

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for October 25, 2018, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on October 25, 2018 at Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated April 26, 2018. 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 at 10:05 am by SETWAC Vice-Chairman Chris Fisher. Mr. Fisher welcomed all participants and observers. 69 people were present. All SETWAC members and attendees introduced themselves. Mr. Fisher turned over the floor to the Captain of the Port.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Captain Jacqueline Twomey gave welcoming remarks. She spoke to the dynamic challenges facing the waterway in regards to the deepening and widening project. CAPT Twomey updated membership on the NPRM to disestablish the Sabine Federal Anchorage; the events accompanying the spill and subsequent clean-up after the ill-fated bunker at the Port of Port Arthur; the recent sinking of a fishing vessel off the Sabine Jetty and the incident involving M/V Artic Blizzard and the sunken 24-inch dredge pipeline.
- CAPT Twomey stressed that port partners remains engaged and vigilant and to promptly contact the MSU and/or VTS for issues throughout the waterway.

3. Approval of the July 26, 2018 Minutes:

- A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the July 26, 2018 minutes.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- CAPT Charles LaHaye commented on his optimism that the Deeping and Widening Project would commence, as scheduled, in 2019.
- CAPT LaHaye reminded port partners to remain cognizant of winter weather; plan and prepare accordingly to forestall potential delays, however, understand that delays are inevitable throughout the fog and winter weather season.
- CAPT LaHaye asked for a vote to hold a meeting at SNND to discuss the sequence of events and challenges for the Deeping and Widening Project. A vote was made and seconded to hold the meeting at 1:30 PM on October 25, 2018 (same day).

Port Education, Research, Port Welfare & Workforce Development Sub-committee Report:

- Mr. Erik Stromberg, Center for Advances in Port Management Lamar University, addressed the Education, Research and Workforce Development Program (ERWD) at Lamar. He commented on the program's organization and proposed first-year initiatives including the Workforce Development Workshop on December 6, 2018; the Student Bus Tour between Houston and New Orleans during the summer of 2019, and SNWW resiliency initiatives.
- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Port Arthur International Seafarer Center, addressed the "unexpected" visit of cadets from the Texas A&M Maritime Academy after the T/S General Rudder experienced a casualty and was forced into dry-dock for repairs. Fr. Oubre also addressed "Seafarer's Access" rules and the pending implementation of said rules.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:

- Mr. Randy Reese, SNND, informed membership that the FY-19 work plan (first engineering portion) for the Deeping and Widening Project was 90% complete. Mr. Reese commented that he'd met with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works and the Director of Civil Works on October 24, 2018. The work plan was approved by Congress, signed by the President, and is now awaiting full approval by OMB.

Dredge Operations Sub-committee

- Ms. Belynda Kinman, USACE, spoke to ongoing dredge contracts including PA-11 shoreline stabilization and SNWW maintenance dredging, and upcoming FY-19 contracts for maintenance dredging in the Port Arthur Ship Canal, Ready Reserve Fleet and the Sabine Neches Outer Bar and Bank Channels.
- Ms. Kinman gave a Pipeline Crossing update for the Kinder Morgan and Colonial-Neches River pipelines, and she addressed the current traffic restriction at Taylors Bayou.
- Ms. Kinman addressed the ongoing buoy replacement project at the USACE moorings, stating that the M/V Snell was currently engaged in hurricane recovery operations on the east coast thus forcing a delay in completing the buoy project. M/V Snell is expected to arrive in the area in January 2019.

Waterway Security Sub-Committee Report:

- Mr. Jeremy Hanson, USCG, reported the AMSC has been relatively "quiet" while most efforts are focused on gathering data for the year-end reports.
- Mr. Hanson advertised the AMSC Workshop scheduled for July 10, 2019, he announced the expected kickoff of the new Grant season, also in January.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- BMC Harold Zurlo, Officer in Charge, ANT Sabine, reported (3) aids to navigation discrepancies in the waterway. He also stated the ANT was working with the Pilots to correct visibility issues with the DELTA range.

5. New Business:

- Mr. Chris Fisher informed membership to be prepared to vote on new SETWAC Charter, upon the next meeting, following recommended changes to the permanent membership of the managing committee including adding both the Port Welfare and Education, Research and Workforce Development representatives as a permanent members of the managing board and removing the Port Welfare and Waterways Security Sub-Committee. The Seafarer's Center will continue to make reports at quarterly SETWAC meetings, and an Ad-Hoc Waterways Security Sub-Committee can be adjourned if there is a need above and beyond what the AMSC provides.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, VTS Port Arthur, updated the group on current waterways projects including: (3) new USACE permit public notices for the Port of Beaumont; a likely extension beyond January 2019 for the projected repair of the fender system at the KCS RR Bridge; NPRM progress for the Sabine Federal Anchorage; USACE permit public notice for Phillips 66 to build a new crude dock; USACE permit public notice for the construction of the Port Arthur LNG facility, and TxDOT has commenced the process of restoring/preventing bank erosion along Highway 82 in Sabine Pass.
- Mr. Whalen advertised Brownwater University to membership. At the time, there were (9) open seats for the class taking place in Houston October 3 – November 1st.
- Mr. Jeremy Hanson spoke to the need to stand up a Marine Firefighting Ad-Hoc Committee to address the port's capability and readiness to deal with marine firefighting operations. Mr. Hanson indicated that the AMSC would like to step back from firefighting endeavors and let SETWAC address with port partners via participation in an Ad-Hoc Committee. Mr. Hanson introduced the Port Neches Fire Chief, Mr. Nelson, who stated he was looking forward to working with SETWAC and port partners to promote marine firefighting.
- A motion was made, and seconded, to establish a Marine Firefighting Ad-Hoc Committee.

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn:

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

