

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-  
EAST (SLFPA-E) SPECIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON APRIL 10, 2007  
at the offices of the East Jefferson Levee District  
203 Plauche Court, Harahan, LA

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PRESENT: Chairperson Stradford Goins  
Commissioner Louis Wittie, Committee member  
President Thomas Jackson  
(Commissioner Ricardo S. Pineda participated via conference call)

FURTHERMORE  
PRESENT:

John Ashley, USACE  
Calvin Hoppmeyer, USACE HPO-PPS  
Brett Herr, USACE PRO  
Vice Landry, USACE PRO  
Leo Skinner, USACE Dist. PAO  
Gloria Just, USACE HPO-R.E.  
Angelle Bergeron, Engr Magazine  
Michael Brennan, USACE ED  
David Vossen, USACE ED-H  
Richard Pinner, USACE ED-F  
Patrick Conroy, USACE (St. Louis District via conference call)  
Murray Starkel, USACE  
Stevan Spencer, O.L.D. Director Hurricane/Flood Protection  
Michael Stack, LADOTD  
Billy Marchal, FPA  
Tim Ruppert, USACE ED-E  
Cornelia Ullmann, O.L.D. Interim Counsel  
Fran Campbell, E.J.L.D. Executive Director

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- I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Goins at 10:10 a.m.
- II. Opening Comments: Chairman Goins advised the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed load test at the London Avenue Canal by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the proposed remedial levee work along a section of the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal by the Veterans Bridge.
- III. Adoption of the Agenda: No changes were offered to the agenda.
- IV. Discuss recommendations for the interior levees along the London and 17th Street Canals.

President Jackson noted the proposed load test had been discussed prior to this meeting, and although this matter is being reviewed today by the Technical Issues Committee, which is made up of qualified civil engineers, a decision would be needed by the full Board.

Mr. Patrick Conroy, Chief, Geotechnical Design and HTRW Section, Geotechnical Branch, St. Louis District, provided a verbal presentation via conference call on the proposed load test of the London Avenue Outfall Canal (copies of the written presentation were distributed). He explained the St. Louis District of the USACE was requested by the New Orleans District to be the technical lead on the site test. The load test and related requirements were described. Based on various analyses, the USACE has determined the safe water elevation in the London Avenue Canal should be limited to +4 elevation, which results in an increased potential for interior flooding. The +4-ft. elevation is based on a theoretical analysis; therefore, the USACE would like to run a load test to determine whether this elevation can be safely increased.

Mr. Goins requested that a copy of the analyses be provided.

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President Jackson explained a major issue in the granting of this right-of-entry is the hold harmless provision and asked the reason why the SLFPA-E should hold the USACE harmless in this situation. He further advised the right-of-entry could be provided by the SLFPA-E without the hold harmless, and further asked why a hold harmless by the Sewerage & Water Board (S&WB) would not be sufficient for the USACE, as this is related to a hydraulics and drainage issue and the S&WB had already signed the right-of-entry for the work.

Mr. John Ashley, USACE Project Manager, responded the USACE had expected this to be a technical meeting and did not bring legal representative to discuss the hold harmless, which was a legal matter. He also pointed out that should the hold harmless provision be taken out, the USACE would fall back on the original Acts of Assurance signed by the O.L.D.

Col. Starkel felt the locals' concern seemed to be based on something catastrophic or near catastrophic happening, and advised appropriate protocols would be laid out.

President Jackson added, the USACE previously indicated the whole canal would be tested (full load testing) and related his concerns about such a test.

Col. Starkel pointed out the USACE would not conduct the test with the lakefront gates open. The contractor will be responsible for building the cofferdam and providing necessary equipment, including contingency equipment; however, the USACE would direct the test.

The objectives of the test and participation by IPET representatives in the decision for the load test and the calculations were discussed.

Mr. Ashley stressed the need for receiving the right-of-entry by the next Board meeting in order to conduct the test prior to hurricane season and expressed his concern about public perception should the test be on-going after hurricane season commences. Col. Starkel further explained the technical reasons for doing the test as soon as possible.

Mr. Conroy explained the data will be reviewed, in light of the analyses done to date, and the USACE will determine whether it feels comfortable with increasing the safe water elevation. The USACE may suggest that the elevation not be increased and further reserved the right to request a full load test.

It was pointed out that prior to today's meeting Col. Bedey had indicated that the need for the full load test was not to be preordained. However, should it be determined that the full load test is necessary, the USACE has given thought on how to run the test.

Mr. Goins asked how stability would be guaranteed after removal of the cofferdam, and Mr. Conroy explained how the cofferdam would be constructed and removed.

Mr. Goins pointed out the stability issue in light of the deflection in the test section, and USACE representatives indicated that issue would be a part of the test analysis.

Federal funding and the subject of replacement vs. repair of the floodwalls along the canal was discussed.

Mr. Conroy reviewed the current status of this effort.

Mr. Goins requested a copy of the draft specifications for this project be provided.

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Should the safe water elevation be raised to +5 or +6, recommendations will be made on the future permanent pump station requirements.

Col. Starkel indicated factors of safety are specific to each application, and Mr. Conroy added, because of uncertainties, a factor of safety of 1.6 is being used.

Mr. Goins pointed out the need for additional pumping capacity should the flood protection not be repaired sufficiently to accommodate a higher safe water elevation.

The current designated floodwall elevations were discussed, and USACE representatives advised the numerical changes were due to new datum, rather than settlement of the wall.

Mr. Conroy reviewed the particulars on the site specific load test. Data from the automatic system will be about 15 to 20 seconds old. The site specific test area and cofferdam location were described, and the materials to be used and method of construction of the cofferdam were explained. The top of the wall will be built to +8 feet. Water will be raised in one-half foot increments with a four hour wait between the incremental raisings to provide time for evaluation; water will be raised incrementally only during daylight hours.

Mr. Goins inquired about notification of the public in the area, and Mr. Ashley explained the notification process.

Mr. Goins asked about the availability of manpower that may be needed should personal notification of area residents be required during the testing, and stressed he wanted to be assured that the appropriate man power would be available during testing to ensure public safety.

Mr. Conroy described the instrumentation to be used during testing, and advised he felt there were adequate redundancies through automated and manual systems. Field calculations will be performed.

Caution and cut off points were discussed. Col. Starkel requested that test triggers and decisions points be shared with the SLFPA-E.

President Jackson advised that this matter would be placed on the agenda for the April 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Pineda recommended (via telephone) the USACE make clear at that meeting the reasons the test needs to be done, plans for emergency response in the event anything should go wrong, and whether there are any alternatives should the hold harmless not be granted.

President Jackson stressed the USACE needs to be up front that the right-of-entry has been requested with the hold harmless clause and they should be ready to explain the reasons for this.

Col. Starkel indicated a fact sheet and legal opinion could be provided.

Mr. Wittie added, information should be provided as to how the water in the cofferdam would be emptied in the event of an emergency.

The Committee moved on to the discussion of the proposed levee remedial work on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal. A copy of the location map and draft plans for the work were distributed, along with a copy of the bidding schedule. USACE representatives explained the need for the proposed work and the location, approximately 400 feet north of the Veterans Highway Bridge and extending approximately 500 feet south of the bridge. The existing sheet piling was only driven to a depth of 2.5 ft. above the top of the beach sand strata, and seepage problems could occur. The levee will be raised to

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an elevation of +8. The stockpiled materials that are to be used were described and details of the drawings provided were reviewed.

Mr. Goins requested that a copy of the plans and specifications be provided to Orleans Levee District staff.

The Committee concurred that the request for right-of-entry for the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal remedial work would be placed on the agenda for the Board's next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.