

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterways Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on January 28, 2016, 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 promptly at 10:00 by SETWAC Chairman Larry Kelley.

2. Remarks by the Chairman:

- Chairman Larry Kelley welcomed guests and members.
- He asked all SETWAC members and guests to introduce themselves in turn. Approximately 60 people were present (23 members and 37 guests).
- Mr. Kelley called on Captain Randal Ogrydziak, COTP, for his remarks.

3. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Captain Ogrydziak welcomed all.
- He highlighted upcoming presentations later in the program and made particular note of the agenda item "Sabine-Neches Setback Policy" under the new business section.
- He introduced and recognized U. S. Army Captain Robert Burnham who headed the Sabine-Neches Setback work group and was scheduled for presentation later in the program.

4. Approval of the October 22, 2015 Minutes:

A motion was made seconded, and the committee approved the previous meetings minutes.

5. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report

- Newly elected Sabine Pilot President, Captain Mike Egan, in his first meeting as head of the SETWAC Navigation Sub-Committee, introduced himself and his fellow Sabine Pilot officers for the 2016 calendar year – Captain Mike Egan, President. Captain Chuck LaHaye, Vice President. Captain Brian Thibodeaux, Secretary-Treasurer. Captain Craig Arnaud, Vice President of Boat Operations.

Port Welfare Sub-Committee Report:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre reported on the establishment of the new Lamar State College – Orange Marine Industry Training Courses. He said that the courses were made possible by a \$1 million grant from the State of Texas and that Mr. Tyler J. Crawford had been hired to run the program. A copy of Fr. Oubre’s presentation is posted along with the other meeting presentations on the SETWAC.org website.
- Fr. Oubre also briefed on the status and recent activities of both the Port Arthur and Beaumont Seaman Centers – separate organizations but temporarily working together and sharing some resources during a transition period for the Seaman’s Center of Beaumont.
- Fr. Oubre invited all SETWAC guests and members to the Port Arthur Seaman’s Center on the evening of January 28, 2016 for a cocktail party and fund raiser.
- Fr. Oubre also briefed on the possibility that “Tall Ships America” might consider a port call to the Port Arthur area later in the year. He offered to keep members posted.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-Committee Report

- ***USACE Waterway Maintenance Report***
- Neither Mr. Randy Reese nor newly hired Matthew Kaufman of the Sabine-Neches Navigation District were able to attend the meeting because of a conflict with an important meeting relating to cost-benefit analysis for the Sabine-Neches Deepening Project, but SETWAC Chairman Larry Kelley noted the importance of the meeting that they were attending and that this was a major step in moving along the Sabine-Neches deepening project.
- Mr. Ed Morgan reported on on-going private projects on the Sabine-Neches Waterway. There were no ACOE dredging projects currently in progress.
- Mr. Ed Morgan gave an operations and maintenance update on projects and planned bid solicitations scheduled for 2016.
- His presentation is posted on the SETWAC.org web site.
- He also introduced U. S. Army Captain Haley Mercer, new ACOE Operations Manager for the Sabine-Neches Waterway to who would be replacing Nancy Young, who had been filling a temporary position to replace the retired Paula Wise.

Dredging Operations Sub-Committee Report - Ed Morgan

- Mr. Ed Morgan reported that there were no on-going ACOE dredging activities on the Sabine-Neches.
- Mr. Ed Morgan reported again that 11 pipelines had been identified on the Sabine – Neches Waterway that were not buried deep enough to accommodate project depth dredging operations and that the ACOE was moving to make formal demands for surveys, repositioning, or removal of the lines.
- Mr. Morgan also updated SETWAC on the progress of on-going work to compile a list of discrepant facilities with ACOE permits. He offered to continue to provide updates on this project.
- Details of Mr. Morgan’s presentation are posted on the SETWAC Web site.

Waterway Security Sub-Committee Report

- Captain Randal Ogrydziak briefly reported on successful cyber security surveys that had been conducted in Lake Charles and the Calcasieu Waterway that would be expanded to include the Sabine-Neches Waterway later in the year. The survey, as he described it, involved a specially equipped vessel to transit the navigation channel and adjacent areas and search for un-password-protected, and inadequate-password-protected Wi-fi signals that might leave the operations and controls of waterway facilities vulnerable to cyber attack – with the results of the survey to be shared with the affected facilities.

ATON Status/Projects Report

- BMC Craig Hayes, USCG ANT Sabine, reported on the status of ATON on the Sabine – Neches Waterway.
- He mentioned that ATON strikes by vessels and the resulting repair costs had been higher than normal in the previous year.
- He emphasized the importance of prompt and accurate reporting of ATON knockdown or outage and provided a 24-hour contact number.
- 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:

- Mr. Scott Whalen VTS Port Arthur gave a power point presentation about new AIS requirements and how the Class B AIS units might affect waterway users. His presentation is posted on the SETWAC.org web site.

- Mr. Mike Measells, Director of Vessel Traffic Service Port Arthur gave the annual State of the Waterway Presentation for 2015. Highlights of the presentation were:

- Tanker transits were down 6.6% over 2014.
- Freighter transits were down 11%.
- Inland boat and barge tow transits were up slightly.
- However, the overall transit count was basically unchanged from 2014.
- Groundings and Collisions were basically unchanged for 2015.
- Allisions were up for 2015.
- Total incidents were slightly down for the year.
- Beaumont/Port Arthur remained the third largest tonnage port in the US.

- Captain Robert Burnham gave a power point presentation detailing the new methodology and new criteria for initial review of U. S. Army Corps permit applications as they relate to setback from the toe of the channel slope. Captain Burnham's presentation is posted in its entirety on the SETWAC.org web site; and the ACOE will send public notices requesting further comments on their new Setback Policy prior to implementation.

- Chairman Larry Kelley reminded members and guests of the upcoming National Harbor Safety Conference scheduled for September 13-15 at the Red Lion Hotel in Portland, OR.

- Ms Laci Theriot, Ransom and Associates, announced to the SETWAC group that her organization had scheduled additional dock dredging seminars and provided registration information.

- Mr. Brian Hill, MARAD, discussed new Port Security Grant opportunities.

8. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, April 14, 2016, at 10:00.

- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, April 28, 2016, at 10:00.

9. Adjourn

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.