

**MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON APRIL 7, 2011**

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair
Timothy Doody, Committee Member

ALSO PRESENT: George Losonsky, Commissioner
Thomas Jackson, Commissioner

The Operations Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (SLFPA-E or Authority) met on April 7, 2011 in the Second Floor Hall of the Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Mr. Wittie called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Opening Comments: None.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the February 3, 2011 Operations Committee meeting were approved.

Public Comments: None.

New Business:

A. Presentation on Bayou St John Water Management Phase 1 Study – BKI.

Gerry Gillen, Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) Executive Director, stated that representatives of Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. (BKI) would provide the presentation on the Bayou St. John Water Management Phase I Study. The Study was paid for with Louisiana Capital Outlay funding and the O.L.D.'s matching cost share.

Henry Picard with BKI advised that this is the first phase of a multi-phased study. The goal is to determine whether the introduction of marine life and species into Bayou St. John can be accomplished. The first phase of the study shows that there is a potential; however, a number of things must be done to enhance this potential.

David Boyd with BKI explained that a hydrologic and hydraulic model of Bayou St. John connecting to Lake Pontchartrain was done. The control structure at Robert E. Lee Boulevard, the sector gate and the bridges along the Bayou were included in the model. Flow rates through the existing sluice gates on the sector gate were determined based on different water surface elevations in the Lake and the Bayou. Currently, two 3-ft. diameter valves are periodically opened to allow flow into the Bayou from the Lake, as well as a 2-ft. sluice gate. The control structure at Robert E. Lee Boulevard has two 5-ft. valves and a 3-ft. valve; however, only one of the 5-ft. valves is operational. The control structure (waterfall) is an impediment to the introduction of marine life into the Bayou

south of Robert E. Lee Boulevard. Recommendations were developed using the flow rates through the sluice gates of the sector gate to introduce marine life into and south of the Bayou to Lafitte Street. It was found that the sluice gates do not work well for a number of reasons, which include the limited attractant flow for creatures to find and follow and the growth that occurs inside of the sluice gates. The following recommendations were provided:

1. Dredging the existing sand bar under the Lakeshore Drive Bridge. The sand bar blocks migration from the Lake to the mouth of the Bayou. The dredged material could be beneficially used elsewhere.
2. Removing the old control structure at Robert E. Lee Boulevard between the concrete embankments and leaving the levees where they currently stand parallel to the Bayou.
3. Pulsing water into the Bayou by partially opening the sector gate at a time when there is a high probability of marine life being present at the mouth of the Bayou.

Mr. Boyd advised that he spoke with Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries and LSU AgCenter representatives concerning the availability of matching funds to create a cooperative endeavor to accomplish the Phase I recommendations. The second phase of the study will address enhancing the environment for the marine life that is recruited into the Bayou, particularly between the sector gate and Robert E. Lee Boulevard in order to persuade the organisms to move farther south into the Bayou. The enhancements could include floating vegetative islands, reef balls, placing screens on the discharge structures into City Park, and looking at the topography of the banks of the Bayou to determine the potential of raising the safe water elevation within the Bayou and allowing the sector gate to remain open for a longer period of time. Cost estimates would be provided under Phase II of the Study.

Mr. Doody pointed out that the flow of water into the Bayou must be closely coordinated with the New Orleans Sewerage & Water Board. BKI representatives explained that the water level in the Bayou would be allowed to lower due to evaporation and pumping into City Park and the sector gate would be used to allow flow into the Bayou instead of the sluice gates. Therefore, there would not be much of a change in terms of water level in the Bayou. Mr. Doody noted that these efforts would be beyond the Authority's mandate of flood protection. Mr. Gillen advised that Phase II will address the question of jurisdiction.

BKI representatives explained that the recommended dredging would be to a depth of about six feet in order to allow fish and other species to pass over the sand bar and into the Bayou. Maintenance dredging may be required periodically. The goal is to maintain the current water level in the Bayou. A rainfall analysis was done looking at the entire basin using a ten year rain fall event. It was pointed out that the sector gate could not be left open permanently because flooding would occur. The operational management system would allow water to be pulsed in to maintain current water levels at key times during the spawning season and when other factors occur that would provide the best advantage of attracting fish. Opening the sector gate would allow the introduction of a full water column. The sector gate would be opened for a period of three to five hours in order to pulse water into the Bayou. An adaptive management process would be taken.

The opening of the sector gate for a duration of just a few hours and the velocities coming through the gates during that period of time would not lend to any type of navigation through the sector gate. The low elevations of the bridges that cross the Bayou are a further hindrance to navigation.

B. Discussion of Franklin Administration Building Refurbishment Scope of Work.

Mr. Gillen advised that Alton Davis with Richard C. Lambert Architecture, LLC (RCL) provided recommendations and cost estimates for the refurbishment of the Franklin Administration Building. The next step would be the issuance of a contract based on the State's Facility and Planning Control fee curb.

Mr. Davis provided a copy of a scope of work for the refurbishment. The work can be divided into three parts:

1. New air conditioning and lighting for the Franklin Office Building (approximately 10,000 sq. ft.). The new chiller that was put in place for the safe house build out will be tied into new DX systems on the roof, new VAV boxes and new air conditioning system. The old ceilings will be removed to replace the lighting and duct work. New finishes will include new ceilings, paint and carpet. Bathrooms will be updated to meet current ADA requirements. The lobby will be updated.
2. An enclosed public walkway designed to meet new codes will be constructed from the office building to the warehouse and will tie into the elevator for the safe house build out. The safe house build out will be used for public meetings. A channel will be provided on top of the walkway in order to run the chill water piping from the warehouse to the roof of the office building.
3. A small portion of the warehouse will be enclosed adjacent to the elevator so that the public will not be exposed to warehouse operations.

Mr. Davis advised that the estimated total cost of the work is \$1,140,000. The existing lighting is proposed to be replaced with LED lighting. Based on initial discussions a rebate of \$50,000 to \$100,000 may be available under the Smart Energy Program for making the building more energy efficient.

Mr. Losonsky asked how the project relates to the SLFPA-E's mission of flood protection. Mr. Turner explained that the districts must have a good, safe facility in which to conduct business, hold public meetings and effectively operate. Mr. Gillen added that the safe house build out will be used to hold Board meetings and other public meetings; therefore, safe public access to the build out is required. The public access corridor will present an opportunity to brand the Orleans Levee District and inform the public about its operations with photos. In addition, the air conditioning system is over forty years old and is need of replacement. The new air conditioning system and lighting will provide energy efficiencies that will save money on future energy costs. The proposed work will meet all of the new energy codes. Mr. Doody pointed out that this situation is similar to the proposed safe house and administration complex planned by the East Jefferson Levee District.

C. Discussion of Lakefront Seawall Erosion Protection Scope – DEI

The status of the Lakeshore Drive utilities and lakefront parks was provided. Mr. Gillen advised that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been pushing to open the lakefront by mid-April.

Richard Lewis, O.L.D. Police Chief, commented on the need for an OLD Police presence on the lakefront with the growing number of people on weekends, increased traffic and to deter vandalism. OLD Police Officers provide 24-hour security for the levee system and park area along Lakeshore Drive. Donald Booth, Assistant O.L.D. Police Chief, noted that in the past the lakefront has drawn crowds of up to 25,000 to 30,000 people on Sundays and the need for police protection. The lakefront parks are being closed at dusk since there is no lighting at this time. Mr. Doody explained that Chief Lewis and Mr. Gillen were requested to serve on a committee with Bob Garner, Mr. Pineda and Mr. Barry to look at how the flood protection mandate is being met.

John Holtgreve with Design Engineering, Inc. (DEI) advised that the plans prepared for the utility levee crossings for the shelterhouses and street lighting along Lakeshore Drive are under review by the USACE. The at-grade utility crossings will be placed above the flood protection with ramps over the crossings. Fourteen services are being replaced. Verbal approval has been received for eight of the services; however, written permission or restrictions have not been received. Six of the services are still under review. The USACE will not participate in the cost for future relocations that may be required. Within about the past six months the USACE agreed to pay for the replacement of thirteen of the fourteen services that were disrupted. The relocations will begin as soon as permission is received from the USACE.

Mr. Gillen advised that DEI was contracted to continue its pre-Katrina work on two sections of the lakefront: a portion of Reach 1 extending from Canal Boulevard to just past the Mardi Gras Fountain and a portion of Reach 4 extending from Franklin Avenue to just past Shelterhouse No. 4. The estimates were revised to remove the electrical work that was repaired after Hurricane Katrina. The construction cost for the Reach 1 section is \$5.9 million and for the Reach 4 section is \$4.9 million. He stated that he and Kevin Spruell, O.L.D. Engineer Manager, reviewed the plans and came up with some ideas to reduce costs. He suggested that the cost savings be used to fund additional safety lighting along the walkway. Slightly reducing the factor of safety on the foundation piling would potentially save \$340,000 to \$350,000. The amenities could be further reviewed. The project could proceed with a recommendation on the scope of work.

Mr. Holtgreve explained that Alternate 1 is similar in its presentation for both reaches. Alternate 1 includes decorative trash cans that would eliminate some of the problems experienced with the current trash cans. The use of plain concrete versus colored or stamped concrete was discussed. Mr. Wittie suggested taking alternate bids on the different types of concrete.

Mr. Losonsky stated that overall this is a good project; however, parts of the project are in a grey area that may be crossing over from flood protection to recreation. He suggested that a legal opinion be requested from the Attorney General on this issue. Mr. Gillen advised that SLIP funds will be used to fund the project. One of the specific projects

listed in the SLIP tax renewal proposition and subsequent bond issue addressed the erosion behind the seawall. In addition, the seawall is included as a flood protection asset in the Memorandum of Understanding delineating flood and non-flood assets. Therefore, the replacement of fill behind the seawall and the cleanup of fill that washes onto Lakeshore Drive is the responsibility of the Flood Protection Division. The proposed project will alleviate these maintenance problems. Mr. Gillen expressed concern about the safety and liability issues. Mr. Turner added that the intent was to bring this information to the Committee so that a decision could be made. The O.L.D. cannot continue to spend operations and maintenance monies cleaning up fill from Lakeshore Drive and replacing backfill behind the seawall every time there is a northerly wind. In addition, there are exposure issues from a safety standpoint every time this occurs. He commented that the decision on amenities is up to the Board members; however, the assets belong to the O.L.D. Mr. Doody pointed out that flood protection facilities can be used for recreation purposes. He commented that if there is legal ground to do so that the lakefront should be made an inviting area. The issue of security will also need to be addressed. Mr. Gillen advised that one of the two options on each reach is a scaled back version.

Mr. Jackson stated that the Board has a legal mandate and instructed Mr. Gillen not to proceed until the mandate is defined, which could be done through an Attorney General's opinion. He added that it was a clear mandate of the voters of the State of Louisiana that the SLFPA-E was to deal only with flood control. It was noted that this question could also be asked about Bayou St. John and the O.L.D. Police.

D. Discussion of Major Operations and Maintenance issues of the 100-year flood protection system.

Bill Fogle, representing the SLFPA-E, provided a sample schedule that gave a sense of the efforts being made by the limited number of SLFPA-E staff to cover the 35 active Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System projects (HSDRRS).

Mr. Fogle explained that the purpose of the presentation is to provide an update on some of the issues impacting future operations and maintenance (O&M) responsibilities across the SLFPA-E's jurisdiction. Future updates will be provided on a regular basis. He reported on several priority issues:

- IHNC/Seabrook – An attempt is being made to legislatively transfer the O&M responsibility for the navigation gates to the USACE; however, the SLFPA-E must be prepared to accept this responsibility and face these challenges.
- Bridge at Bayou Bienvenue – The bridge at one time had been a given by the USACE. The Shaw Group's contract with the USACE will be used for a design-build project. The SLFPA-E will continue to monitor this project.
- Additional equipment – Examples are winches and jib cranes. The SLFPA-E continues to engage the USACE about these critical needs. There has been some positive movement for the SLFPA-E to obtain some of these items to help facilitate its future O&M responsibilities.
- Access Roads – Temporary access roads were built by the contractors for LPV 147 through the St. Bernard polder and for LPV 111 along the IHNC. The temporary

roads were built with gravel and geo-textile fabric. In April, 2010, the USACE approved making the roads a project feature as requested by the SLFPA-E. A number of discussions have been held on modifying the 70-ft. wide access roads, since only a 12-ft. wide road is needed for flood protection purposes. The SLFPA-E proposed the placement of 55-ft. of clay fill, a 12-ft. road, and a 3-ft. clay blanket to prevent erosion on the bayou side.

Mr. Fogle commented on the recent lesson learned when a contractor degraded an area in the levee in the vicinity of Pump Station No. 8 and neglected to rebuild the degraded area. The SLFPA-E will look for potential gaps in the system in order to ensure that interim measures are put in place and that contractors are held to contract standards. Turf establishment is another across the board issue that is being addressed.

Mr. Fogle reviewed the next steps that will be taken:

- Continue the collection of additional facts from the USACE
- Keep the Operations Committee updated as issues change
- Shore up the SLFPA-E case for critical needs
- Stay fully engaged with MVN-Operations and the USACE Hurricane Protection Office (HPO) on impacts and Task Force Hope on money programming

Mr. Fogle advised that as the HSDRRS gets closer to completion, the SLFPA-E will continue to focus efforts on:

- O&M Manual reviews
- O&M training for SLFPA-E/levee district personnel
- Warranty procedures
- Continuous engagement with the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration (OCPR)
- Saying out in front of current and potential O&M issues

Mr. Doody commented that a major concern of the SLFPA-E is the resiliency of the system. On-going tests are being conducted on the grasses that will provide armoring. Steve Stockton suggested at a recent meeting held in Washington, DC that an armoring summit be held to begin the discussion of armoring issues.

LEVEE DISTRICT REPORTS: (copies of reports appended to minutes)

East Jefferson Levee District: Jonell Blowers, EJLD Administrative Assistant, reviewed the EJLD's monthly status report.

Orleans Levee District: Gerry Gillen reviewed the O.L.D. monthly status report.

Lake Borgne Basin Levee District: Stuart Williamson, LBBLD Executive Director, reviewed the LBBLD monthly status report. Mr. Williamson commented that the problem previously discussed relative to a contractor leaving a degraded portion of the levee in the vicinity of Pump Station No. 8 exposed was a Quality Assurance (QA) problem.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.