

**MINUTES OF  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON MAY 14, 2009**

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair  
Dave Barnes, Committee Member  
Timothy Doody, Committee Member  
Stephen Estopinal, Committee Member  
Tom Jackson, Commissioner  
Stradford Goins, Commissioner

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The Operations Committee met on May 14, 2009 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 1:15 p.m.

**Opening Comments:** None

**Adoption of Agenda:** The agenda was amended to include Item E -- discussion of House Bill 61. The amended agenda was unanimously adopted.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the April 9, 2009 Operations Committee meeting were approved.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Old Business:**

**A. Presentation on Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) safehouse.**

Gerry Gillen, O.L.D. Executive Director, advised that he and the project architect visited the West Jefferson Levee District safehouse. A revised layout of the O.L.D. build out was shown to the Committee. The E.O.C. office area was removed and the area opened up for dining. A commercial kitchen was added. During emergencies the I.T. area will also be used for housing employees. Including police officers, the O.L.D. estimates that it will need to house approximately 90 employees. The facility will have double back up generation fueled by natural gas. The use of a food service for stocking the commercial freezer is being investigated.

The revised plan was approved by the Committee. Plans will be finalized and the project advertized for bid.

**B. Discussion of policy for painting murals on floodwall.**

Gerry Colletti with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) stated that the USACE's engineering staff does not have a problem with painting on the floodwall from a structural standpoint and would consider NOLA Rising's request for the mural project. He clarified that he was not saying that the USACE does or does not oppose the request at this time. NOLA Rising had mentioned that sixty artists are anticipated to

participate in the project. The USACE would prefer that one permit request be submitted for the entire project. The USACE's concerns include the appropriateness of the paintings and community sensitivities, and if at any time the USACE District Engineer determines that the paintings are inappropriate, they would be removed. In addition, all the appropriate agencies must review and approve the proposed project.

Mr. Jackson asked NOLA Rising representatives Michael Dingler and Crista Rock, who would repair the paintings if work must be done on the floodwall or if for any reason the paintings are damaged. Ms. Rock stated that NOLA Rising would be responsible. She added that a provision stating that NOLA Rising would be responsible for any repairs to the paintings could be included in its final offering to the Authority. Michael Dingler advised that NOLA Rising would attempt to locate the original artist for that particular section to redo the section.

NOLA Rising representatives provided a packet with additional information relative to the graffiti problem and how the mural could act as a small stimulus to the economy of the local area. The current condition of the local area and the potential positive impact of the mural was discussed. Mr. Dingler explained that NOLA Rising is looking into the long term aspects of the paints and anticipates that the paints that would be used will last from 25 to 35 years.

The Committee clarified that a permit request would be submitted to the Orleans Levee District with a copy of the proposal, drawings and paint specifications. Copies of the permit request and backup information would be provided to the USACE (Amy Powell), OCPR (DOTD), and any other appropriate agencies for review. Letters of no objection would be provided by the reviewing agencies to the Orleans Levee District, along with any recommended stipulations for inclusion in the O.L.D. permit. A letter of no objection would also be required from the City of New Orleans' Mural Review Board. The Orleans Levee District would make the final decision on the issuance of a permit.

Mr. Doody explained that he is in favor of this project; however, he cautioned that the Authority must think about future requests. Potentially, numerous individual requests could be received which would distract the Authority and levee districts from their flood protection responsibilities. He recommended that the Authority have a policy that no artwork would be allowed on the floodwalls with the exception of the request by NOLA Rising, if all the appropriate agencies approve the request.

The Committee determined that once the permit request is submitted, reviewed and all letters of no objection are obtained, the request would be placed before the Board. A policy for artwork on floodwalls would also be developed for Board approval.

## **New Business:**

### **A. Recommendation of survey consultants by selection team for ID-IQ Contracts in response to Request for Qualifications for professional surveying services.**

Mr. Estopinal advised that the selection team met and reviewed the information presented by the ten firms that responded to the Request for Qualifications. A point system was used to evaluate the ten responses and the top six firms were

recommended for ID-IQ contracts. The top six firms are Forte and Tablada; Krebs, LaSalle, LeMieux; NTB Associates; Acadia Land Surveying; Riverlands Surveying and BFM Corporation.

Mr. Jackson pointed out that one of the firms is located in Baton Rouge. His concerns were that the Authority not be charged for travel time or per diem if an overnight stay is required. Mr. Doody responded that these issues would be addressed in the contract negotiations and that the contract terms should be consistent across contracts.

The Committee concurred with the selection team's recommendation of the six firms, which will be forwarded to the Board for approval.

### **C. Review levee districts' Emergency Operations Procedures (EOP) Manuals.**

Copies of the levee districts' EOP Manuals were distributed. Contacts and other appropriate information have been updated in each of the manuals.

Fran Campbell, EJLD Executive Director, advised that confirmation was just received for 25 employees to be safehoused in East Jefferson Hospital and 25 employees in Ochsner Hospital in Kenner.

A list of equipment for all levee districts has been compiled by DOTD. A mutual aid agreement has been initiated between the levee districts.

A resolution will be placed before the Board for approval of the EOP manuals.

Stevan Spencer, SLFPA-E Regional Chief Engineer, explained that Robert Turner, SFLAP-E Regional Director, requested that he draft a manual for the Authority, which would act as a preface for the levee districts' manuals. The SLFPA-E manual stresses communications with the local partners. He distributed a copy of the draft manual.

### **B. Discussion of Temporary Construction Servitude and Right of Entry with UNO (LPV-104.01a Lakefront Ramps).**

Stevan Spencer explained that the USACE is preparing to launch a major project on the Lakefront involving five lakefront crossings. The existing grade of the crossings will be raised to the height of the levee on each side of the crossing. The Lakefront levee has been raised to the 100 year level from the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal to the IHNC. The embankment toe of three of the crossings when raised will go onto UNO property. UNO has prepared a Temporary Construction Servitude and Right of Entry so that the project can proceed. The Temporary Construction Servitude will be brought before UNO's board the week of June 4th. The document has also been reviewed by Robert Lacour. When the project is completed, the O.L.D. will survey the right of way and a final Servitude Agreement will be prepared and executed. Mr. Spencer added that a meeting will be needed with the City of New Orleans in order to address the Canal Boulevard crossing.

The Committee unanimously adopted a motion to recommend approval of the Temporary Construction Servitude and Right of Entry with UNO to the Board.

**D. Juan Lorenzo, Ph.D., LSU Department of Geology and Geophysics --  
presentation on Seismic Testing of Levees**

Michael Merritt with the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-West introduced Dr. Lorenzo. He commented on Dr. Lorenzo's use of scientific principles to solve levee safety problems.

Dr. Lorenzo explained that the geology of the subsurface, particularly in New Orleans, is unpredictable and highly variable. Seismology is a proven technique that has been around for fifty years and millions of line miles of this type of data have been collected by industry. He further explained how industry uses this technology.

Dr. Lorenzo stated that the major causes of levee failure in the New Orleans area after Hurricane Katrina resulted from overtopping, under seepage and deep weak foundation soils. Seismics are particularly good for picking out weaknesses in foundation soils. He discussed the study that was performed on the leakage of the Citrus Lakefront Levee and the survey published in 2008 in which a low velocity zone was pinpointed by using the seismic technique. Low velocity means that the speed of sound is relatively slow at a particular point, which is directly related to the shear strength of the materials. Dr. Lorenzo explained how the seismic data is collected. He advised that in cases where a more direct measurement is needed, an invasive probe can be used to achieve a more direct sampling of the soil.

Mr. Jackson asked how this technology would detect seepage problems. Dr. Lorenzo responded that seepage problems can be detected in two ways; i.e., by directly pushing the probe into the ground and by comparing the ratio of sound wave to shear wave. He explained how both methods work.

The Committee discussed a joint participation between the East and West Authorities in the proposed \$60,000 demonstration study. Dr. Lorenzo pointed out the importance of the educational aspect of the study. The study would be phased over three years. A very specific goal would be identified the first year. The goal would be continually reviewed and adjusted with reports written and results presented. Based on the degree of success, the goal can be adjusted for the second year. Dr. Lorenzo anticipated that two miles can be done within the budget, which is mainly for student salaries. He added that there is a certain start up time and personnel cost for each segment.

Mr. Estopinal offered a motion to recommend to the Board that the East Authority enter into a joint venture with the West Authority and share the cost for the demonstration study. Robert Turner would select the portions of levee that would be tested for the East Authority. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jackson and unanimously adopted.

Mr. Merritt advised that West Authority President Susan Maclay was unable to attend today's meeting; however, she is most interested in this demonstration study.

Mr. Spencer advised that the information provided by Mr. Merritt has been sent to the USACE.

## **E. Discussion of House Bill (HB) 61.**

Mr. Estopinal noted that HB 61 was introduced by Representative Wooton and calls for the giving of lands purchased by the Orleans Levee Board in 1929 to the Plaquemines Parish government with no compensation, along with the income derived by the Authority from those lands. Mr. Estopinal requested that the Committee authorize him and Mr. Doody to appear before the House Transportation Committee on Monday to testify on behalf of the Authority.

Mr. Doody pointed out that any Board member has the ability to appear before a Legislative Committee and testify as a Commissioner. He also pointed out that HB 61 would give Plaquemines Parish revenues back to 1984, which is estimated at \$60 million. He stressed this issue is important to all of the levee districts. The Orleans Levee District would have to strongly consider filing for bankruptcy protection should this bill be passed. This would mean that the State would then have to commit State assets to operate flood protection in the Orleans Levee District. All of this would be happening while the Authority is trying to complete the 100 year level of protection.

Mr. Goins pointed out that a House Bill has been filed to remove the St. Charles and St. John the Baptist seats from the SLFPA-E Board. The Committee discussed the bill.

**Levee District Reports:** (copies of the monthly status reports are appended)

**East Jefferson Levee District:** Fran Campbell reviewed the EJLD monthly status report.

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

**Lake Borgne Basin Levee District:** Peggy Sembera reviewed the LBBLD monthly status report.

Mr. Spencer reported that he attended the joint hurricane team annual preparation meeting which included representations from the USACE and U.S. Coast Guard. The meeting was mainly to discuss DOTD bridge closure plans along southeast Louisiana and the coast. Communications and coordination with DOTD was stressed on the bridge closures and the clearance of canals. The clearance of the IHNC--north to south and east to west--of all vessels at the appropriate time was addressed. A copy of the protocol will be obtained.

Mr. Doody advised that the first piling was driven last week for the IHNC surge barrier. Initially six piling will be driven per day. Eventually two operations will be on-going with 10 to 12 pilings driven per day. A total of 1,400 pilings will be driven for the project. Each piling is 66 inches in diameter, 140 feet in length and weighs 96 tons.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.