

**MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2012**

PRESENT: Louis Wittie, Chair
Dave Barnes, Committee Member
Timothy P. Doody, Committee Member
Stephen Estopinal, Committee Member

The Operations Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (SLFPA-E or Authority) met on September 13, 2012, in Meeting Room 221, Orleans Levee District Franklin Administrative Complex, 6920 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana. Mr. Wittie called the meeting to order.

Opening Comments: Mr. Doody recognized and thanked the SLFPA-E and levee district personnel who worked during Hurricane Isaac for all of their hard work.

Adoption of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the August 2, 2012 Operations Committee meeting were approved.

Public Comments:

Roy Arrigo, a resident along the 17th Street Canal, read an excerpt from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) decision making chronology for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Hurricane Protection Project concerning the original 17th Street Canal Levee and the decision to construct the floodwall. He stated that at that time the USACE and levee board knew that they had no rights to the private property portions of the levees along the London Avenue and 17th Street Canal.

Craig Berthold, a resident along the 17th Street Canal, stated that at the last Board meeting he requested that the Board adopt a resolution to request the USACE to approve a variance along the 17th Street Canal. He read a resolution that he drafted, which he requested that the Board consider adopting, to relay the Authority's support for a variance for the Bellaire Street private properties along the 17th Street Canal.

Mr. Doody explained that the SLFPA-E made a request to the USACE relative to a vegetation free zone variance along the outfall canals. He pointed out, however, that the USACE cannot tell the Board what may be required in the future. He noted that any request for a variance would be for all of the outfall canals and not just a specific section of a canal. He added that he would discuss this matter with the SLFPA-E's General Counsel.

New Business:

B. Discussion of a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the East Jefferson Levee District and Jefferson Parish relative to the Harahan Pump to the River Stormwater Drainage Project.

Robert Lacour, SLFPA-E General Counsel, explained that he prepared the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) between the East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) and Jefferson Parish for the Harahan Pump to the River SELA Project. Drainage lines will be constructed under River Road and travel over the Mississippi River Levee (MRL). The MRL levee in this vicinity is too close to River Road for this to occur; therefore, the levee will be setback at this location in order to accommodate the drainage lines. Jefferson Parish will pay all costs for the MRL setback and the USACE will issue a contract for the work. Jefferson Parish will be responsible for all costs should there be a requirement to remove or relocate the drainage lines because of a change to the MRL.

Mr. Estopinal offered a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Doody and unanimously adopted, to recommend that the Board approve the CEA.

C. Discussion of collection of High Water Mark Data and ADCIRC Model validation for Hurricane Isaac.

Robert Turner, SLFPA-E Regional Director, explained that shortly after Hurricane Isaac SLFPA-E crews placed semi-permanent marks either on the ground or along floodwalls noting the elevation of high water levels throughout the system. Yesterday SLFPA-E and Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation crews obtained the elevation data using GPS. The Orleans Levee District's (O.L.D.) survey crew collected some elevation data last week. Data will be collected next week in the East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD). This information will be compiled into a single document for comparison with models runs just prior to the event. The first preliminary review of the data collected indicated that that the ADCIRC and SLOSH modeling results published just prior to the storm were fairly close to what actually occurred.

Mr. Doody explained that the biggest test of the system was on the eastern end closest to Braithwaite. Discussions have taken place concerning whether the height of the Mississippi River Levees (MRL) is sufficient. The modeling performed by the USACE indicates that a raise of the MRL is not required. There is a challenge to be faced at the transition at Caernarvon where the MRL meets the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System (HSDRRS). He pointed out that Hurricane Isaac was a less severe storm than the HSDRRS was designed to protect against. The direction of approach and speed of the storm challenged this particular area more than any other area.

Mr. Doody commented that the HSDRRS as designed performed well; however, the system as constructed may have potentially pushed water into other areas. The USACE and the SLFPA-E will be running models that will either confirm or refute this charge. The floodwalls along the Industrial Canal would have been overtopped had the IHNC Surge Barrier not been constructed. There is still work to be accomplished, such

as armoring. The SLFPA-E continues its argument that the USACE should take over the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the IHNC Surge Barrier. The coordination of maritime traffic along the GIWW is outside of the SLFPA-E's expertise. The IHNC Surge Barrier also prevented water from the GIWW from entering into Lake Pontchartrain.

Mr. Estopinal suggested that the SLFPA-E have its Independent Delivery-Independent Quantity (ID-IQ) contract surveyors measure the high water marks. He explained that one RTK (Real Time Kinematic) observation is not reliable enough for the basis of a decision or policy and that multiple observations and conformity of datum is needed. He recommended that the SLFPA-E obtain several observations, particularly in light of the flooding at Braithwaite.

Mr. Turner explained that the USACE has been tasked to conduct a study to determine whether the construction of the HSDRRS exacerbated flooding in areas outside of the system and a report will be issued. The study will be funded with HSDRRS funding for the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity (LPV) and West Bank and Vicinity (WBV) projects and will require a local cost share from the State for the two projects. He explained that one of the reasons that the water was high in Braithwaite on the east bank and on the west bank of Plaquemines Parish is the MRL, which protects from riverine flooding but exacerbates coastal flooding associated with hurricanes. The Committee discussed the dynamics of Hurricane Isaac.

Mr. Turner advised that there are multiple tools that could be used to reduce risks in the system. There is a high risk associated with floatables in the IHNC-GIWW corridor. The IHNC Surge Barrier wall was designed to be overtopped to some degree and for the water level to rise inside this corridor due to overtopping and rainfall to a level of +8-ft. to +12-ft. However, should the water level rise in this corridor there is a potential for floatables to impact and damage the I-walls. The Coast Guard only regulated barges and ships. The USACE in a letter stated its expectation that the SLFPA-E would regulate floatables (e.g.; pleasure crafts, fuel tanks, floating houses, etc.). Mr. Doody pointed out that the property where the floatables are located is leased by the Port of New Orleans and that a meeting is needed with the Port concerning this liability. Mr. Turner suggested investigating the use of the Central Wetlands as a water holding area in order to mitigate the rising level of water in this corridor and reduce the risk. Allowing water to enter into the Central Wetlands in a controlled way would only raise the water level in the wetlands by inches and lower the water level in the IHNC-GIWW corridor by feet. Mr. Doody suggested that this concept be discussed informally with the USACE.

Representative Ray Garofalo thanked the SLFPA-E for its efforts during Hurricane Isaac. He specifically thanked the SLFPA-E Regional Director and Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) staff for their assistance in Braithwaite. He commented on several issues. Many people in lower St. Bernard Parish are concerned about the height of the MRL, particularly where the levee intersects the floodwall at Caernarvon. If the elevation of the MRL at this location is sufficient, this should be communicated to the public. Boaters should be given sufficient warning of structure gate closings in order

to bring vessels inside of flood protection. He stressed the need to address coast stabilization and stated that he would support the SLFPA-E whenever possible.

Mr. Doody addressed Rep. Garofalo's comment concerning the MRL. He stated that the Board does not think that 100-year protection is enough. The public should be informed about the level of risk that they accept living within the system. The Federal government decided that it would fund protection for the entire country to a one percent level of risk (100-year protection). The SLFPA-E does not think that this is acceptable. Coastal restoration is a huge part of what should be done. He noted that Mr. Kemp was appointed to the Board because of his work in coastal restoration and chairs the SLFPA-E's Coastal Advisory Committee. The SLFPA-E is looking for projects that will push defenses further out. He pointed out that a meeting should be scheduled with Parish officials concerning the various closures so that all of the challenges can be aired. He explained that trigger points require certain actions in operating the system. The SLFPA-E is seeking to improve its use of the technology available for notifications. Mr. Estopinal commented on the need to find a way to provide local governments with a better understanding of storm threats and to approach planning commissions and building code enforcers about building on the Gulf Coast.

Mr. Lacour advised that the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) is preparing comprehensive regulations on activities near levees. The regulation of floatables should be under State jurisdiction. He suggested that the CPRA be requested to draft regulations concerning inter-harbor floatables and regulate this activity. He stated that he would follow up with the CPRA concerning this issue.

Bob Jacobsen commented on the collection of high water marks and the need to properly populate models with accurate current data. He also commented on the lack of data on waves near coastal structures during storm events and on the gages that were inoperable during Hurricane Isaac. Mr. Doody noted that employees were dispatched during the storm to manually read gages. The need for hardened gages was discussed. Mr. Jacobsen commented on the communication of risks by the media to the public.

Mr. Doody explained that during a flight over the system Garrett Graves, the Governor's Executive Assistant for Coastal Activities, brought up the need to pursue the construction of a surge barrier at the Chef and Rigolets passes. The SLFPA-E was successful in getting this concept included in the first fifty years of the State's Master Plan. The benefit to all of the communities that circle the Lake is being recognized. He suggested that the Coastal Advisory Committee consider drafting a resolution to support this project. Mr. Kemp advised that the Coastal Advisory Committee would be reviewing a consultant's report that includes the affects of placing a barrier at the Chef and Rigolets Passes. Mr. Doody added that the science should inform the discussions.

LEVEE DISTRICT REPORTS:

Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD): Nick Cali, LBBLD Executive Director, reviewed the monthly status report, including activities in connection with Hurricane Isaac and the assistance provided in Braithwaite. The LBBLD has recovered from Isaac

and is ready to go back into the emergency management cycle should the need arise. LBBLD crews will commence normal operations next week.

Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.): Gerry Gillen, O.L.D. Executive Director, reviewed the monthly status report, including activities in connection with Hurricane Isaac and the assistance provided to Lafitte and Braithwaite. He noted that the O.L.D. facilities were used by the National Guard as a distribution point for water and MREs. Damage assessments are on-going; however, thus far no major damage has been discovered. The cleanup of Lakeshore Drive has been completed. The Southpoint to GIWW levee project has not yet been turned over to the O.L.D.; therefore, the USACE will handle the debris removal along this levee. O.L.D. crews have returned to normal operations. He recognized and thanked Bunny Bread and Browns Velvet for their donation of bread and milk during Hurricane Isaac. He noted that bids will be received for renovations to the O.L.D. Administration Building in mid-October. After the Administration Building renovations are completed, repairs/renovations to the Police Administration Building will be addressed.

Mr. Wittie asked about a notation in the quarterly inspection report concerning the IHNC I-walls. Mr. Gillen explained that some of the panels are leaning. The USACE is aware of the situation and asked the O.L.D. to continue its monitoring of the walls. The O.L.D. surveyed this area for several years to monitor for settlement. No further movement has been detected. The O.L.D. will continue to visually monitor the walls.

East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD): Fran Campbell, EJLD Executive Director, reviewed the monthly status report, including activities in connection with Hurricane Isaac and the assistance provided to DOTD. Barges were moved out of the area and construction equipment was moved to the protected side of the levee in advance of the storm. The Administration Building incurred roof damage and damage due to roof leaks. Staff and records will have to be relocated to another site for several months during the building repairs. Surveys are being done for the purchase of land from the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport for the construction of the EJLD Safehouse and Consolidated Facilities. The sale of the property was approved by the New Orleans City Council. Mr. Turner is working with the architect and Mr. Lacour on the contract/task order for the design of the project.

A. Review of GEC, Inc., Task Order No. 1 for the development of a Comprehensive Operation and Maintenance Plan for the Lake Borgne Surge Barrier and Gates, Seabrook Complex and Gates, Bayou St. John Sector Gate, Bayou Bienvenue Sector, Bayou Dupre Sector Gate and Caernarvon Sector Gate.

Mr. Turner advised that he, Stevan Spencer, SLFPA-E Regional Chief Engineer, and Commissioner Tom Jackson were involved in the extensive negotiations with GEC, Inc., for developing the comprehensive O&M plan. The plan will assist the SLFPA-E in determining the internal manpower and external contract requirements needed to provide effective O&M for the surge barrier and gate structures. The first task order includes the collection and review of O&M manuals, along with other appropriate documents and data, and attending USACE O&M meetings. A report will be developed

and used for a path forward for a future second task order to develop the plan. Task Order No. 1 will take about four to six months to complete. The cost of Task Order No. 1 is approximately \$152,000. A decision will be made whether to proceed with a second task order. Representatives from GEC, Inc. were not present at the Committee meeting, but will be instructed to attend the Board meeting in order to answer questions.

The Committee referred Task Order No. 1 with GEC, Inc., to the Board for further action.

There was no further business; therefore, the meeting was adjourned.