

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024
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 seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

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

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Linda Cook – Griffith
Richard Cook – Griffith
Thomas Burke – CBBEL
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC

Commissioners Absent:

Anthony Broadnax
Ron Ware

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the minutes from September 18, 2024, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to our October meeting. He stated that it has been 16 years since the events of 2008. He said that the Commission is tasked with the continued maintenance of a \$275 million man-made federal flood control project. He added that the yellowing pictures that are shown at every meeting are a true reminder of why we are here and an example of what happens when you don't maintain a system that was designed to control mother nature. If we get 10 gallons of water for our 5-gallon bucket, we are going to have some issues. But we are far better prepared today than we were before the flood of 2008. He added that this is a true economic development project by getting the levee completed and having it certified every year. There are at least 4,000 properties that no longer have to pay mandatory flood insurance. This saves about \$4 million dollars every year that goes back into the

community. We have a continued collaboration with all the communities within the watershed to make sure the events of 2008 are something only history knows about.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the October 2024 claims in the amount of \$374,916.37. Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with a claim in the amount of \$74,400.00 from Superior Engineering for the Pump Station upgrades. The PLC's are ready to be installed, our contractor Great Lakes Electrical Maintenance will be handling that this week. We are also in the process of getting SIM cards from AT&T so that text notifications will be sent out when needed. \$63,750.00 was paid to Wiltjer Excavating for clearing blockages from Colfax to the railroad tracks. We plan to utilize a burn box to take care of the debris. As part of our agreement with the Town of Griffith, we reimbursed them \$50,000.00 for annual maintenance of the Cady Marsh Ditch. Day's Construction submitted a claim in the amount of \$37,901.60 for sealant and crack filling along the Burr Segment of the levee. Finally, two claims totaling \$22,850.00 were paid to VVP Enterprises for clearing along the levee wall. The contractor used the USACE inspection reports as a checklist and went from the state line to Cline Avenue and cleared the encroachments.

Chairman Baker asked for an explanation of the claim in the amount of \$2,550.00 from Stantec Consulting Services for the Native Prairie at Deep River. Mr. Repay stated that this payment completes the 5-year contract with them to maintain the 4-acre butterfly mitigation site that was built alongside the Deep River Rock Riffle in Lake Station. The Commission can choose to extend the contract if necessary.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Executive Director's Report –

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

- We are going through a checklist of deficiencies from the last USACE inspection report and are repairing them.
- We are working with Krooswyk Trucking & Excavating to place large boulders in several areas around the levee as we have seen an increase in people either driving through barriers or severely damaging gates.
- Bids for cleaning and videoing culverts for the Gary North, Gary South and INDOT segments will be advertised later this week with bid opening at the November Meeting.
- Work on the Levee Sealcoating Project has been completed for the Hammond and Highland segments. The Gary segment began on Monday and should be completed by the end of the week. Under a separate agreement, the Burr Street segment is ongoing and should be completed soon.
- This winter, in cooperation with the Lake County Surveyor's Office, we plan on clearing Cady Marsh Ditch from Cline Avenue to Grant Street. Last year we cleared the ditch from Hart Ditch to Cline Avenue.

- The last portion of Harts Ditch was cleared of all leaning and dying trees from Main Street to the entrance of the Twin Creek Subdivision. We typically clear Hart Ditch every 4-5 years.
- The flood control portion of the Sauerman Woods Project, which was started almost two years ago, is almost complete. There is one final segment of culvert to be placed prior to completion.
- We recently completed annual maintenance on our security cameras placed throughout the system. The cameras and hardware have been in operation for over 6 years and some of the hardware is needing replacement or upgrade. We are working with our contractor to determine what is needed for the system.
- The 3 parking lots for the Hobart Mitigation Project have been paved and striped.
- We are currently negotiating a contract with our engineers to update the design plans for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge. We hope to have the proposal on the agenda for approval before the end of the year.
- We've had lengthy discussions with the USACE regarding 408 permits. We have several outstanding requests with them. Two projects, stabilizing the toe of the levee and changing the closure structure in Highland and Hammond near the Visitors Center are nearly complete. The last one, Kennedy Avenue Sandbar, has a more complicated approval process that we are still working through with the USACE.

Commissioner Whittaker asked for status on the Cady Marsh Screen Raker. Mr. Repay stated that the project is complete and passed inspection. We paid the final amount to the Town of Griffith for the project management this month and it is complete.

Commissioner Whittaker also asked for status of the issue with the USACE regarding soil borings. Mr. Repay said that this issue was part of the 408 discussions. He noted that the USACE is requiring the Commission to have multiple engineers on site for 82 of the borings that are scheduled. This could potentially add half a million dollars to the cost of the project. Mr. Repay added that we continue to negotiate with the USACE on this issue.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked if the project to clear Cady Marsh Ditch would include any plans to eliminate the phragmites. Mr. Repay stated that right now the plan is just to get the leaning and dying trees out of the way so that they do not block the flow of the water. He added that residents will be notified by the County that our contractor will be working in the ditch.

Other Issues/New Business –

No New Business

Statements to the Board –

No Statements to the Board

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Castellanos thanked Dan for reaching out to minority companies to participate in the projects we are doing. He had a chance to see the job that Day's Construction & Asphalt recently completed and said they did an excellent job. He complimented Dan for assisting a caller with resources and information regarding flooding on her property during the recent WLTH AM 1370 radio show. He reminded everyone to vote and added that we have a diverse board and may disagree at times, but we all work together.

Commissioner Ochi thanked all for attending the meeting. He further added that information conveyed at our meetings is presented for the purpose of transparency and information. It has never been the intent to transmit project information that is incorrect or misleading. The Commissioners are here to be objective in their mission and comments and review of materials are based on logic, integrity, and ethical professional best practices and hopes that residents, stakeholders, partners and advocacy groups are void of any political agendas and share the same mission.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked the public for continuing to attend our meetings.

Commissioner Wichlinski thanked everyone for attending the meeting and looked forward to holding meetings in our new space in the near future.

Commissioner Whittaker thanked all for attending the meeting and looks forward to continuing to work within the community and to continue to get the community input.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 20, 2024.