

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for July 24, 2014, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterways Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on July 24, 2014, at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated July 21, 2011. Printed materials presented at the meeting are available for copying at the office of the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Unit at 2901 Turtle Creek Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642. The meeting information and power point presentations are also available electronically through the SETWAC website www.setwac.org.

1. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Kelley at 10:00am.

Remarks by the Chairman:

- Chairman Larry Kelley welcomed guests and members
- He introduced Captain Randal Ogrydziak, new COTP, and he asked all SETWAC members and guests to introduce themselves in turn. Approximately 65 members and guests were present.
- Mr. Kelly called forward Mr. Blake Hopper, Deputy District Director for Congressman Randy Weber, and, together with Mr. Blake Hopper and Captain Randal Ogrydziak, they presented a Certificate of Appreciation form SETWAC and an American flag that had flown over the Capital to out-going and former SETWAC Chairman Randal Reese.
- Mr. Kelley called on Captain Randal Ogrydziak for his remarks.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Captain Ogrydziak remarked that he was glad to back in southeast Texas and that the MSU Port Arthur COTP position was his requested assignment.
- Captain Ogrydziak thanked all for coming and praised the committee for the coordination and initiative of the past.
- He said he wanted to continue to encourage discussion and debate of issues through the proven SETWAC forum.

3. Approval of the January 23, 2014 minutes:

A motion was made and passed to approve the previous meetings minutes.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report

- Captain Mark Taylor mentioned the recent Waterway Suitability Assessment (WSA) that was conducted for Enterprise Marine on July 22, 2014. He said there were no on-going, troublesome issues or navigation related objections with the project as presented.

Port Welfare Sub-Committee Report

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre was not in attendance at the meeting, but Mike Measells reported that Fr. Oubre had sent word that he had no new items to report to the committee.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-Committee Report

- Mr. Randy Reese reported that the Sabine-Neches Deepening and Widening Project had been approved and signed by the President; however, he said that the next step was to secure funding for the project. Mr. Reese remarked that both Texas and Louisiana legislators had been supportive of the funding, and he encouraged SETWAC members to contact their legislators and ask them to be supportive as well.
- Mr. Reese said that the earliest that funding could be in place would be late 2015-2016.

USACE Waterway Maintenance Report

Paula Wise with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave an operations and maintenance update on the following:

- Neches River Channel:
 - o On-going.
 - o Expected Completion Date (delayed to) August 2014..
- Outer Bar and Bank Channel:
 - o Estimated start date is End of September or early October 2014.
 - o Estimated completion date is December, 2014
- Port Arthur Canal:
 - o Planned award date: Sep 9,2014
 - o Planned start date: Oct 3, 2014
 - o Planned completion date: Aug 6, 2015
- Sabine Jetties radar reflector project:
 - o Project contract awarded June 2014.
 - o Working with SNNND to provide maintenance funding.
 - o Construction scheduled for October 2014.

Waterway Security Sub-Committee Report

- Mr. Jeremy Hansen was scheduled to present a brief update on AMSC initiatives, but Mr. Hansen was unexpectedly called away and the report was tabled for a future meeting.

ATON Status/Projects Report

- Newly arrived USCG ANT Sabine Chief Craig Hayes reported on the status of ATON for the Sabine-Neches Waterway and on plans for upgrading many of the night ranges to day ranges – a transition that was applauded by Captain Mark Taylor of the Navigation Sub-Committee. Mr. Hayes and Captain Taylor engaged in an informative and productive discussion of ATON priorities and schedules.

5. New Business:

1. SETWAC Chairman Larry Kelley introduced recently hired TxDOT Marine Division Port Operations Director Michael Perez. Mr. Perez made a brief introduction to the group of the current organization of TxDOT Marine Division and his role with the organization. Mr. Perez offered to return to a future SETWAC meeting to make a more formal, detailed presentation about TxDOT Marine Division.
2. Mr. John Moore, Electronics Material Officer (EMO) for Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), Port Arthur narrated a power point presentation about on-going USCG efforts to dismantle, temporarily replace, and permanently re-locate the VTS radar and camera tower on Humble Island. Mr. Moore stated that waterway erosion had taken over 200 feet off the bluff (at a rate of about 3 feet per month) since Hurricane Ike, and that the existing tower was being condemned. The temporary tower should be in place by September-October 2014. The permanent replacement tower should be in place by 2016. VTS service interruption during the transition from the existing tower to the temporary tower to the permanent replacement tower is expected to be minimal.
3. LTJG Akaninyene Inyang, USCG presented a short power point presentation that included an 8-10 year look-ahead of “New Projects and Plans for the Sabine-Neches Waterway”. The presentation showed that approximately 10-12 new projects were already in the works that would result in an estimate of over \$40 billion in new construction and an increase in deep draft vessel traffic of over 200 vessel transits per month – a 42% increase in ship traffic over an 8 year period.
4. Mr. Mike Measells, USCG, citing the anticipated increase in dredge operations as a result of the recently approved Sabine-Neches Deepening Project, presented a recommendation to amend the existing SETWAC charter to add a new standing committee for “Dredging Operations”. The Dredging Operations would be chaired by the Port Arthur Resident Engineer (ACOE) and include members representing Pilots, Inland Towing Industry, VTS, and Sabine-Neches Navigation District. The new committee would monitor dredging activities and meet with dredgers to coordinate waterway and navigation related dredging issues. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to amend the charter and move ahead with the program.

6. Next Meetings:

- The working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District office on Thursday, October 9, 2014 at 10:00 am.
- The full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, October 30, 2014 at 10:00 am.

7. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.