

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 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 eight (8) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

William Baker, Chairman
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Dave Castellanos
Robert Ochi
Derek Nimetz
Anthony Broadnax
Ron Ware

Commissioners Absent:

Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborsky – Gary
Laurie Czulno – Hammond
Vicki Williams – Munster
Michael Novotney – Wessler Engineering
Carolyn McCrady – Gary
Doreen Carey – Gary
Paul Botts – The Wetlands Initiative
Daniel Suarez – Audubon Great Lakes
Hodge Patel – Abonmarche
Thomas Burke – CBBEL (via zoom)
Sivash Beik – CBBEL (via Zoom)
Jeff Huet – Town of Schererville (via zoom)
Robert Fulton – City of Hobart
Mark Gordish – City of Hammond
John Reed - Munster

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to approve the minutes from August 21, 2024, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to the 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 September 2024 claims in the amount of \$577,537.34. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with two reimbursements to the Town of Merrillville for completed watershed projects including \$81,000.00 for the engineering and design of the Hickory Ridge Flood Control Improvements Project and \$23,425.00 on the Hayes Farm Drainage Improvements Project. \$73,435.00 was paid to American Trust Insurance Services for the annual renewal of our liability insurance. Encap Incorporated submitted a claim in the amount of \$14,700.00 for continued maintenance of the Chase Street and Black Oak Mitigation sites. C&H Mowing completed the 4th mowing of the season and was paid \$27,500.00. We may need one additional mowing this year. DLZ Engineering submitted a claim in the amount of \$22,109.00 for continued work on access crossings for Wolverine Pipeline between Chase Street and Clark Road. Finally, HWC Engineering was paid \$10,412.00 for continued work on bank stabilization engineering.

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:

- The PLC replacements at Burr North and Grant East and West are expected to be delivered this week. Our contractor will then begin installation, starting with the Burr North Pump Station.
- NIPSCO has hung the transformer and connected power to the meter the Natural Spring. We received the green tag from the City of Gary and are now able to move forward with the lights and security cameras at the location.
- We are working to update the plans for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge. Since the bridge was initially designed, INDOT and bridge standards have changed, so the plans will need to be reworked to meet current standards.
- Our contractors recently finished up some clearing of dead and leaning trees throughout the system. In the last month we cleared the Little Calumet River from Colfax to the railroad tracks to the west. Clearing was also done on Hart Ditch from Main Street to the north.
- Christopher Burke Engineering is preparing a report of its findings from the Deep River/Turkey Creek Report and ranking them by opportunity. For example, they will be outlining the location of undersized culverts that contribute to the flow being restricted. Most of these culverts are under former railroad crossings that are now bike trails.
- We have met with and exchanged emails with several USACE officials regarding the outstanding issues on the Kennedy Avenue Sandbar permit. USACE gave us a list of items to complete, but at this time we do not yet have the permit to complete the project.

- I met with the City of Hobart about several projects and ideas. The City would like to pursue the redesign of Lake George Dam. This would be the third project that helps the flow within Deep River.
- The Lake County Conservation Collaborative is on the agenda to discuss the Marshalltown Marsh Design Plan. The design is currently 60% complete.

Presentation –

Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative - Marshalltown Marsh Design Plan. Paul Botts, The Nature Conservancy and Daniel Suarez Presenting.

Video: https://youtu.be/uJwm_GedQxU?si=SgM7GIZI2fSsy6BK

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-13 to authorize the disposal of obsolete surplus property consisting of 14 metal file cabinets, 2 bookcases and 10 office chairs in accordance with Indiana State Statute IC 22-22-1, subject to final draft and approval by attorney Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay stated that we have had interns scanning and digitizing Commission documents and records for the past few years. The scanning project is nearly complete, and the filing cabinets are no longer needed. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0-1 (Commissioner Whittaker abstained).

Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-14 and an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Crown Point for the Edgewater Flooding Mitigation Watershed Project in the amount of \$40,000.00. Subject to final draft and approve by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that this is for the design of a new culvert that will allow for better movement of water for 33 homes and 4 roadways in the Edgewater subdivision. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Commissioner Ochi made a motion to deny the City of Hobart's Watershed application for the construction of the Stinky Creek Diversion and Regional Stormwater Project; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Mr. Repay stated that this application has been around for a while. After putting the project into the Burke Engineering model, it was determined that for the cost of \$9 million dollars, it didn't drain as much as it needed to and was not effective enough to justify the cost. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Statements to the Board –

Doreen Carey a resident of the City of Gary expressed her disappointment that the Commission accepted another lease payment from Maya Energy to build a municipal solid waste processing facility on Commission owned property. She stated that there is opposition to the project from the City of Gary, the Gary Common Council, Gary

residents and local organizations such as the Gary Advocates for Responsible Development. She added that the lease of property for this purpose does not meet the statutory requirements that apply to the Commission and hopes the board will reconsider their position.

Carolyn McCrady, a resident of the City of Gary, spoke in opposition to Maya Energy. She stated that Maya Energy came to the City of Gary and said they wanted to start a recycling facility that morphed into something completely different that would have garbage truck coming down 35th Street 6 days a week. 35th Street would not be able to handle the additional traffic. She further added that several months ago contractors for Maya Energy were attempting to construct a driveway off 35th Street without the proper permits from the city. Additionally, she stated that there is nothing in the statute that says the LCRBDC can offer land for a garbage processing facility.

Laurie Czulno, a resident of the City of Hammond, offered her congratulation to the Commission for closing out the project with the USACE. She thanked the Commission for continuing to work hard on crediting and actually getting a refund from the federal government. She also questioned a large No Trespassing sign that has been placed adjacent to the Levee in her neighborhood. Several neighbors have expressed disappointment that they can no longer use the levee for recreation and wondered if there was anything that could be done about it. Lastly, she stated that she just paid for her supplemental flood insurance and noted that less and less people are opting to buy the supplement insurance. She encouraged anybody who lives close to the river to purchase flood insurance.

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Castellanos thanked Doreen Carey and Carolyn McCrady for coming forward and expressing their opinions on Maya Energy. He stated that he agrees with them, but the Commission is hung up by the law. He complimented the Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative on their presentation, saying the project is good for the City of Gary. He further reminded everyone of the Commission's radio program on WLTH AM 1370 which is held on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Commissioner Ochi thanked the Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative for their presentation and looks forward to receiving the completed plans for the Marshalltown Marsh.

Commissioner Broadnax thanked the public for their comments.

Commissioner Godecki thanked the public for attending our meetings and offering their comments. He stated that we are all here to best serve the interests of the entire watershed. It isn't always easy, but he is proud of the efforts of the Board and the community for their passion.

Commissioner Whittaker thanked the public for continuing to attend our meetings and offering their comments. He added that the Commission has had an eventful year and the charge that this board has is to set policy. He stated that we do a good job in

operation and maintenance, and everyone has the desire to do the best that they can.

Commissioner Ware thanked the Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative for their outstanding presentation and thanked the public for attending our meeting.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

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