

**MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MARCH 17, 2022**

PRESENT: Eugene J. Joanen, IV, Chair
Roy Arrigo, Committee Member
Mark L. Morgan, Committee Member

The Coastal Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (FPA or Authority) met on March 17, 2022, at the New Orleans Lakefront Airport, Terminal Building, Second Floor Conference Room, 6001 Stars and Stripes Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Joanen called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m.

Opening Comments: None.

Adoption of Agenda: The Committee adopted the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The Committee approved the minutes of the Coastal Committee meeting held on February 17, 2022.

Public Comments: None

New Business:

A. Updates on critical infrastructure and coastal projects.

Mr. Joanen reported that he had discussions with the FPA engineering staff and representatives of the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and parish governments, as well as private individuals, regarding infrastructure and coastal projects and needs. He anticipated developing a needs list that would be shared with the Committee and the Board over the next month that includes items from the Lakefront Management Authority (LMA) and FPA, along with potential matching funding opportunities and streams.

B. Report on conversations with consultants regarding Federal funding opportunities.

Mr. Joanen reported that he had an hour-long discussion with the FPA's consultants concerning Federal funding opportunities and that he shared his agenda with the consultants. He advised that Randy Noel, FPA Treasurer, attended the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association's (MVFCA) Annual Spring Legislative Meetings in Washington, DC, and that he would like to follow up in Washington and present his report and needs list. The FPA's consultants are preparing a list of potential funding opportunities that can be used to create a matrix for matching needs with potential funding opportunities.

The Committee discussed the possibility of Mr. Joanen attending an Association of Levee Boards of Louisiana (ALBL) meeting in Washington, DC. Kelli Chandler, Regional Director, advised that ALBL discussions would focus on FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program Risk Rating 2.0 and funding for areas that do not have 100-year flood protection, especially Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes.

C. Information from Randy Noel (FPA Treasurer).

Mr. Noel reported on his participation in the MVFCA Annual Spring Legislative Meetings in Washington, DC, on March 6-9, 2022. The MVFCA's primary focus was upriver Mississippi River and Tributaries funding. He advised that participants in the MVFCA's Legislative Day included representation from the Mississippi Valley, the State of Louisiana, and USACE leadership, and that he was able to provide information to Congressmen Troy Carter and Garret Graves concerning flood protection for the New Orleans Lakefront Airport.

Mr. Noel advised that he met with Congressman Scalise's aide and discussed living shoreline projects, at which time he was informed that the FPA would have to work with the USACE. At the reception, Mr. Noel spoke to the USACE's representative, who indicated that he did not know anything about the living shoreline projects; therefore, he was sent the presentation that was given to the Coastal Committee. Mr. Noel added that Mr. Joanen may wish to follow up with the USACE's representative to ask about any potential objections. Mr. Noel's comment to the USACE's representative was that living shorelines seem to be an inexpensive way to reduce pressure on and protect Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction (HSDRRS) levees.

Mr. Noel further advised that during the reception he was also able to speak to Congressman Garret Graves, who is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee which oversees funding for airports, and that they discussed funding for the construction of flood protection for the New Orleans Lakefront Airport. Congressman Graves was provided the estimated cost projections (\$195 million to \$360 million) for the project and the FPA Resolution stating that the Orleans Levee District would fund 35 percent of the cost. Congressman Graves concurred that the Airport experiences a tremendous amount of pressure and is deteriorating with each storm. He agreed to look into funding for the project. The possibility of Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) funding was brought up.

Mr. Noel added that during his discussions with Congressmen Scalise, Carter and Graves he brought up the issue of increasing flood protection within the FPA's jurisdiction to the 200-year level. The Congressmen expressed interest in helping to obtain funding for the increase to the 200-year level because they had seen the reports and noticed that it was not that big a lift to achieve this increase. He pointed out that Mr. Joanen may also wish to follow up on this issue.

D. Information from Roy Arrigo (Committee member).

Mr. Arrigo reported that he attended the March 16th CPRA meeting during which the following topics were discussed:

- The CPRA covered a number of projects that directly affected or were adjacent to the FPA's jurisdiction.
- The Lake Borgne Marsh Creation Project, which is the largest project to build land (about 3,000 acres) undertaken to-date by the CPRA, was extensively discussed. The project starts at a point on the Lake Borgne shoreline near Shell Beach and continues four miles south downriver (between the MRGO and Lake Borgne). The containment feature has been completed and dredging from Lake Borgne will soon commence. The project created 203 local private sector jobs.
- A number of upcoming projects of interest to the FPA were listed, which included the New Orleans East Landbridge Project, the Bayou LaLoutre Ridge Restoration and Marsh Creation Project, and the LaBranche Marsh Restoration Project.
- It was pointed out that costs to restore damages from the MRGO are 100 percent federally funded. The State is proceeding with some of these projects and will be reimbursed by the Federal government.
- CPRA discussed the one-time State surplus monies (\$150 million) that Governor John Bel Edwards would like dedicated to coastal projects; however, Legislative action would be needed.

Mr. Joanen recommended that the FPA provide a letter of support for the dedication of the State's \$150 million one-time surplus monies to coastal projects. The Committee concurred that a request would be made to add an item to the March 17th Board agenda to approve providing the stated letter of support.

Mr. Arrigo noted that he and Ms. Chandler interact with attendees both before and after the CPRA meetings. He also advised that April 5th is Coastal Day at the Louisiana Legislature.

E. Discussion regarding short list of projects developed by the FPA Engineering Department and Lakefront Management Authority for seeking Federal funding opportunities.

Discussed under Item A.

F. Discussion regarding Pontchartrain Beach.

Mr. Joanen advised that Pontchartrain Beach was the topic that first interested him in becoming a member of the FPA Board. Initially, Pontchartrain Beach was under FPA management; however, it was subsequently designated a non-flood protection asset of the Orleans Levee District and placed under LMA management.

Mr. Joanen explained that during his search for historical information on Pontchartrain Beach, he discovered that in 1947 or 1948, 150,000 cubic yards of sand was taken from Louisiana's protective barrier islands to create the at-that-time 100-yard wide beach. Mr. Joanen became involved in the beach nourishment plan developed by John Lopez with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation (LPBF, now the Pontchartrain Conservancy) and helped present the plan to the USACE and the FPA for approval. The approval was provided subject to LPBF having the funding to follow up; however, the funding opportunities for follow up vaporized for various reasons.

Mr. Joanen explained that some of the same philanthropists who helped preserve the lighthouse and create the botanical garden in City Park, created a NGO (non-governmental organization) with a mission to put Pontchartrain Beach back into public use. A proposal will be developed for the LMA. Mr. Joanen emphasized that it is high time that this get done. The City of New Orleans recognizes that Lincoln Beach and Pontchartrain Beach are important to the public and Lincoln Beach is well on its way to being put back into public use. The NGO hired an engineer to update and develop estimates for the work that is needed. Mr. Joanen advised that he is working with the NGO to ensure that the 408 Permit can be obtained and that any other issues, such as security, are addressed. He added that he discussed this issue with Chris Humphreys, FPA Director of Engineering, and stressed that the proposed work would not impact the HSDRRS.

G. Discussion regarding proposed Coastal/Technical Committee.

Mr. Joanen explained that he would like the role of the Coastal Committee expanded to create a Coastal/Technical Committee. He pointed out that the construction of the HSDRRS fell short in that the foreshore protection and coastal improvements needed to stave off the day-to-day wear and tear of the system was not sufficiently addressed. He added that he would like to have one or two positions created for an engineer and scientist who would interact with the Director of Engineering, USACE and CPRA and report directly to the Board. The incumbent(s) would actively maintain and be the sentinels for a needs list. Reports would be given to the Board once or twice annually that include, at a minimum, the status of technical efficacy and interfacing from a technical standpoint with the FPA's partners in coastal restoration and flood protection.

Mr. Joanen advised that with Mr. Miller's assistance, he would develop the criteria for the position and job description. A resolution will also be developed for presentation to the Board in April to create a Coastal/Technical Committee.

H. Discussion regarding potential April Committee meeting presentations and discussions.

Mr. Joanen stated that he would like to schedule a Coastal meeting and invite the FPA's counterparts (CPRA, USACE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA, and Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard Parishes) to participate in an open forum discussion on the previously discussed needs list.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.