.

- A final walk thru on Stage V-2 (Kennedy to Northcote, both sides of the river) was held. A punch list of items needing attention is being put together by the Corps and will be available to the Commission soon.

- Monitors have been installed and are working except for Calumet Avenue and Hart Ditch in Dyer. Calumet Avenue should be in this week.

- Chairman Dernulc asked for a motion to add an item to the agenda regarding Forest Avenue. Ron McAhron made a motion to that effect; motion seconded by Anthony Broadnax; motion passed with a 5-0 roll call vote. Mr. Repay stated that he has been in discussion with Dr. Unger of the Hammond Sanitary District and Stan Dostatni, Hammond City Engineer, and has received initial approval to bid out a contract for the rehabilitation of the Forest Avenue levee. We have the Army Corps inspection report of the existing levee to work from. Eventually, approval would be needed to set up a work scope to address the cost involved. HSD would be bidding out a contract and we would be reimbursing them. A motion was then made by Bill Baker to give approval for the attorney to work with HSD attorney, Joe Allegretti, to develop an agreement for Forest Ave. work; motion seconded by Tom Wichlinski; motion passed by a 5-0 roll call vote. Commissioner Baker added that HSD has an engineer they already work with that will develop a plan. It will come back to us for our review. We need to spell out what we are paying for in the agreement.

Colonel Quarles addressed the floor. He thanked the Commission for the opportunity to meet tonight and introduced Roy Deda, Imad Samara, and other members of his team. He visited the area and checked the river during this last heavy rainfall to make sure his people were there; many other residents were there also.

Col. Quarles stated he visited the construction sites to see exactly where the contractors stood with the uncompleted sections of levee. He was the colonel in the flood event in September 2008. He went on to say that they learned lessons from that event. At that time, Stage V-2 was not completed and Stages VII and VIII not yet started. At this point, he reported that V-2 lines of protection have been completed. A punch list is being developed and those items will be corrected before turnover. Stage VII is about 60-70% complete. Contractor will have lines of protection completed by the end of December 2010. Stage VIII is between 40-50% complete up to the railroad. He added that they are now challenged to get this section completed by the end of the year. Some days have been lost due to weather and strike, but they are aggressively working with the contractor to see where this time can be made up to have it completed by the end of this year.

He referred to a map showing how a State Line tieback plan would be put into place.

Army Corps Status Report:

- SV-2 – Roberto Peredes from the Army Corps informed the Board members that the final inspection was held on July 28. A punch list of items has been sent to the contractor; the Commission will also receive the list; Corps is developing punch list for the railroad area.
- SVII – Stage is about 70% complete. About 80% of concrete floodwall is in place. Target date is still by end of year.
- SVIII – Construction is about 40-50% complete; currently negotiating an accelerated schedule with contractor so lines of protection can be completed by end of year.

Action Required – Chairman Dan Dernulc presented items for action.

- He referred for the claims for August to be approved in the amount of \$54,558.84. Commissioner McAhron made a motion to approve the claims; motion seconded by Bill Baker; motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0.

- Mr. McAhron then made a motion to approve the O&M claims in the total amount of \$5,098.32; motion seconded by Bill Baker; motion passed with a roll call vote of 5-0.

Commissioner Broadnax stated that he was going to try to contact the city of Gary to discuss O&M with them. Mr. Repay added that at the time of inspections, Gary levees were not mowed so we went ahead and mowed them. Commissioner Baker asked if Austgen gives us a repair bid when they find something that is wrong with the pump stations when they do their inspection. Mr. Repay stated they flag a pump station needing a repair and list out what that repair is and will give a bid if they are asked to repair it.

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

Land Acquisition/Land Management – William Baker informed the Board members that he has sent a draft RFP to Mr. Repay for review for putting out a request for proposals to local billboard companies to see if there is a potential funding source for new billboards. He is looking at alternate funding sources for lands that the Commission owns; he is going to see about consolidating some of the individual properties the Commission owns for easier marketing.

Operation & Maintenance – Mr. Repay thanked the communities and CERES for helping out during the last flood event. There was a debris situation at Calumet Avenue that CERES helped clear out. Highland was also clearing some areas of debris to allow the water to flow easier during the rain. All this really helped the entire system to work smoothly. Chairman Dernulc thanked John Bach from the town of Highland for his help.

- Commissioner Wichlinski inquired whether or not we ever received a response from the city of Gary regarding a letter we sent them asking them to vacate Chase Street. He feels that is where a real pinch point is in the flow of the river. After Mr. Repay saying we did not get a response, Chairman Dernulc asked him to resend another letter. Commissioner McAhrn brought up the fact that officially vacating Chase Street would probably be a problem for the city. INDOT has installed the semi-permanent closure structure (that could be removed if necessary). We have an agreement with Gary that the structure can stay in place and the Corps has agreed to that.

Other Issues/New Business – Ron McAhrn stated that misinformation was given out about the “endangered bat” issue. That appears to not be a problem for construction.

Statements from the Floor -

- Tula Kavadias from Munster expressed concern that sandbagging was not done properly during the last flood event. Col. Quarles stated he would look at the photos she has and address it with his team.

- Paul Taylor from Forest Ave. in Hammond inquired about the end time line. Mr. Repay answered that he has passed out an information letter to homeowners in the vicinity. We will be working with Hammond Sanitary District to get an agreement with them as soon as we can. HSD will bid it out; no date certain but we will move quickly. Ultimately, a permanent easement will be need from those property owners adjacent to the river.

- Paul Daniels from Munster wanted to see the process started for certification that will be necessary for FEMA to officially make any changes in flood insurance requirements. Commissioner McAhrn stated it is a process that takes about a year; the Commission cannot certify; only the Army Corps can do that.

- John Zolnar from Forest Ave. in Hammond asked about the status of meeting with the Mayor in Hammond. Mr. Repay stated he met with Stan Dostatni, Hammond city engineer and president of the HSD, and he is on board with plans for Forest Avenue. Mayor McDermott is also agreeable. Ron McAhrn added that a lot of growth needs to be removed from the existing levee. Once the agreement is in place with HSD, the engineering firm will work quickly to determine an elevation of the levee and what exactly needs to be done to correct the situation. He added that the levee has withstood several flood events so there is not an immediate concern of failure. Hammond has committed to flood fight in this area if necessary. We are hoping repairs can be done this fall.

- Laura Czulno from Hammond thanked Mr. Repay for walking the neighborhood and expressed the need to set a date for a neighborhood meeting; they will set a date after the meeting tonight. Mrs. Czulno expressed her concern that nothing has been done up to this point. Mr. McAhrn explained the situation as it stands and reiterated that we are hopeful to begin this fall.

- Peter Yakanich from Forest Ave. in Hammond inquired what the plan was for State line. Mr. Repay discussed the plan for Stateline, using blocks and sandbags, in a flood event.

- Paul Dombrowski from Forest Ave. in Hammond expressed his concern about maintenance of the flap gate near his house. He experienced flooding on his property and lost a guest house and mechanical devices; concerned about the delay.
- Karla Hunt from Munster expressed concern about having the minimal protection of sandbags. Commissioner McAhron and Colonel Quarles assured her that safety standards are built in for risk reduction. The flood of September 2008 was a flood of record; but with all the pieces that are in place right now, Mr. Repay stated that Hammond and Munster were at the level they needed to be at to flood fight.
- Barb Hargrove from Hammond was given an explanation of where the blocks and sandbags would be placed down state line. It would be temporary during a flood event only. We will continue to be in discussions with Illinois. Ron McAhron added that our biggest hurdle is finding money to run this system once it is completed. A maintenance fee may be the only answer. Nothing has been decided at this point.
- Allen Blocker from Munster expressed concern about the project stopping at Madison and not enough dollars to complete the project. Imad Samara stated it is the Corps process to determine whether it is a floodwall or a levee and that is based upon how much land is available. Their first choice would be to build an earthen levee, but if land is restrained, it would have to be a floodwall. No compromise in flooding with either one. Stage VIII is being given the same consideration as Stage VII and V-2.
- Rick Bryant from Forest Ave. in Hammond stated that the river was just a couple of inches from going over on Forest during the Sept. 08 flood event; and he wanted to know how are we safer today. Mr. McAhron answered that the diverter structure at Hart Ditch is in place that will send water back east now. Also, we now recognize our flood fighting ability and we will provide flood fighting along Stateline which was not in place in 08. Colonel Quarles added there are more lines of protection in place now.
- Bonnie Vavrek from State line in Hammond wanted to know where the blocks would be stored. Mr. Repay answered they would be practicing and demonstrating their ability to put the line of protection in within six hours. There are several sites being considered for storage. A discussion was held on how the blocks would be put in.
- John Mulesa from Munster expressed concern about the number of sandbags and their availability. Mr. Repay said this would be addressed in the O&M plan.
- John Beckman from Lake County Fish & Game thanked the Corps for allowing Lynne Whelan to work with them on watershed management and looking at upland storage.
- Discussion was held on the culverts at Chase Street and how it was felt they restrict the water flow.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting was scheduled for the second Wednesday of the month, which will be Wednesday, September 8 at the Munster Town Hall at 6:00.