

**MINUTES OF OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2007
East Jefferson Levee District Board Room
203 Plaque Ct., Harahan, LA**

PRESENT: Chairperson Larry McKee
 President Timothy Doody, Committee member
 Commissioner Louis Wittie, Committee Member

FURTHERMORE

PRESENT: Fran Campbell, Interim Regional Director and Executive Director East
 Jefferson Levee District (EJLD)
 Stevan Spencer, Executive Director Orleans Levee (O.L.D.)
 Peggy Sembera, Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD)
 Jonell Blowers, EJLD
 Glenda Boudreaux, O.L.D.
 Pat Johnson, SLFPAE
 Larry Ardoin, LA Dept. of Transportation and Development (LADOTD)
 Michael Stack, LADOTD, Dist. 02
 Mac Sayes, LADOTD PW
 LTC Anoy Ford, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
 Brett Herr, USACE
 Jerry Colletti, USACE
 Amy Powell, USACE
 Kevin Wagner, USACE
 Victor Landry, Evans-Graves Engineers/USACE
 Billy Marchal, FPA
 Sheila Grissett, Times Picayune

I. Call to Order: A quorum was present and the meeting was called to order by Chairperson McKee at 10:05 a.m.

II. Opening Comments: Mr. McKee provided background information on the Committee, consisting of four members: Chairman McKee, President Doody and Commissioners Wittie and Barnes. He explained the Committee proposed expanding its membership to include representatives from the USACE and LADOTD, along with a representative from the SLFPA-West. Mr. Colletti advised he would be the USACE representative, with Amy Powell as backup, for operations matters. LA DOTD was requested to name a representative.

LTC Anoy Ford, USACE Deputy Commander for Protection and Restoration, Jerry Colletti, USACE Assistant Chief of Operations Division, Brett Herr, USACE Branch Chief in the Protection and Restoration Office, Amy Powell, USACE Operations Manager for Completed Works, Michael Stack, LADOTD New Orleans District Administrator, Larry Audoin, LADOTD Hurricane Flood Protection Office Operations Section, Mac Sayes, LADOTD Hurricane Flood Protection Office Levee Safety Section, and Kevin Wagener, USACE Senior Project Manager for Levees, Floodwalls and

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Armoring in Orleans Parish, introduced themselves and each explained his/her duties and responsibilities.

Mr. Herr reported letters will be sent later this week to residents on the east (Orleans) side of the 17th Street Canal identifying trees and fences that will need to be removed and a request will be sent to the O.L.D. and SLFPA-E within the next month requesting right of entry. Mr. Colletti reported the Hurricane Protection Office did a complete study on the 17th Street Canal erosion problem and determined there is no stability problem relative to the floodwall; therefore, there was no intention to do any immediate actions for that purpose.

III. Adoption of Agenda: No additions or changes were offered to the agenda.

IV. Levee District Reports:

Copies of the EDLD, O.L.D. and LBBLD status reports were distributed (copy appended to minutes), and Ms. Campbell, Mr. Spencer and Ms. Sembera cited highlights from the reports. (Mr. Turner was unable to be at the Committee meeting as he was attending the USACE Project Engineering Report review meeting scheduled for today.)

In addition, Mr. Spencer reported, the contracted grass cutting of approx. 15 miles of New Orleans East levee will start on Monday and the canal clearing contract work, starting with the 17th Street Canal, will begin at the end of this week. Mr. Wagner advised the USACE's Memphis hired labor forces is doing the earthen levee raising on the GIWW south side from the Hwy. 47 Bridge to IHNC to bring it to authorized grade; the north side of the GIWW levee had been raised to elevation 15, along with two small earthen sections on the west side of the IHNC that were not raised during Task Force Guardian.

Mr. Wagner noted that the Maxent Canal alignment in New Orleans East and the St. Bernard back levee (40 arpent levee) are being investigated and considered for possible alternative alignments for providing 100 year protection--the idea being to create redundancy of multiple lines of defense by using these existing non-federal levees. Mr. Stack added, LADOTD is leaning towards doing something on a temporary basis, until something is done on a permanent basis, on the 40 arpent levee.

V. Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA):

Mr. McKee explained the 17th Street Canal erosion problem brought to light the need for a formal agreement which identified responsibilities so that there is no delay in attacking and repairing such problems in the future. He mentioned at a meeting attended by himself, Mr. Doody, Mr. Colletti, Col. Lee, Col. Bedey, Col. Starkel and Mr. Accardo, additional issues were discussed, such as rights-of-entry, and identification of project sponsors and their authority and responsibilities. Other issues for consideration in the CEA concern the USACE's acceptance of construction projects which the levee districts felt required additional work before they could be maintained, elimination of the gap between the acceptance of a project by the USACE and turn over to the levee

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district for maintenance, and the identification of projects for peer review, noting that 250 projects, some of which are segments of a larger project, are projected to be underway within the next two years.

Mr. Colletti commented having early involvement of the Authority and levee districts, i.e., during the alternative consideration stage, was discussed at the meeting. Mr. McKee noted the various entities having interests in the different phases of hurricane and flood protection and felt the East and West Authorities should be the clearing house for these projects, with mechanisms for such things as meetings with municipalities and the Sewerage and Water Board being spelled out in the CEA. He asked that Mr. Colletti and Mr. Doody, along with a representative from LADOTD and the West Authority, work on the CEA.

Mr. Colletti explained the importance of inspections by the levee districts throughout the construction period, coordinated for safety reasons through the Project Manager, and encouraged comment on problems or issues encountered so that those situations can be taken care of during the construction period. The USACE is revising its design specifications on types of seeding, timing of seeding, watering, etc., to hopefully eliminate the recent problems with grass growth and has also engaged a grass maintenance and turf contractor for re-establishing turf, if necessary. Mr. Colletti stressed the most important inspection for participation by the levee districts is the pre-final inspection, since it is at this time that the punch list is formulated. Mr. McKee suggested the levee district, as the owner, should have the final say on whether a project is acceptable and hoped this dialog would continue. Mr. Colletti advised the USACE recognized the need to address the grass maintenance problem occurring during the gap between project completion and the issuance of the letter to the levee district turning over the project for maintenance.

Maintenance of levees under the control of the USACE or its contractors was discussed, along with the liabilities should a levee district attempt to maintain the grass on those levees.

Mr. Doody commented on the levee districts' shortage of engineering staff and resources. Mr. Stack pointed out the record highway construction taking place at this time; however, he advised he would do his best to assist.

VI. Project Delivery System:

Mr. McKee explained he would like to open a dialog with the USACE on a "Design / Build / Maintain" contract, in which the contractor would maintain the levee for some period of time before it is turned over to the levee district, which would ensure delivery of a better project. He suggested a pilot project with each levee district.

Mr. Colletti felt contractors would resist being tied into a contract for that long a period. Mr. Herr pointed out the Project Cooperation Agreements specifically require the sponsor take over operations and maintenance of projects upon completion.

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Mr. Spencer commented LPV-109 phase one will take about 18 months and phase two (100 year protection) would commence immediately thereafter. This levee will be degraded, geo-textile material placed, and then the levee will be raised.

Mr. Stack pointed out an issue that may need to be looked at is responsibility during times of emergency when a project is under construction. Mr. Colletti explained, generally, USACE contracts have a hurricane protection plan.

Mr. McKee requested that information be provided on the revision of specifications regarding seeding, testing and maintenance for the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Colletti offered to have a USACE construction representative at the next meeting to answer questions. He further advised the USACE has commenced the Mississippi River and Tributaries levee inspections; LBBLD's inspection will be conducted on Monday and the O.L.D.'s inspection will be conducted in October. The EJLD'S inspection was conducted in May.

VII. Vehicle Policy:

Mr. Wittie explained he saw no reason to modify the policy distributed at last month's meeting. Little feedback was received from other levee districts. The State manual requires 12 call outs in a three month period, or one per week, to justify a take home vehicle, and he stated he did not receive any further information relative to this requirement.

Mr. Spencer requested the O.L.D. Chief Engineer be included in those authorized for take home vehicles.

Mr. McKee asked that each levee district executive director send his/her comments or recommended policy modifications to Mr. Wittie, and he and Mr. Wittie would get together to come up with a final policy.

VIII. Public Comments:

Ms. Grisset asked whether there were any anticipated activities due to the tropical depression in the Gulf which was forecasted to move into Texas, but could present a major rain threat to Louisiana.

The Committee indicated the situation would be monitored, especially the canals with the possible rain event.

IX. Adjournment:

There was no further business, therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.