

Spring Bayou Lake Commission September 16, 2019

The September 16, 2019, meeting of the Spring Bayou Lake Commission was called to order by Chairman Jimmy Landry at 6:00 pm in the Avoyelles Police Jury Meeting Room. Chairman Landry continued with the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Terry Laborde called roll with the following committee members present: Chairman Jimmy Landry, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux, Commissioner Artha Hale, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere, Commissioner Jules JK Bordelon, Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett, Juror Mark Borrel, and Juror Trent Clark. Also in attendance were Civil Works Director Kevin Bordelon, LDWF Biologist Jody David, Brad Launey from LDWF, Ronald Coco, engineer Ron Bordelon, Bill Jupp, Mike Ducote, Scott Laborde, Jacques Goudeau, James Franks, George Isreal, Brent Logan, Daryl Deshotel, Jonathan Lachney & Brad Sticker from DOTD, Brad Simeneaux, Dave Dixon & Harold Schoeffler from Acadian Watershed Group, Warren Byrd from RRABB, and other guest.

Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux made a motion to approve the minutes from the August Spring Bayou Lake Commission meeting, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde added the second, and the presented minutes were approved unanimously.

Daryl Deshotel, candidate for District 28 Representative, was first to address the commissioners. Deshotel expressed his views and plans for the betterment of Avoyelles including a focused direction for our parish, the need for economic development, the potential resources Spring Bayou offers, and a voice for Avoyelles in Baton Rouge.

Secretary Terry Laborde requested Civil Works Director Kevin Bordelon be moved up the agenda to allow his presence for personal business. Director Bordelon stated the elevations a Wolf Prairie Bridge have been done as requested and his crew is working on the elevations for the other bridges in Avoyelles not monitored by DOTD. The water elevation markers are to be installed in the upcoming week. There are plans to perform an inspection on the gates of the control structure down Little River. They are to use machinery to clear sediment from the structure, open and close the gates, and have the huge sandbags on location to stop the flow of water in the event of a malfunction. Chairman Landry's priority is the working of the mechanisms to open and close the gates. RRABB will have machinery on site along with the contractor Chris Dauzat (clear obstructions and remove an estimated 3-4 feet of sedimentation against the gates) to perform the work for \$2,500.00. At present there are six to eight inches of water flowing over the dam.

LDWF Biologist Jody David was next to address the commissioners on the subject of the Giant Salvinia infesting the complex by doubling in size every seven to ten days. The biologist stated the alien species appeared towards the end of 2017 and has since spread throughout the complex. It is assumed the vegetation was transported by boat trailers launching in other bodies of water and then launching in Spring Bayou. The spraying by LDWF has not proven to be completely effective on the Giant Salvinia and especially not in Valerie. Besides the herbicides, Biologist David says biological weevils are a possible solution in addition to a possible physical drawdown. He said LSU is working on the weevil project all over the state of Louisiana but it may take two to three years for the process to work because of their intolerance to cold weather. Biologist David said Bayou Chicot is on a three year drawdown program. Scott Laborde added that the clumps of Giant Salvinia move

with water currents. Commissioner Bordelon provided printed information concerning the herbicides that could be used for the Giant Salvinia and on agricultural farms.

Next discussion ensued on the topic of dredging. Biologist David stated the LDWF legal specialist had prepared documents to get signatures from the Boggy Bayou waterway land owners giving permission to dredge. Chairman Landry asked Biologist David about the plans of LDWF concerning participation in the commission's Master Plan since LDWF is the majority landowner. Figures of \$3.5 million emerged again when consideration is given to dredging the complex and pumping the sediment out the Spring Bayou complex. Commissioner Hale said as of now, the Tunica Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana has only given a verbal commitment on the purchase of a dredge boat scenario.

Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde questioned Biologist David about the position of LDWF on issues. Biologist David said the LDWF agrees with the commission's recommendations for dredging and the removal of the silt. The biologist said LDWF is only in favor of removing the sediment. However, Biologist David said LDWF opposes a plan to pump freshwater from the Red River into the Spring Bayou complex due to the threat of invasive species entering Spring Bayou and opposes the plan to raise the dam on Little River because it would flood timber and the accumulation of sediment would catch up the removal process.

Secretary Terry Laborde requested Biologist David's views on the dredging process and he responded that the dredging should be similar to the dredge of 1989 where spoil banks are placed in the center of the channel with slits every 800-feet. Commissioner Hale added that the dredged sediment should be put on the right side of the channel to build up the embankment. Commissioner Hale then asked Biologist David about the possible draw down since most residents oppose the idea of a drawdown. The biologist said the plan by LDWF is to dredge three to four feet in the channel to allow fish to survive then bring the water level down to dry the vegetation. George Isreal commented about the "hill" as Boggy Bayou turns into Little River. Isreal's plan is to plant trees in the new dredged sediment to hold the sediment. Isreal concluded saying, "In the past 12 years, Jody (David) has been a friend to Spring Bayou".

Commissioner JK Bordelon then vented frustration about the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury saying in a matter of words, if a plan is not acceptable by Col. Jones the project stops. Commissioner Bordelon continued with an explanation of the large amount of money spent on limestone towards Grassy Lake and nothing on the Police Jury Road. Commissioner Bordelon concluded his statements stating, in his opinion, there is a lack of pride in the parish and that there is no leadership in the parish.

Chairman Landry expressed his frustration saying that it is difficult to work an agenda into the Jury's schedule. Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett echoed the chairman's frustrations from his previous dealings with the Police Jury in Mansura saying the Police Jury must be on board for all projects. Chairman Landry said the purpose of the Spring Bayou Lake Commission is to make recommendations to the Police Jury, but there must be more cooperation in carrying out those recommendations.

Brad Sticker, the Water Resource Engineer with DOTD, was the next speaker. Mr. Sticker said the Little River dam, built in 1955, is sheet metal with a concrete cap and has not been included in the DOTD State Dam Safety Program because it was classified as a low hazard structure. The three gate management structure with 16-foot panels and embankments on both sides are parts of the dam. He plans for DOTD to do an initial assessment and get the dam into the program, but any modification must be approved by DOTD. Chairman Landry asked Mr. Sticker about funding for modifications, but Mr. Sticker said there is no funding for such a project and recommended modifying the present structure instead of considering a new structure. Chairman Landry and Juror Mark Borrel discussed the access road (Police Jury always has access) to the dam when weather condition take a turn for the worst and the road is nearly impassable for maintenance on the dam.

Pan American Engineer Ron Bordelon was the next speaker. Mr. Bordelon spoke on the submitted Capital Outlay projects including the dam and four other projects. He said the Little River dam project is now classified as a Priority II and no funding has been received yet this year even though a reported amount of \$207,000.00 was given earlier from an initial amount of \$240,000.00. He stressed the need for approval and significant pushing by our representative and senator in Baton Rouge. Secretary Laborde questioned Mr. Bordelon about his thoughts to continue with the current application for next year or submit a new application for more funding. Mr. Bordelon suggested letting this application continue cycling.

Warren Byrd, Executive Director with RRABB discussed the Bayou Des Glaise control structure in Bordelonville. The structure was built in 1929 and has been closed since 1967. After numerous floods in the 1970s, consideration was made to open the gates in 1977, but an inspection by the Corps of Engineering showed the chains and mechanisms to open the gates were beyond repair so a recommendation was made to close the RRABB owned structure for good in 1979. In 1939, the Bayou Des Glaise bypass diversion canal was dug/built. Discussion ensued on the waterway and the permanently sealed structure. Commissioner Bordelon stated the structure cannot be removed because it protects Avoyelles and upstream in the event of excessive water in the Atchafalaya River backing up. Discussion by Chairman Landry, Commissioner Bordelon, and Ronald Coco pointed out that excess water from Rapides parish flows down the Bayou Des Glaise Diversion Canal all the way to Port Barre. In discussion, caution was urged that future modifications to the Rapides water outlet system could dump more water in the Avoyelles direction.

Dave Dixon and Harold Schoeffler from the Acadian Watershed Group expanded on the drainage of water from Avoyelles, the top of the Zone 5 watershed. A plan for a possible 3.5-mile canal to be dug maybe an option. The complete project for the state has \$1.2 billion available, but to get funding they suggest a multi-parish plan for drainage. The projects fall under HUD and are scored where low-income housing is a consideration, helping Avoyelles. Avoyelles is split in two districts. Mr. Dixon and Mr. Schoeffler urged our representative and senator make “noise” concerning this \$1.2 billion project in order to secure more funding for Avoyelles in the Tech Watershed. Ten parishes throughout the state that were most effected by flooding in 2016 will receive 50% of the funding according to the grading system.

Commissioner Hale made a motion to adjourn, Secretary Laborde added the second, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 pm.