

Spring Bayou Lake Commission Minutes April 15, 2019

Attendance: Chairman Jimmy Landry, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Commissioner Artha Hale, Commissioner Roland Dugas III, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere, Commissioner Jules (JK) Bordelon, Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett, & Juror Trent Clark.

Absent: Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux, Police Jury President Charles Jones, & Juror Mark Borrel.

Guest: Ronald Coco, Scott Laborde, Jacques Goudeau, James Franks, Craig Laborde, Thomas David (President of Pan American Engineers), Brendon Gaspard (Pan American Engineers), Will Lavergne (District NRCS Conservationist, Dr Scott Manley (Director of Conservation Innovations).

Chairman Jimmy Landry called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm at the Marksville Courthouse.

Chairman Jimmy Landry said the opening prayer & led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Thomas David began a 40 minute discussion with an explanation of the Louisiana Water Initiative Program saying \$1.4 billion was in the program for HUD and the State of Louisiana. He explained how this money is available for initiative programs in state wide hydraulics model to develop programs since Louisiana has no models to work with at this time. He suggested models or ideas need to be on file, ready to go, in the event the monies become available to fund projects of great impact. He suggested some of the hazard mitigation money be used in this program is to prevent flooding, but Avoyelles could use some of the monies in smaller projects to move water. In our case, get water from the Red River into the Spring Bayou Complex. At pool stage, the water in the Red River is at 40-MSL while the Little River dam is at 40.8-MSL. His idea was to locate a barge in the Red River with spuds using a 250-HP engine to pipe the water over the levee into the complex through a well covered pipe (cannot drill through the levee). The cost of the project would be in the area of \$8 million to build everything. The obstacle is to pay for the diesel fuel to pump the water using an electric pump estimated to cost \$30,000.00 over a three month period or a diesel pump estimated to cost \$60,000.00 over the same three month period or 90-day cycle. Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde added this project was considered in the 1980's, but the Parish of Avoyelles could not afford to run the pumps. Avoyelles would be responsible for an additional 20% match of the estimated cost of \$1.6 million. Laborde added that the concrete lined ditches in Rapides parish have added to the water in Avoyelles from the lower 3rd area of Alexandria south east to the parish line. This has increased the influx of water into Avoyelles. Commissioner Jules Bordelon sought a correlation with this plan and the dredging in False River. More information will be required for this answer. When Jacques Goudeau questioned Thomas David about the suggestion to dredge Spring Bayou allowing the complex to hold more water, David stated the problems arise concerning the use of federal dollars in the project and its limitations to all the issues involved concerning wetlands. David concluded using a drawing of the complex area and emphasizing the water cannot just be dumped on someone else's property and digging Spring Bayou deeper was not the answer.

William Lavergne, NRCS District Conservationist, began a discussion on the Regional Conservation Project and its ability to assist and benefit private landowners under government guidelines. His plan is to hold the soils in the watershed and show gradual improvement by reducing soil loss from year to year. His project ideas need assistance from the landowners as some of the commissioners recognized how the project's ability to reduce soil loss would help a major problem seen in the Spring Bayou Complex, the issues of increased sedimentation. Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere expressed his visualization to target the loss of soil from the fields which stops erosion and leads to a reduction of siltation in the waterways and the complex. Lavergne's plan is a total resource management plan which cleans the water before it leaves, retains the soil in the original location, and prevents down river sedimentation. He stated how this process would bring in LDWF on the issues of water quality for the management of wildlife. When Chairman Landry asked Lavergne about using the same documented practice in a same area, Lavergne said the key was to identify a different problem in the same area making it a new idea and capable of additional funding. In another question from Chairman Landry, Lavergne responded the monies could be funneled to different levels of work in the same project, but the monies for dredging must be tied to the ultimate landowner.

Dr Scott Manley, Director of Conservation Innovation with Ducks Unlimited, was the next presenter. His drawback was the issues that develop when timber remains in water covered lands too long and the timber become stressed. Dr Manley explained how DU monies arise. He recognized how the annual DU Banquet in Avoyelles and other areas raise private investment dollars that get matched by public dollars. When Laborde question him about how the commission could get DU dollars, Dr Manley responded that key emphasis needs to focus on waterfowl/wetland issues. He stressed working on the lines of a bottomland forest system is a strong selling point, but a program allowing water in a hardwood forest area would not help an application. Dr Manley suggested a program submittal that would balance timber, wildlife, recreation, recreation, and aquatics would be beneficial to the success of getting funding. Here Laborde reminded everyone how Avoyelles is really the start of the Atchafalaya Basin.

Commissioner Roland Dugas presented a list of common facts and suggestions from the committee including the need for expertise in addressing issues, the common desire of commission members to work on dredging initiatives to reduce sedimentation which is a major problem in the complex, the need for a long term solution to remove the sediment, and the need for a long term solution to move sediment out the complex by selling the dredged material and hauling it far from the complex. He emphasized that sedimentation has been a problem in Spring Bayou since the 1950's and it needs to be eliminated on a long term basis. Scott Laborde, a SBRT member, tagged on that dredging is necessary, but steps need to be taken to stop or slow the process of sediment entering the Spring Bayou Complex in the first place. Jacques Goudeau, also with SBRT, suggested vegetative buffers or purchasing a small dredge to continually dredge the complex on a local level. Vice-Chairman Laborde complimented Commissioner Dugas on focusing on preventive measure to reduce sedimentation. Mr. Lavergne stepped into the

discussion pointing out that an acceptable technique is to slow the rate of the movement of water (velocity) which will allow the slower moving water to drop its sediment earlier. Chairman Landry concluded this discussion adding the Spring Bayou Complex has five water entry pathways.

Where are the water elevation markers for the Spring Bayou Complex? Chairman Landry explained that Signs+ decided not to charge for the signs declared unacceptable by the Spring Bayou Lake Commission made by his business (an estimated cost of \$700.00). Instead, another local vender will produce the markers according to approved guidelines by the commission for installation in the near future.

Concerning the property near Grand Lake landing deemed as a “Junk Yard”, Vice-Chairman Laborde stated DEQ has stepped in to monitor the salvage yard. Police Jury ordinances require the owner to surround the property with a fence which will hide the contents of the property from the public view. Laborde stated DEQ questioned the presence of appliances in a flood zone.

Commissioner Artha Hale gave an update on the Police Jury owned dam constructed at the lower end of Little River in 1955 and the associated three-gate control structure approximately 300-feet along side built in 1979. He said construction consist of sheet pilings with a concrete cap. Craig Laborde added that Bayou Rouge passes through his property and if the top of the dam (40.85 MSL) were increased above one foot, portions of his property would begin to flood. As of this evening, the water level at the dam was predicted to be at approximately 44-feet MSL and still rising. Craig Laborde stated portions of his property were covered with water at this time. It's Craig Laborde's opinion that the lifting of Little River Road a few years ago caused the road to act as a levee and the culverts are not sufficient because they slow the moving water. He emphasized any significant change in the level of the dam would affect him and other farmers. Commissioner Hale gave his opinion that the dam should be elevated to 42-feet MSL (a little over a foot higher).

Chairman Jimmy Landry began a discussion of the Spring Bayou Watershed Restoration Master Plan. He had very recently emailed the plan to all commissioners. The adoption procedure for the Master Plan is for our committee to adopt the plan as presented or modified. The next step is to submit the commission approved plan to the Avoyelles Police Jury for their review and adoption. Finally partnerships for the Master Plan need to be identified by sending letters of support to agencies to determine their contributions to the Master Plan. After a short discussion, Commissioner Roland Dugas presented a motion receiving a second by Commissioner Terry Laborde to delay approval to next month's meeting to allow everyone the opportunity to read and analyze the plan as presented. The vote was unanimous.

At 7:58 pm, Commissioner Hale presented a motion to adjourn. After a second by Terry Laborde, the motion received a unanimous vote.