

MINUTES OF  
SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA FLOOD PROTECTION AUTHORITY-EAST  
OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON JANUARY 9, 2008

PRESENT: Larry McKee, Chair - SLFPAE  
David Barnes, SLFPAE  
Timothy Doody, SLFPAE  
Louis Wittie, SLFPAE  
Jerry Colletti, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)  
Larry Audoin, LA Department of Transportation & Development  
Robert Turner, SLFPA-E Regional Director/LBBLD Exec. Director  
Stevan Spencer, O.L.D. Executive Director  
Fran Campbell, EJLD Executive Director

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The Operations Committee met on January 9, 2008 in the Second Floor Hall of the Lake Vista Community Center, 6500 Spanish Fort Blvd., New Orleans, LA. Chairman McKee called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m. Committee members introduced themselves.

The agenda was amended to include the following additional items for discussion: tractor cages, West Return Floodwall seepage and grass specifications. A motion was offered by Mr. Doody, seconded by Mr. Wittie, to adopt the agenda as amended.

Discussion of Tractor Cages:

Mr. McKee inquired about rear cages on levee district tractors. Mr. Stevan Spencer, Orleans Levee District (O.L.D.) Executive Director and Mr. Bob Turner, Lake Borgne Basin Levee District (LBBLD) Executive Director, described roll over or other features currently on O.L.D. and LBBLD tractors and similar equipment.

Mr. McKee requested that Mr. Turner review OSHA requirements concerning this issue and bring a recommendation back to the Committee. Mr. Turner pointed out governmental agencies are exempt from OSHA requirements; however, he would report on the safety issues.

Discussion of West Return Floodwall Seepage (EJLD):

Mr. McKee advised the Rapid Response Team, along with the USACE, had looked at this situation and requested that the Committee be updated.

Mr. Colletti reported, as far as structural issues are concerned, the findings do not indicate that seepage is a problem. A test section will be done on at least two joints. He described the test to be performed and advised further decisions will be made based on those findings. He reiterated that there is no belief that there is a structural problem.

Mr. Turner advised Mr. Colletti was addressing T-wall sections; however, there was an I-wall section that some East Jefferson Levee District (EJLD) maintenance personnel expressed concern about where they thought there may have been some seepage back

in September. USACE and DOTD representatives, along with levee district representatives, looked at this situation. The new sheetpile was driven at an elevation of -45 ft. Also, since there is only a two foot differential between the outside water surface and inside ground elevations, it was felt that a seepage problem at this location was unlikely. A sample of the water was taken along the bike path and from the lake immediately adjacent, and results indicated significant salinity from the bike path sample and less salinity from the lake sample. He went over the details of the results of the water sample tests and advised that after evaluating these results it could be assumed the water may have been produced by one of several means (e.g., seepage, heavy rainfall events, etc.). To provide further assurance that there is not an on-going seepage problem, Eustis Engineering was engaged by the EJLD at an estimated cost of \$4,400 to look into this matter. The USACE will provide Eustis Engineering with soils information and as built drawings for the I-wall. Further information should be received within the next 30 days.

#### Discussion of Grass Specifications:

The subject of the return of levees to the levee districts at the completion of construction projects, and maintenance problems associated with insufficient growth of grass, had previously been discussed by the Committee.

Mr. Colletti reported that a contractor has been engaged in a sixteen month contract and will be working with two LSU professors doing test sections in various areas of different levees and will be looking throughout the state at different types of materials and grasses. The USACE also has a contractor for making immediate repairs on existing levee construction projects, which is being coordinated through the project managers.

Mr. McKee requested that the Committee be provided a copy of the USACE's seeding/grass specifications. Mr. Colletti commented the USACE has acknowledged that its original specifications were not adequate and that the purpose of engaging a contractor was to improve those specifications.

The following recommendations were offered: contractors going through one mowing cycle or season; contractors seeding and maintaining grass as projects progress, and a storm water plan requiring temporary seeding to prevent erosion.

Mr. Turner commented on the use of best value evaluation where proposals are evaluated based on their merits and contractors provide a seeding plan and progression of work, which is part of the consideration.

Mr. Colletti advised he would get with the USACE's construction people about this matter.

#### Levee District Reports:

Reports were distributed by each of the three levee districts and are attached and made a part of these minutes.

East Jefferson Levee District: Ms. Campbell advised changes were highlighted in the EJLD report. The final analysis for providing 100 year protection on the West Return levee has been received and are available. It was noted that projects for Reaches 1 and 3 have not been accepted for maintenance due to grass and surface issues. Contract awards for canal frontal protection under Reaches 1, 2 and 3, as well as Reach 5 levee raising, have slipped to early 2009. EJLD is working with LSU and Parish, State and Federal officials on authorization and funding for a shoreline protection project, which is currently in the concept stage, that would incorporate recreation and wetlands mitigation. Regulatory approval on 404 Permits was briefly discussed.

Orleans Levee District: Mr. Spencer advised the Finance and Purchasing Departments, which were displaced from the Airport Admin. Bldg. after Katrina, have been relocated to the Franklin Admin. Bldg., and the five trailers which had housed those employees and were being paid for by FEMA have been returned. Four trailers still remain.

Projects LPV 102 and 104 (lakefront earthen levee raising) are well underway. The USACE has awarded the contract for LPV 103. The current design for Project LPV 101 (Orleans Marina Floodwall) would replace the wall and provide 100 year protection; the USACE is currently working on the construction details. The USACE provided a status of LPV 105 thru 111 (included in report). LPV 108 when constructed will be raised to the 100 year authorized grade; however, a large foreshore rock berm will be needed. The earthen levee work (raising the levee to elevation 15) on the GIWW south side from the IHNC to Paris Road Bridge is 50% complete.

The Committee discussed communications problems between the USACE, DOTD and levee districts, in regards to coordination and participation in construction inspections.

Inspection reports for the Mississippi River and hurricane protection system levees were submitted for the fourth quarter of calendar year 2007. The floodgate inspection was just completed and will be submitted this week.

Status of IHNC Hurricane Protection Project: Design-build proposals will be received on January 7<sup>th</sup> and award of the design-build contract is anticipated in March, 2008, with construction to commence in the summer of 2008. Interim measures have been done. DOTD has a draft of the PCA, which must be executed before contract award.

The vegetation along the inside of the outfall canals has been removed, allowing inspection of the floodside of the floodwalls (quarterly inspections are required). DOTD and levee district representatives participated in the final inspection of Task Force Guardian projects. USACE will provide the O.L.D. the status of remaining projects. A two day Lakefront Pump Station Stakeholders meeting is scheduled for January 22-23.

The USACE scheduled a meeting the evening of January 10<sup>th</sup> with property owners on the 17<sup>th</sup> Street Canal (fattened levee section) south of Veterans Highway. Mr. Doody advised the USACE has established a theoretical toe for the fattened levee section and extended the line six feet from the theoretical toe. Most trees and structures are outside

of that line; however, the current understanding regarding the fattened levee section is the fence and trees would need to be removed at one property.

Mr. Spencer advised he requested that Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc., put together a summary and status on the wetlands restoration and shoreline protection work they had done for the O.L.D. prior to Hurricane Katrina for areas east of the Lakefront Airport.

Maintenance of the inside of the outfall canals by the Sewerage & Water Board (S&WB) was discussed. Mr. Doody suggested he and Mr. Wittie begin a dialog with Ms. Marcia St. Martin (S&WB) regarding this issue.

Lake Borgne Basin Levee District: Mr. Turner reported the post-Katrina emergency repairs are 100% completed; however, sections along the MRGO have not been accepted by the LBBLD; the levee district is working with the USACE, particularly between Bayou Bienvenue and Bayou Dupre, on the repair of substantial rills, vegetation problems and damage by wild hogs. He commented on the LPVHPP accelerated completion of projects to Pre-Katrina authorized grades. Relative to the LPV 142 (IHNC to Paris Road) levee enlargement, the USACE found unsuitable materials in some sections, and degraded and rebuilt those sections. Additional geotechnical investigations are being done in other sections of the levee. The construction contract was awarded on October 31<sup>st</sup> for LPV 148.01 (Verret to Caernarvon Levee raising); the pre-construction meeting was held and notice to proceed is anticipated to be issued in the next week or two for the 365 day project.

The USACE project status for 100 year protection was incorporated in LBBLD's report. Mr. Turner noted the Draft Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) was completed on August 3, 2007, for the work basically from Bayou Bienvenue to Verret. The USACE Project Delivery Team and LBBLD reviewed this report and provided comments. Changes to the PER are on-going and the final PER is scheduled for completion in February, 2008. Plans and specifications are anticipated to be ready for December, 2008; therefore, funding will be required to be in place and real estate issues resolved by this time next year in order to execute the PCA's.

Task Order No. 15 is for a study to determine whether the 40 Arpent Levee, which is currently a non-Federal levee, could be made part of the hurricane protection system and designated a Federal levee. The USACE is developing a boring plan for subsequent soil investigations so that it can continue its investigation and determine whether this would be cost effective and feasible from an engineering perspective.

Status of cleaning of the drainage canals: Virtue Street Canal, Guichard Canal, Vista Canal Sites 1 and 2, and Forty Arpent Canal Reach 1 are 100% completed. Back Levee Canal Reach 1 is 23% complete (completion schedule for May, 2008); Reach 2 is 16% complete (completion scheduled for April, 2008). Forty Arpent Canal Reach 2 contract was awarded and notice to proceed issued in December, 2007 (completion scheduled for March, 2008). Twenty Arpent Canal is 69% complete. Plans and specifications have been done for the Bluebird Ditch and Artillery Ditch; however, LBBLD is awaiting funding. The debris and sediment removal at canal segments (silt and debris removal from a total of 19 miles of drainage canals) is 100% complete.

The Drainage Pump Station (2, 3 and 5) Projects are progressing. DOTD is assisting with review of plans and specifications. Completion is estimated for August, 2008.

#### Discussion of levee inspections:

Mr. McKee commented during the recent levee school there was considerable discussion of levee inspections and record keeping.

Mr. Audoin explained forms were developed almost two years ago. A levee school was started in this past year to help inspectors know what to look for, and training is anticipated to be modified to emphasize how forms are to be completed. DOTD is working towards uniformity for all levee districts and coastal zones. The Code of Federal Regulations requires inspections every 90 days. He felt there was room for improvement and stressed the need for thoroughness in the quarterly inspections. The annual inspections with the USACE are to assure compliance.

Use of GPS in identifying problem areas was discussed. Mr. Colletti advised the USACE and DOTD will each send two representatives to St. Louis in March or April to learn about a computer based work tool that would address this identification issue. He hoped this software could be downloaded on any computer.

Mr. Doody commented on the importance of standardizing reporting by the three levee districts. The difficulty of doing all the inspections required for the O.L.D. due to the current lack of staff to perform these inspections was discussed.

The Committee discussed use of the term "deficiency" for situations that require continued monitoring and whether a better term could be used. Mr. Ardoin commented on the intent to develop criteria through the LA Transportation Research Center to evaluate, rate and prioritize deficiencies, which could become a tool for seeking funding for repairs.

Mr. McKee noted the subject of levee inspections will continued to be addressed by the Committee.

#### Discussion of Vehicle Policy:

A preliminary policy was previously provided by Mr. Wittie. Mr. McKee requested that Mr. Wittie contact the executive directors for the levee districts and work out a take home vehicle policy to be brought back to the Committee at its February meeting.

#### Discussion of Payment of Insurance Premiums:

Ms. Campbell requested, since premiums must be paid monthly in advance, that the Committee consider instituting a policy for prorating health insurance premiums for individuals who sever their employment with the levee districts. Mr. Turner noted that the Office of Group Benefits and Cobra rules may dictate otherwise and recommended that this issue be reviewed and brought back to the Committee at its next meeting.

Informational items:

Mr. Audoin advised Governor Jindal has appointed Mr. Garret Graves as the Director of the Governor's Office of Coastal Affairs.

Mr. Barnes suggested that the topic of emergency repairs/response be addressed at next month's meeting. Comments were offered on the importance of knowing what resources are available in each district's jurisdiction and adjacent districts in the event of failures and where there are areas of vulnerability. It was noted that each levee district has an emergency response plan; however, those plans must be flexible and adaptable. It was also noted that DOTD has pre-placed contracts. Mr. Colletti suggested the USACE's Emergency Response Manager attend the Committee's next meeting. Mr. Turner discussed the status of radio communications between the levee districts.

Mr. Spencer advised the USACE sent out flyers on public meetings being held in regards to IER's on borrow pits and that a schedule would be provided by Ms. Heaton via e-mail. The Association of Levee Boards' Executive Committee meeting will be held on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

There was no further business, therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.