

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for July 25, 2024, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on July 25th, 2024, at MSU Port Arthur in Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated January 29th, 2019. Meeting information and power point presentations are available electronically through the SETWAC website www.setwac.org.

1. Call to Order:

- SETWAC Chair, Daniel Plumley, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Plumley welcomed those in attendance. 85 members and guests attended in person at MSU Port Arthur. Mr. Plumley opened the floor to Capt Migliorini, CO, MSU Port Arthur.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Capt Migliorini, CO, MSU Port Arthur, welcomed those in attendance. He introduced himself and expressed his gratitude to be there.
- He moved to discuss the Cyber Security Proposed Rulemaking and stated that the comment period is officially closed. There were 450 individual comments submitted and now the Coast Guard Headquarters will address all comments.
- Next, he moved to thanking everyone for their participation and roles during Hurricane Beryl. The Coast Guard set up PCT calls during this process and published several MSIBs. While there weren't major impacts to the area, he wanted to ensure everyone involved was informed. He welcomes feedback related to the PCT calls and the flow of information, LCDR Gates will collect that information.
- He introduced the following members:
 - MSU Port Arthur Executive Officer (XO): Commander Morgan Kelly
 - MSU Port Arthur Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner: Mr. Nathan Souza
 - MSU Port Arthur Emergency Management and Force Readiness, Chief: Mr. Eric Pugh
- Finally, he presented a Letter of Appreciation to the Cheniere Foundation for their work to repair the East Jetty Light, thanking them for their generosity.

3. Approval of the April 25th, 2024, Minutes:

- A motion was made and seconded to vote to approve the April 25th, 2024, minutes without edit. A vote was conducted; the minutes were approved.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- Capt Moore, Sabine Pilots, started by speaking to a letter that the Sabine Pilots sent to dock owners for a Dock Assessment & Suitability Study to account for an increase in displacement from vessels passing. The draft of the channel will be increasing as the Deepening Project continues. The Pilots request that all docks and terminal owners/operators complete a comprehensive look at “Passing Vessels Studies”. The other aspect of the letter addresses the dock’s physical integrity, docks need to be able to withstand the increase in dynamic forces that are anticipated. Finally, he touched on the importance of suitable gangway access to vessels. Anyone who did not receive the letter may reach out to him directly for a copy.
- Capt Moore concluded by discussing changes to their Sabine Pilots Website for cyber security purposes. They have noticed that there is a high number of account sharing, multi-factor authentication will start to be implemented. The sharing of account information is discouraged.

Tug Utilization Sub-Committee (Ad Hoc)

- Mr. Sean Marchant, Valero, stated there has been progress with regard to the tug operators. The Sub-Committee is expecting an increase from 12 to 14 vessels in the area.
- He then talked about an informal poll that has been circulated. He asks that each terminal actively record the tug delays they experience and share that data. This information will help guide their next steps in their data analysis.

Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-Committee Report:

- Rob Dubois, Lamar University, spoke to how busy the Workforce Development Sub-Committee is this summer. Lamar State College Orange took their maritime training unit to Lamar University, where they worked with 180 students. They had a great event working with students from the local area.
- Next, he moved to praised Camp Seaport and how successful the program has been this summer. The program is currently circulating the local ports and visiting different port partners. Mr. Kelly, Port of Port Arthur, followed up and thanked all those who have volunteered.

Port Welfare Public Ad-Hoc:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Seafarer’s Center, presented on Training Opportunities for the US Merchant Marine. (See SETWAC Slides for details)
- Fr. Oubre, discussed the opportunities at the following institutions: Lamar State College Orange Maritime Program, San Jacinto College Maritime Program, Paul Hall Center School of Seamanship, Texas A&M Maritime Academy, and the United States Merchant Marine Academy.
- Finally, he spoke to four Maritime Dates:
 - World Maritime Day – September 26th, 2025
 - National Maritime Day – May 22nd, 2025
 - Day of Seafarer – June 25th, 2025

- Sea Sunday – July 13th, 2025.

Commercial Fisheries Report:

- Nathan Souza, MSU Port Arthur Fishing Vessel Examiner, spoke on behalf of Niki Fitzgerald. He started with a thank you to Niki for all the work that she is continuously doing for the fishermen and the entire community.
- He proceeded with a self-introduction and expressed his joy to be able to fill this position.
- Mr. Souza then spoke to the Shrimper's meeting on July 3rd at the Seafarer's Center. They had a great turnout with representation from across the Texas and Louisiana Coast, including State Representatives.
- Mr. Souza thanked those who participated in a recent free Health Clinic hosted by UT Health at the JBS Docks, with lots of donations given to the fisherman.
- Louisiana has had some legislative updates. The state has passed and signed Senate Bill 166, which will take effect on January 1st, 2025. He explained that this bill will require restaurants menus to label where the shrimp originate from, nor can they use labels such as "Cajun" "Gulf" if the shrimp were not caught and harvested in the claimed area. Imported shrimp would not be allowed into public schools or state agencies. He stated that this may be a great direction for Texas to proceed.
- Mr. Plumley asked for a motion to put Mr. Nathan Souza as the Alternate to the Commercial Fisheries Ad Hoc, motion was second and passed.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:

- Mr. Plumley opened this by speaking to the Deepening Sub-Committee that has now begun to meet, information from this next section is a result of some of the work done during the Sub-Committee's meetings.
- Kyle Reed, SNND, provided an update on the Deepening Project, slides on SETWAC website provide a visual update (as of July 25th) of the current dredging projects. SNND has awarded and issued a Notice to Proceed to Crosby Dredging for the section just past Cheniere to Taylor's Bayou. This work is set to be completed in January of 2025.
- Great Lakes is doing dredge work offshore (Contract 2A), this contract is set to complete in December of this year.
- Mr. Reed moved to talking about pipeline removal. There are four pipelines that are being focused on. Targa is looking to be complete with their approval from BSSE for removal, destined to begin in late August.
 - Kinetica's 16in pipeline is planned for removal on September 18th. Their 30in pipeline is making traction on receiving FERC approval and is looking to be removed in October.

- Renaissance is looking for ACOE approval to abandon and leave their pipeline in place due to the depth being lowered than it was expected.
- Mr. Plumley added that as the pipeline removal gets closer, there will be information pushed out by SETWAC, Pilots, and Coast Guard. Port Coordination Team Calls will commence in preparation for the operation.
- A question was asked to SNND, the question inquired if there is a schedule of the placement areas that expected to be used. The SNND stated that they can add this to their website.
- Mr. Plumley laid out how the process for the deepening project. Dredging must first be completed, the ACOE will not approve the dredging if the pipelines are not out of the way. Ideally, the pipelines will be removed, the dredging completes, the ACOE approves and notifies the USCG of the new channel dimensions, the USCG moves the Aids to Navigation, and finally the Sabine Pilots will relocate their Pilot Boarding Station.
- Mr. Matthew Kaufman, Deputy Director of SNND, then proceeded to give an update on the project. Additionally he spoke to user fees for area, they are currently at a 98% collection rate. They are collecting data on this, as well as streamlining their notifications to agents.
- He then gave an update on the Sabine-Neches Waterway and their efforts to identify fire boats for the area. They met with plant managers last month, and recently met with partners at the Jefferson County Airport to find a location to store the fireboats. They are looking at \$20M - \$25M to get the program started, for two 70ft vessels with two areas to stage them in the area. The vessels would take approximately one year to construct, if this is approved. They are looking at 3.5 to 4 cent in total increase for user fees. There will be a one-page document on the SNND website with further information.

Dredge Operations Report:

- Mr. Tim White, USACE, began by introducing Brianna Taylor, who will be the new SETWAC Coordinator/Secretary.
- Mr. White then spoke to future dredge projects, including deepening and widening plans, SNWW Maintenance, the offshore channel extension, Coastal Storm Risk Management Projects, and the Taylor's Bayou Channel improvement (Slides on SETWAC website).

Area Maritime Security Report:

- Michael Hiatt, USCG Port Security, spoke to the FY24 Port Security Grants are under review in Washington DC. This year was a record for the area at \$18.5M. Next, he talked to the Area Maritime Security Plan being updated and is under review at the Coast Guard Headquarters level. (Slides on SETWAC website)
- The next FSO Subcommittee meeting is on September 19th, 2024.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- BMC Dru Sistrunk, ANT Sabine, during Hurricane Beryl his team had 16 discrepancies that they repaired over two days. Additionally, he sent a crew to assist the teams in Houston in correcting 165 discrepancies, in 36 hours.
- Next, he moved to state in accordance with the Deepening Project, he is looking for support to have “F” Range and “E” Range to be modernized, they will be a Day/Night Conversion to flash a light during the day and to remove the boards, allowing the structure to be more resistant to weather.
- Finally: the CLAIBORNE was in the area last week to relocate the buoys for Great Lakes. The HATCHET will be in the area to correct 20 discrepancies in the AOR during the first week of August.

5. New Business:

- Johanna Guerrero, AECOM, spoke and presented about work they are conducting with TxDOT. They’re currently doing a MLK and Veterans Bridge Economic Impact Analysis. They have been gathering information from local stakeholders; however, they have some data gaps that still exist and are need of input from the local community.
- She presented on the problem that they are looking to address, project goals, project scope, and what they are looking to gather from local stakeholders. AECOM needs information about facilities that are north of the bridges. They are looking for the costs associated with the air draft restriction and what impacts it has. They would like to know what the largest ship is, that is being restricted by their air draft. Her and Matthew Mahoney, TxDot, may be contacted for any questions or feedback. Any data shared will be kept confidential and will be aggregated to ensure that no individual facility can be identified. (Slides on SETWAC website)
- Mr. Eric Robertson, Texas General Land Office (TGLO), gave a presentation related to TGLO and their response efforts following a hurricane. He discussed the Oil Spill prevention & Response Act of 1991 which designated TGLO as the lead agency for preventing and responding to coastal and marine oil spills. He touched on the reporting requirements, and the means to report any and all spills. The 24-hour number is 1-800-832-8224. (Slides on SETWAC website)

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, October 10th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, October 24th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn:

- Mr. Plumley adjourned the meeting at 11:42 a.m.