

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
HELD THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2016 AT
9:30 AM CDT
KANKAKEE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA HEADQUARTERS
4320 W. TOTO ROAD
NORTH JUDSON, IN 46366**

Chairman Chris Knochel called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Substitute Secretary Jim Kreiger called the roll.

Members present

Kevin Breitzke	Bill Crase	Larry Fisher
Mark Kingma	Chris Knochel	Jim Kreiger
Brad Lawrence	Tom Larson	John Law
Don Lode	Kim Peterson	Ken Porter
Russ Pumroy	Ken Purze	Gerry Scheub
Vince Urbano	James Walstra	

Guests Present

Mike Aylesworth	Siavash Beik	Kathe Brunnick
Les Burton	Jim Carter	Linda Cosgrove
Eric Courtright	Steve Engleking	Matthew Linn
Rick Niemeyer	Harvey Nix	Jared Obrien
Randy Peterson	Dan Plath	Derek Schmitt
Joe Skelton	Prue Tokarz	Joe Toth
Mark Wunderink	David Zack	

Staff Present

Jody Melton

Chairman Chris Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

Approval of Minutes

Ken Purze made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2016 meeting. Gerry Scheub seconded and the minutes were approved.

Finance Report

The finance report was presented on two pages. Page one is an accounting of work funds dedicated to river work per county; page two is administrative expenses. Ken Purze made a motion to accept the finance report. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the report was accepted. Jody Melton told the Board he would be appearing before the State Budget Committee in July to ask for release of the last \$395,000 from 2011.

Old Business

Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor, said the Crooked Creek project is complete. The Heimberg project was due to be bid and then he realized the permits had expired. He has applied for extensions for the existing permit.

Don Lode asked if the KRBC would be interested in setting up an information booth at the LaPorte County Fair. The cost is \$100 for a booth. Ken Purze made a motion to have the KRBC rent space and post our banner in that spot. Gerry Scheub seconded. Ken Purze will work with Don Lode to get the banner up. Jody Melton asked for permission to create a new banner since the old one is getting worn. The motion was approved unanimously. The LaPorte County Fair runs from July 10th to the 16th. Don also provided a flyer advertising the Environmental Conference at Michigan City sponsored by the Sanitary District on June 3. Jody will scan the pamphlet and send to the mailing list.

Shady Shores and the culverts was a subject of a meeting with the Lake County Commissioners, Highway Department and Surveyor's Office along with Jody Melton from the KRBC. We are looking to a cheaper alternative to handle the bayou flooding and a plan is being put into place to replace the part time pumps with an overflow pipe to the Niemeyer ditch.

Chris Knochel said Newton County and Abonmarche Engineering are studying the embankment from I 65 to the 3 I railroad to determine how the bank can be repaired. Wetland mitigation is required and the landowners are also going to be involved.

Russ Pumroy said there is approximately 120 acres near Rivers Edge for sale. It would be a good addition to the farm the KRBC owns and would probably lend itself to wetland creation. Ken Purze made a motion to have the Executive Board look at the property, Russ Pumroy seconded and the motion was approved. They will report at the next meeting.

The KRBC again discussed the widening of I 65 and the need to get a road under it on the south side of the river. Jody Melton said he had been assured by INDOT on several occasions that they will get the road underneath when the bridges are adapted for 3 lane traffic. Rep. Mike Aylesworth has also carried that message to INDOT in Indianapolis

Vince Urbano told the members that a citizen of Jasper County was cutting riverbank supposedly to put in a boat ramp. Vince sent a stop order but hasn't checked it out again.

Vince is also looking for funds to stabilize riverbank destroyed by tornadic winds and uprooted trees. This is a problem in every county along the Kankakee. Sloping the bank back creates wetland fill problems. There is going to have to be a long range solution created for this problem. CBBEL and Bob Barr are talking to the Silver Jackets, IDNR, and IDEM. They have met with State Farm Bureau about permitting issues and possible long range work. So far the meetings have been positive.

Siavash Beik spoke of the progress on the Yellow River work being undertaken. They are still collecting some data and are having meetings with regulatory agencies to explain the concepts they are creating. There have been some meetings with Notre Dame professionals who are modeling and working on two stage ditches.

Members of the KRBC expressed their desire to see work taking place sooner and with some thought as to the crises emerging. They want some action. Growth in the Basin has put the Kankakee River in critical position.

Chris Knochel suggested that Dr. Jennifer Tank of Notre Dame be invited to the KRBC to make a presentation concerning Notre Dame's work especially the two stage ditch process. Jody Melton will make connections with her.

There was a meeting held in Kankakee City Hall convened by Rick Bryant, staff person for Congresswoman Robin Kelly of Illinois to discuss the Kankakee as a two state project. Several people attended the meeting and the outcome of that meeting was a decision to seek federal funding for sediment gages in Indiana and Illinois to provide data for how to best control the sand. Congressman Peter Visclosky of Indiana will be asked to help. There are discussions in Illinois about sand removal as well but nothing concrete has been planned.

New Business

Gerry Scheub told the members that Lake County opposed the establishment of a Great Lake Basin Railroad that is envisioned to be built from Wisconsin to Michigan by circling around the Chicago metropolitan area running south of Lowell to north of Hebron to LaPorte County and beyond. The traffic, the road crossing, the dangers of cargo make the development of a rail line unacceptable. Kevin Breitzke said that Porter County was taking the same stance. Sen. Rick Niemeyer and Rep. Mike Aylesworth commented on the fact that this railroad plan was not presented to any local or state officials before it was announced that the Federal Surface Transportation Board was going to hold hearings. Ken Purze from LaPorte County said that there is some favorable sentiment in LaPorte County and officials there are waiting for the Federal officials to complete their initial hearings before taking any position. After a great deal of discussion, Ken Purze made a motion to table this matter until further information can be gathered to allow the KRBC to make a recommendation. Russ Pumroy seconded. Gerry Scheub said the comment period ends on June 15. 9 votes were in favor of the motion, 6 votes were against. The motion was tabled.

Because of the public comment deadline, a motion by Gerry Scheub seconded by Mark Kingma authorized Jody Melton to write a letter to the Federal Surface Transportation Board expressing the concern of the KRBC about environmental impacts to the waters of the Kankakee River and the Basin.

Jody Melton and Chris Knochel told each of the members that the time is closing in on identifying projects to seek support for funding from the Indiana General Assembly in the upcoming session. Jody will be collecting information from each county.

The next KRBC meeting will be held on July 14, 2016 at 9:30 am.
The meeting was adjourned.