

**MINUTES OF THE
MERRILLVILLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019**

President L.J. “Bud” Crist called the October 1, 2019, Merrillville Stormwater Management Board (SWMB) meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was said. The other members in attendance were Barbara Ghoston and Ralph Simek. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Staff members present were Executive Director Matt Lake, Financial Advisor Karl Cender, Attorney James Meyer and staff secretary Liz Bushemi. Others present were Councilman Richard Hardaway, Councilwoman Chrissy Barron, Darren Olson from Christopher Burke Engineering and residents Bob Cotton and Linda Neidlinger.

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Crist welcomed Councilman Richard Hardaway and Councilwoman Chrissy Barron to the meeting. He said on Friday night, he was out at 10:30 pm at 54th Avenue and Lincoln and Buchanan Streets because storm sewers were plugged up.

MINUTES

Included in the agenda packet was a copy of the minutes from the August 6, 2019 SWMB meeting and the September 3, 2019 SWMB meeting. Ralph Simek made a motion to approve the minutes from both the SWMB meetings held on August 6, 2019 and September 3, 2019, and it was seconded by Barbara Ghoston. There were no questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTERS APPROVAL

Also included in the agenda packet were copies of the accounts payable registers from September 10 and September 24, 2019. Barbara Ghoston made a motion to accept the accounts payable registers from September 10 and September 24, 2019, and it was seconded by Ralph Simek. There were no questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

OLD BUSINESS

Matt said the Lakewood Estates project was completed by Delta III, Inc., and rip rap was added in select areas to stabilize the outlets. He said doing this project will address isolated drainage issues throughout the subdivision.

Matt said Darren Olson from Christopher Burke Engineering was present to give a presentation on the Meadowdale lateral study from north to south and Merrillville and Gary, which is part of the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission (LCRBDC) study. He showed pictures of the 2008 flood, and the Meadowdale project is coming directly from the 2014 Stormwater Master Plan, which is Merrillville’s highest priority in the master plan. He said the engineers’ estimated costs for the two (2) basins that will be created are: north (smaller) basin - \$845,000, and south (larger) basin: \$1,732,000. He said the next step would be looking at the headwaters which may benefit the Town of Merrillville. They have looked at three (3) alternatives: Flood storage in multiple locations in Unincorporated Lake County, headwater diversion and flood storage in headwaters. Matt suggested securing land that may be on tax sale in Gary or Unincorporated Calumet Township for storage. Councilman Richard Hardaway said the county has a printout of about 10,000 tax sale properties, and that Code Enforcement Officer Vickie Bunnell could go through the list to see if there is land that could be secured; Matt said he will also talk to Craig Zandstra with Lake County Parks because this area is part of the Lake County Parks Open Space Plan. Mr. Crist asked if wetland areas were used, if it would have to be mitigated, and Matt said yes, the wetlands would have to be delineated and impacts would be

mitigated based on permitting requirements. Resident Bob Cotton asked who would benefit from this in Merrillville, and Darren Olson said properties along Lateral 6. Mr. Olson said Merrillville schools granted an easement for the north basin, which will provide off-line storage for Lateral 6. The project is tentatively planned for two (2) phases – creating the north basin first, and then the south basin in order to save money while doing the project. Mrs. Ghoston asked about the need for multi-jurisdictional participation for the two (2) basins at the school, and Matt said Stormwater will go back to the LCRBDC for a cost-share on construction of the project. Matt said if other properties are secured, they could also approach the LCRBDC for cost-shares on those projects.

Matt said he attended the Indiana Assn. for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (INAFSM) conference in September in Fort Wayne, and there were some progressive LED and green infrastructure seminars.

NEW BUSINESS

Included in the members' packets was a copy of an invoice from Delta III, Inc. for pipe removal and replacement on the C&O bike trail in the amount of \$7,450.00. Matt said this project was located at the bike trail west of Stefek Park and Innsbrook Subdivision. Bruce requested that it be done back in April as an emergency. Barbara Ghoston made a motion to approve payment of the Delta III, Inc. invoice the amount of \$7,450.00, and it was seconded by Ralph Simek. There were no questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Financial advisor Karl Cender said he is working on the list of stormwater fees for Merrillville parcels for submission to Lake County; he expects it to be done by the end of October.

Ralph Simek suggested having another Utilitree sign for the tree area at the northeast corner of the Stormwater property closest to Broadway.

Attorney Jim Meyer said there is no legal ban for the Town of Merrillville to own property of another municipality.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilman Richard Hardaway said the 54th Court rain garden parcel is on tax sale and asked that it be looked into; Karl Cender will address it.

Mr. Hardaway also asked for assistance with Gary Sanitary District (GSD) issues because several residents in the GSD area are having continued problems after rain events. He'd like to know what the SWMB can do as a Board, and also what the town can do. Matt said he will request a meeting with GSD, Merrillville Conservancy District (MCD), the Independence Hill Conservancy District (IHCD) and the town's attorney, Joe Svetanoff. At the last rain event, several residents had issues near 56th and Grant Street, and he suggested use of backwater valves. Matt said the Independence Hill Conservancy District (IHCD) has a program where they inspect the home and provide backwater valves at no charge to their customers; he said backwater valves would be a temporary fix for GSD residents until they fix their service area. Matt said it would be good to have all three (3) sanitary/conservancy districts at the meeting – GSD, MCD and IHCD. Councilman Mr. Hardaway said he is amenable to whatever Matt can arrange; in the

meantime, Mr. Hardaway said he will get together with residents west of Harrison Street and north of 54th Avenue. Attorney Jim Meyer said this issue became an issue before the town became a town, and there is no easy fix.

Councilwoman Chrissy Barron thanked Bud Crist, Matt Lake and the Lake County Surveyor for all their help with the Taft Street project. She said at the last several heavy rain events, Taft Street did not flood, and Independence Hill residents did much better with little ponding and no flooding. She said the Taft Street project has been a great success story. She also said the state mowed the ditch on Taft Street.

Matt said Dyer Construction will be installing the box culvert on Taft Street next week. He said he will check with the contractor and CBBEL about modifying the south Taft Street basin behind the Dairy Queen so we can direct more flow into the basin and store more stormwater in the upper watershed.

Mr. Cotton said some residents at the “finger area” of Bon Aire Lake and the area on the southwest side of the lake are very shallow, and Lake & Pond Biologists could not get the boat in the water. Matt said he may have underwater topography done by Butler, Fairman & Seufert to get more data on Bon Aire Lake. Mr. Cotton said after the September 27 rain event, no resident got flooded.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Crist said the next SWRC meeting is set for Wednesday, November 6, 2019, at 4:30 pm at the Stormwater Resource Center since Tuesday, November 5th, is Election Day.)

Ralph Simek made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Barbara Ghoston. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Bushemi
Staff Secretary