

City mulls issues with Little Black River watershed

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CHEBOYGAN — Representatives with the City of Cheboygan have met with several other entities to try to come up with solutions to resolve is-

ssues with the Little Black River watershed.

Cheboygan County Drain Commissioner Cameron Cavitt had recently addressed several issues regarding the watershed during his annual report to the Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners. In 1960, the City of Cheboygan

entered into an agreement with the federal government to maintain the dams, levees and culverts in this watershed through the department of public works. This includes the dredging of the mouth of the river.

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"I had a meeting with the Tip of the Mitt organization regarding the Little Black River," said Cheboygan City Manager Dan Sabolsky. "I think they're willing to help us in working on developing the structure and the finances for the county drainage commission."

The entire watershed project encompasses 17,130 acres — around 26.8 miles — and covers parts of Inverness and Beaugrand townships, and the City of Cheboygan.

There are no finances or resources available through the county to make improvements to the Little Black River Watershed. Also, with the agreement from 1960, it is the city's responsibility to take care of the ditches and dams, even out in the townships.

"Which is a huge financial burden," said Sabolsky. "So that's something that we need to look at. We do have a couple county commissioners that are interested in working with us on that, so that we can address some of those things as soon as possible."

Sabolsky said one of the dams along the Little Black River watershed needs around \$1 million in work done to it.

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council will be scheduling a meeting between Cheboygan County, the City of Cheboygan and several other entities who could assist with moving the improvements forward. This meeting should be scheduled before the end of the calendar year.

Anna Sangster, the city's community development fellow, had gone out to the river and watershed with Cavitt and several of the county commissioners, to walk along the river and see what is really happening out there.

"She took some pictures for me, because I could not attend," said Sabolsky.

Concerns along the watershed include dams clogged with trees and debris, as well as overgrown vegetation and the failing of some of the dam structures.

Also during his meeting with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Sabolsky discussed the city's fishing pier project.

The plans for the fishing pier have been approved, the bid documents have been put together and the project will be put out to bid in the near future. The bids will be due back sometime in the middle of December, then Sabolsky will come back to council with his recommendation as to which contractor to award the bid.

"Now, some of that work can be done in the winter and we may get lucky, because of the fact that we're going to have people pouring a lot of concrete right down the road here, for our wastewater treatment plant," said Sabolsky. "So, if they've got the plant running to make the concrete, mix that concrete, we may be able to get some across the river."

The city is also being proactive, requesting an extension of the grant funding, as there are concerns with meeting the deadlines for the project, due to the delay in getting the project out for bids.

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