

**MINUTES OF THE  
MERRILLVILLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2015**

President Leonard White called the April 7, 2015 Merrillville Stormwater Management Board (SWMB) meeting to order at 4:37 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was said. The other members in attendance were Ralph Simek and Barbara Ghoston; a roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Staff present was Executive Director Matt Lake, Attorney James Meyer, financial advisor Karl Cender from Cender & Company and secretary Liz Bushemi. Others present were Bud Crist, Ron Wiedeman from Robinson Engineering and Dolores Flaska.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Mr. White said he hoped everyone had a good Easter weekend.

**MINUTES**

Included in the agenda packet was a copy of the minutes from the March 3, 2015 SWMB meeting. Leonard White made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2015 SWMB meeting, and it was seconded by Ralph Simek. A voice vote was taken, and all three members voted to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2015 meeting, 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 March 10, 2015 and March 24, 2015. Leonard White made a motion to approve the accounts payable registers from March 10 and March 24, 2015, and it was seconded by Ralph Simek. A voice vote was taken, and all three members voted to approve the accounts payable registers from March 10 and March 24, 2015, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Matt further discussed the MS4 agreement with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) for 2015. The members had received an email copy of the response from Kathy Luther from NIRPC. Ralph Simek said he would like to speak with her directly, and Matt said he would invite her to the May 6, 2015 SWMB meeting. Lis reminded everyone that if the fees were paid by May 5, the cost would be \$4,174; after that, the amount is \$4,374. Ralph Simek made a motion to table the agreement with NIRPC, and it was seconded by Leonard White. A roll call vote was taken, and all three members voted to table the NIRPC agreement until May, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

Regarding the 53<sup>rd</sup> Court lift station, Matt met with Carrie Pintar from Robinson Engineering; Carrie had talked to the former town engineer. She saw no obstructions on the ditch on the Merrillville side. Robinson Engineering will set up plan documents to look at the 6" drain pipe to upsize it into another basin and gravity the water instead of building a new lift station, which can be done less expensively. Other improvements may be done with wetland mitigation; Matt said Schererville may want to use the site for a road project, and Merrillville will monitor the site. Matt is hopeful this can be paid with TIF money. Robinson Engineering will have further information for the next meeting.

A meeting was held with residents of the Ross Meadow Farms area; Matt had a Christopher Burke Engineering document showing what manipulation of drainage had been done from 2002 aerial photos; he said the resident who owns the pond and created the original problem did not attend. They will be working on easement agreements and locates before they proceed with cost options. He said 20 acres of drainage flow through the area. There are no original plans for the subdivision at the Merrillville planning office and/or at Lake County. This is a long-standing problem that should have been addressed years ago. He said the area is so flat and cannot drain, and any obstruction would keep the area saturated that it needs to be done properly. He hopes the project can be done this fall and said it needs a proper fix. Barbara Ghoston asked what is an "earth disturbance permit", and Matt said it depends on the project – the amount, who submits it, what activities are taking place and what you are mitigating. Ralph Simek asked the cost, and Matt will have information at the next meeting; he is not sure what other town funding may be available. Now they are checking all as-builts once they are completed.

Regarding the Taft Street project, Matt said he met with the cemetery officials who wanted an open channel. After discussion, a box culvert was okayed by them. Attorney Jim Meyer is working on an easement for approval by town officials and the cemetery, and then Dyer Construction will resume the project. In return for the easement, Stormwater will waive the cemetery stormwater fees.

Matt said a Lake County Contractors' Workshop was held at the Lake County Fairgrounds on March 25<sup>th</sup>, where erosion control was addressed. Representatives of Indiana American Water were there, and they mentioned working with Merrillville on their water main breaks problem.

Matt said the town's annual rain barrel program is underway, and UpCycle Products will provide a weekly update on the number of rain barrels sold. This is the third year for the program. April 30<sup>th</sup> is the pickup date. Three Andean High School art students decorated the black Stormwater display rain barrel, and their theme is a man hugging a tree. The display rain barrel is on display in the reception area at the Stormwater office.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Matt has been reviewing plans and issuing permits for several projects in the town. There will be a new CVS at Broadway and U.S. 30, where they are stressing aesthetics because it is on the U.S. 30 corridor. He said Keough Mechanical plans to move to Harms Road, and Ashley Furniture will be moving to Mississippi Street at U.S. 30, where there will also be spots for two restaurants. Starbucks will be locating by Meijer at Merrillville Road, and they plan to have a rain garden. Other projects are also pending.

Matt said Mike Mahy is back doing jet vac and camera truck work, and some Public Works employees have been doing small drainage projects in the town.

An article was submitted for the town's spring newsletter which addressed Stormwater protection for homeowners and information on awards received by Stormwater and the rain barrel program.

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Matt said he received a call where trees were blocking the flow of Turkey Creek on Deerpath Road and Indian Trail in the Forest Hills subdivision. There were trees that fell onto NIPSCO power lines, and NIPSCO sent out Townsend Tree Service crews, who cut up the trees and left them in the creek, which is a violation of the Stormwater ordinance. A contractor was hired to remove the debris, and NIPSCO was billed for the service and sent a court citation because of the violation. It is an illicit discharge where they affected the Waters of the State. Matt called NIPSCO and was told that it is their forestry department's policy to cut up the trees and leave them where they were found. Matt said they put obstructions in the ditch and will be fined. He said Stormwater's goal is to be reimbursed for our contractor's costs and have them change their policy that they not block waterways.

Although spring and fall is a "hot time" for dumping, no violators have been reported for the joint project with Lake County Solid Waste.

Matt said Attorney Jim Meyer, Karl Cender and he are working on an agreement with the Town of Merrillville for Public Works employees to do small drainage projects in the town. Leonard White asked what projects would be taking place this year, and Matt said he and the Public Works street superintendent Kevin Markle meet periodically, and priority projects are based on safety. They have a list that is subject to change. He said having an agreement in place will help get the jobs done. Karl will coordinate with the town on Stormwater's financial responsibility and whether a memo is sufficient or a town ordinance will be required. The matter will be discussed at the next SWMB meeting.

Matt said town road projects were listed in the spring, 2015, newsletter, and some of them entail stormwater improvements and new catch basins.

Matt said Jan Orlich, the news parks director, will be taking care of Arbor Day this year at the Parks Department's Pruzin Center. Although a date has not yet been set, the Proclamation will be prepared for Town Council approval. The proclamation and hosting an Arbor Day event are two criteria needed in order for Merrillville to continue to be a Tree City USA.

Ralph asked about the trees on 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenue to the railroad tracks, and Matt said they are all located on private property, and the town has no control over them since homeowners must manage their own trees.

Matt said Ron Rex, the owner of the former Y&W Outdoor Theatre, wants to donate that property to the town. He said they may look at it being similar to forest preserve property managed by the parks department. Matt said it's important to have natural areas.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Matt said there are some online videos like "Stormwater 101" that he'd like members to watch, some of which Merrillville Stormwater is sponsoring. He said Liz will send the links to members. Ralph suggested that they be used for lunch and learns held at the Stormwater Resource Center.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT** - None.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. White said the next Stormwater meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2015, at 4:30 p.m. at the Stormwater Resource Center since Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, is the primary election. He encouraged everyone to vote.

Leonard White made a motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Ralph Simek. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Bushemi  
Staff Secretary