

**MINUTES OF
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST
SPECIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE INFORMTIONAL MEETING
HELD ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2024**

PRESENT: Deborah M. Settoon, Chair
Clay A. Cosse, President, Ex Officio Member

The Special Issues Committee of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority-East (Authority or FPA) was scheduled to meet on September 18, 2024, in the Franklin Avenue Administrative Complex, Meeting Room 201, 6920 Franklin Avenue, New Orleans, La. The Special Issues Committee did not have a quorum; therefore, an informational meeting was held. The meeting commenced at 11:15 a.m.

Opening Comments: Ms. Settoon introduced herself as Chair of the Special Issues Committee. Committee members Derek Rabb and Bill Settoon were unable to attend the meeting due to unavoidable circumstances. The informational meeting would cover the activation of the Special Issues Committee.

Mr. Cosse thanked Ms. Settoon for chairing the Special Issues Committee. The Committee will be able to address certain issues and potentially reduce the length of future Board meetings.

Public Comments: None

New Business:

A Discussion of the purpose and role of the Special Issues Committee.

Ms. Settoon explained that the Special Issues Committee is a standing committee included in the Board's Bylaws. The Bylaws state, "This Committee shall be responsible for the review and evaluation of special matters, as they may arise and are requested by the Board or its President." Several issues were brought up after Mr. Cosse requested that Ms. Settoon chair the Committee.

Ms. Settoon explained that the Special Issues Committee is not intended to interfere with the functions of the other committees in executing the mission of the FPA. The Committee address issues that are distracting or overreaching and could affect several entities. Key parameters include: 1) exceptional issues, 2) requests by the Board's President and items that could distract staff from their normal duties (e.g., a strategic plan).

B. Define key parameters for an FPA Strategic Plan.

Ms. Settoon explained that she, Mr. Cosse and Kelli Chandler, Regional Director, have had discussions about a Strategic Plan. The plan should include a strategy for all of the FPA's funding to ensure sufficient money is available for the implementation of maintenance or replacement projects.

Ms. Settoon advised that as a consultant for Texaco she participated in the strategic plan development of a major economic value (all of the exploration and production in the Gulf of Mexico). Standard strategy development was utilized which includes the following: an evaluation of the industry, a self-analysis (strengths and weaknesses), a competitor assessment, an evaluation of industry opportunities and threats, and a business strategy. The FPA has no true competitors. As an organization, the FPA has strengths and weaknesses, opportunities (e.g., grants) and threats (e.g., climate change) within the industry. She suggested a streamlined version of the standard strategy development process. The main input (a long-range financial plan) will be provided by the Regional Finance Director. Opportunities for additional funding and threats will be considered. Additional information on the proposed strategic plan will be provided at the next Special Issues Committee meeting.

C. Update on status of work performed for the proposed International Center for Storm Surge Barrier Research, Public Education and Satellite Maintenance Facility. Evaluate need for Attorney General's opinion to allow flood protection tax revenues to be spent on educational purposes.

Ms. Settoon explained that the Board discussed the need for the proposed International Center for Storm Surge Barrier Research, Public Education and Satellite Maintenance Facility. However, she did not find anything in the statutes establishing the Flood Protection Authorities that allowed the FPA to spend money on anything other than flood protection. She suggested, in order to receive clear direction, that the FPA request a formal opinion from the Attorney General (AG) about whether the FPA can spend tax revenues on educational purposes. The request for an AG opinion requires a resolution of the Board. A motion was placed on the agenda for the Board's September 19 meeting to request an AG opinion. She explained that she wanted to be assured that the FPA is within its legal bounds before it spends much more money on the project. This AG opinion was not intended to dissuade anyone from using FPA funds for seed money to attract grants for construction of such a center or to using FPA funds for normal maintenance such as a building to house maintenance equipment.

Wilma Heaton, Director of Governmental Affairs, advised that she recently discovered that a Federal agency is seeking funding to build a visitor center in close proximity to the FPA's planned facility. She suggested that the FPA may wish to collaborate with this Federal agency on a facility. Additional information will be provided. Ms. Settoon suggested that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers be brought in as a stakeholder on the project.

D. Implementation of an Action Item List.

Ms. Settoon advised that she would like to have an action item list implemented for the Board and key staff. The list would track requests from Commissioners and other individuals and responses. The updated list can be distributed prior to Board meetings.

Ms. Chandler stated that she missed the discussion earlier in the meeting on the strategic plan and asked about takeaways. Ms. Settoon explained that rather than doing a full-blown strategic plan, the Committee will start with the financial plan as the basis and then consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Ms. Chandler stated that she had put together some items and goals that would go into a strategic plan and said that feedback from the Board would be greatly appreciated. Ms. Settoon advised that this would come under the Special Issues Committee.

There were no further items of discussion; therefore, the meeting ended at 11:30 a.m.