

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for April 28, 2016, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterways Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on April 28, 2016 at Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated January 23, 2014. 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. 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 promptly at 10:00 by SETWAC Chairman Larry Kelley.

2. Remarks by the Chairman:

- Chairman Larry Kelley welcomed guests and members.
- SETWAC members and guests were asked to introduce themselves in turn. Approximately 75 people were present (23 members and 52 guests).
- Mr. Kelley called Mr. Michael Measells to the podium to be recognized for his contributions to SETWAC. A flag flown over the U.S. Capitol and certificate was presented to Mr. Measells. Industry comments were solicited and provided by 6 present members.
- Mr. Kelley called on Commander Lovejoy, Acting COTP, for his remarks.

3. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Commander Lovejoy welcomed all.
- He communicated Captain Ogrydziak regrets for being absent.

4. Approval of the January 28, 2016 Minutes:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes.

5. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report

- Sabine Pilot President, Captain Mike Egan, reported that the Navigation Sub-Committee had met to review a Waterway Suitability Assessment submitted to the Coast Guard by Jefferson Railport Terminal. The sub-committee recommended that a report of no objection be made to the Captain of the Port. A motion to accept the no-objection report was made and seconded.

- Captain Egan reported that a new simulator, designed to replicate the unique geography and condition of the Sabine-Neches Waterway, was approximately 4-5 months from delivery.

Port Welfare Sub-Committee Report:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre reported on the “Voluntary Tariffs” program and the costs associated with maintaining vans for transporting seaman into town.
- Seafarer’s Center to hold annual National Maritime Day observances recognition on May 22, 2016. Intending to have the Color Guard present again. He also mentioned recognizing Station Sabine and commissioning of the new pilot boat.
- Terrie Looney presented information about the economic importance of the shrimp fishing industry to Texas in general and Jefferson County in particular. High landings this year have resulted in a decline in value. Imported shrimp still a significant proportion of total shrimp market.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-Committee Report

USACE Waterway Maintenance Report

- Paul Beard reviewed the status of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA). No funding identified from the federal government yet.
- Navigation District continues to work on improving the Benefits-to-Cost Ratio (BCE) and getting funding included in the FY-18 budget.
- Mr. Ed Morgan gave an operations and maintenance update on projects and planned bid solicitations scheduled for 2016.
- He reported that a contract is close to being final to repair / replace the mooring buoys located on the Intracoastal Waterway.
- He also reported that USACE signed the Sabine-Neches Waterway Setback Policy on April 7, 2016.
- He reported that the Galveston office continues to work on issuing letters to pipeline owners and finalizing contract language for dredges operating near pipelines.
- He reported on the USACE’s conversions to Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) Datum to be in alignment with other government agencies. He also reported the status of tide gauge conversion project.
- His presentation is posted on the SETWAC.org web site.

Dredging Operations Sub-Committee Report - Ed Morgan

- Ed Morgan reported on on-going private projects on the Sabine-Neches Waterway. Some private projects are in the works including Motiva and Total.
- Mr. Morgan reported that facilities are required to maintain their permitted structures.
- Details of Mr. Morgan’s presentation are posted on the SETWAC Web site.

Waterway Security Sub-Committee Report

- Mr. Jeremy Hansen briefly reported on next AMSC meeting to be held on May 24, 2016.
- He advertised a Cyber-Security meeting at MSU Port Arthur on May 11, 2016.
- Marine Fire Fighting and Salvage – first 3 marine firefighter graduates and discussed the Mutual Aid Agreement with Houston Fire Dept.
- Mr. Hansen reported that the Port Risk Mitigation Plan needs to be updated (last 2009). AET offered to help.

ATON Status/Projects Report

- BMC Craig Hayes, USCG ANT Sabine, reported on the status of ATON on the Sabine –Neches Waterway.
- He reported on the status of the new VTS / Rear Range “N” replacement – construction to begin May-June 2016.
- He emphasized the importance of prompt and accurate reporting of ATON knockdown. He reported on a recently unreported knockdown where the company was billed ~\$125,000 in replacement costs.
- He reported on the LED conversion project which stands at approximately 44%.
- A copy of his presentation is posted on the SETWAC web site.

6. Old Business:

- There was no Old Business on the agenda.

7. New Business:

- LT Austin Campbell provided an overview for port hurricane preparedness as southeast Texas approached hurricane season. He provided a very brief overview of port conditions and the Coast Guards expectations for industry. Reference was made to an Industry Hurricane Information document that is available at the VTS website and on Homeport. His presentation is available on the SETWAC web site
- Mr. Albright inquired about safe mooring for fishing vessels. It was reported that the Port of Beaumont has graciously agreed to allow shrimp vessels to moor at their facility.
- Mr. Greg Fountain reported on hurricane preparation from emergency management preparedness. He discussed access efforts and reminded everyone that the old hologram program is no longer in effect.
- CDR John Lovejoy commented that the CG would be exercising its’ plan to evacuate to Tyler, TX.

- Mr., Bill Worshan was introduced. He explained the importance of protecting coastal marshes that, in turn, protect the city of Port Arthur (and all coastal communities) by reducing the amount of surge further inland. He also reported that Judge Brannick was working to obtain funding for this endeavor.
- Mr. Worshan also reported on beach sand restoration from Sea Rim State Park to High Island. Mr. Albright asked about other funding sources. Mr. Worshan described a variety of joint efforts involving TGLO, TPW, the Navigation District and other multi-agency approaches that might be beneficial.
- Mr. Chris Ransome reported on state of the art underwater inspection equipment and techniques including multi-beam depth sounding systems, side scan sonar, imaging sonar, and horizontal imaging techniques. His presentation is available on the SETWAC website.
- Mr. Aaron Heniger reported on fish fouling ship sea-chest strainers and causing overheating. He encouraged reporting of instances where ships were impacted by fish fouling by use of the Menhaden Questionnaire.
- Cheniere reported on the status of their exports and number of ships per week as they increase exports.
- Dr. Brian Craig introduced Mr. Eric Stromberg, the new Director of Port Management Studies at Lamar University.

8. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, July 14, 2016, 10:00 a.m..
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, July 28, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

9. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.