

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Lawrence M. Rase, Chairman; Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Vice Chairman; Stephen G. Romig, Treasurer; Lawrence K. Katz, Secretary; Anthony V. Ligi, Jr., Assistant Secretary Treasurer

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Debbie Lopreore; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillipott; Eileen Barthe'; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Perry Daignepont; Verdi Adam, Cary Bourgeois & Bob Boagni, GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Bill Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Bill Murhammer; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Andrea Calvin, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation; Rene Chopin, Burk Kleinpeter, Inc. Steve Bowes, Sisung Investment Management Services; Shelby LaSalle, Jr.; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer; Robert Rhoden, The Times-Picayune

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

On motion by Katz, seconded by Romig, the minutes of the regular meeting held April 3, 2013 were accepted as written. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion.

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Dr. Calvin reported for April that of the twenty-eight water quality samples taken, twenty samples (71%) met primary contact recreation standards. There were four exceeding on the North and South Shores. Dr. Calvin pointed out considering all the rain recently, the report is not bad. Mr. Dufrechou stated Dr. Calvin, Dr. Lopez and their crew recently had the ribbon cutting for the lighthouse. He stated it is open to the public and everyone is welcome to come out to take a tour. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Katz had a quick tour earlier in the week and introduced some folks from WYES to the Foundation.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Murhammer stated the Foundation will be doing its second annual skeet shoot this year, which is supposed to be some time in early November. He stated Mr. Romig won last year and expects he will again this year. Mr. Murhammer

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stated the skeet shoot was successful and the Foundation will try to make it more so this year with more people. He stated as soon as the date is scheduled, the information will be circulated. Mr. Rase asked about Southeast Hospital. Mr. Murhammer stated the Foundation does not know if the hospital will want to have a Christmas party; it is being discussed with the hospital officials. Mr. Murhammer stated the Foundation is looking at other organizations it has supported in the past in case the hospital is not an option. Mr. Murhammer mentioned Southeast Hospital is the Foundation's legacy starting in 1994. Mr. Rase stated he has spoken to the new CEO, but has not met him in person, but is meeting him later in the week and will mention it.

Mr. Dufrechou reported for the past months sixteen vessel openings and one test opening at the drawbridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated there were four days of fog logs - April 1, 2, 15 and 16, which is kind of late for this year. The cones are still on the bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou reported PD and MAP responded to 285 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and 48 breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou reported there were 10 accidents on the Causeway Bridge (4 southbound, 6 northbound, 2 of those in wet weather, 7 in dry). He reported 12 accidents on the Huey P. Long Bridge (7 westbound, 5 eastbound, 1 in wet weather, 11 in dry). Mr. Dufrechou stated he has been informed by both the engineers and police officers that they should anticipate additional accidents on the Huey P. Long Bridge because the width of the new lanes, while they are wider, more people may drive faster and might be bumping into each other.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on April 10 the southbound Causeway Bridge inspection was completed.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on April 11 the Causeway Bridge was closed from 12:50 to 1:10 p.m. for

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severe weather. He added there were four bridge closures because of severe weather in April - on April 11, 14, 24, and 30.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of an incident on April 12, in which one of the Huey P. Long Bridge officers found a five-year-old boy walking up the bridge. Mr. Dufrechou stated he is really proud of the officers; they actually located the mother - apparently the boy had wandered off from Wal Mart. The officers reunited him with his mother. Mr. Dufrechou asked Chief Congemi to pass his thanks on to Sgt. Jacob and his crew for that.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of chickens on the Causeway Bridge being apprehended by the guys; there were actually five but one made a break and went overboard. He stated the chickens were taken to the North Toll Plaza. Mr. Dufrechou stated because the chickens were not claimed, they are now at a minimal security facility in Folsom and he understands from Warden Thompson that three of the four have been released into the population, one is still a bit of a rebel. Mr. Thompson stated there are three roosters and one chicken. Mr. Dufrechou thanked Chief Congemi for the response by the officers.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides on the North Toll Plaza construction updates: pile driving complete for the gantry; footing complete on both sides; the gantry is tentatively to be delivered today. He stated on the evenings of May 8 and 9 the gantry will be erected and will require a closure of the southbound bridge for about an hour, sometime after midnight. He stated the gantry will be assembled onsite. Mr. Dufrechou stated TRMI, the toll folks, is coming down to put as much of their equipment on the gantry as possible on the ground to get it in timely. He added the new toll booths have been delivered; the one in the 5th Lane is in place and will be the first lane populated with equipment; once it is operational, the rest of the lanes will be done. Mr. Dufrechou stated a

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message will be sent out to all commuters, as well as the media, about the closure in advance of May

8. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry regarding the delay in the completion date, Mr. Dufrechou stated the gantry has put things back about ten weeks. Mr. Dufrechou stated the first thing to do now is to get the 5th Lane (the first new one) operational and if it works well, then everything will click; if it does not, they want to troubleshoot everything possible with the first lane.

Mr. Dufrechou reported the southbound commute traffic is averaging about thirty minutes. He apologized for this morning's delays, explaining that Boh Brothers was premature in shutting one lane to work on its punch list. Mr. Dufrechou stated Boh started at 9:15 a.m. but should not have started until 10:00 a.m.

On the Hurricane Protection project, Mr. Dufrechou reported the gantry on the south end is the big item for which they are still waiting. He stated unfortunately the federal government has yet to give a hard date on it; they are saying May but no definite date. Mr. Dufrechou acknowledged Mr. Bourgeois and Mr. McCranie, as well as Mrs. Phillipott, for continuing to work diligently on some of the reimbursement items with the Corps. Mr. Dufrechou stated the Corps' District Engineer, Col. Ed Fleming, is being transferred to Washington at the end of this month but has made a commitment to the Causeway to try to get the answer before he goes.

Mr. Dufrechou stated in yesterday's *USA Today* the Causeway was mentioned as the longest bridge in the world.

On the North Toll Plaza Lane Modifications project, Mr. Dufrechou stated that in December of last year the Commission approved Plan Change No. 5, which was for the gantry work at the North Plaza. He stated unbeknownst to the Commission at that time, friends with the LA DOTD on this cost-shared project, had issued a plan change also for the same project that was for some sub-surface

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drainage work - DOTD issued Plan Change No. 5 to that project. Mr. Dufrechou stated the Causeway is trying to get its sequence to match the DOTD's so there is no confusion, so the Causeway is issuing Plan Change No. 5, which is for zero dollars and zero additional calendar days but will get the Causeway on the same numbering sequence as the DOTD. Mr. Dufrechou stated the original DOTD work was for a 72" drain from the North Approach to the eastern side of the North Approach. He stated the prices came in high - \$120,000 but it was thought the price should be more like \$80,000 so they would rather put that into the road work that is proposed for the East Approach next year. Mr. Dufrechou stated they would like to issue Plan Change No. 5 for zero dollars and zero calendar days. He added then there will be Plan Change No. 6, which will take the December 2012 Plan Change No. 5 and change it to Plan Change No. 6 so the Causeway will be in order with the DOTD. **On motion by Katz, seconded by Romig, Plan Change No. 5 was initiated in the LA DOTD system on October 10, 2012 with the intent of improving drainage on the eastern side of the North Approach Road by lengthening an existing 72" outfall drainage pipe. The submitted price appears high to GNOEC staff and engineers. Thus the drainage improvement work is not recommended. Because LA DOTD had already issued this work as Plan Change No. 5, it is necessary to complete Plan Change No. 5 for the amount of \$0 and no additional calendar days. Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and its Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorizes the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 5. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion. On motion by Lorino, seconded by Romig, on December 5, 2012 the GNOEC approved Plan Change No. 5 in an amount not to exceed \$200,000 for the purchase and installation of a sign truss and foundations to support the new toll collection**

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equipment over the toll collection lanes. As the LA DOTD had assigned No. 5 to a different item of work, the Commission hereby rescinds approval of Plan Change No. 5, dated December 5, 2012, and approves Plan Change No. 6 for the purchase and installation of a sign truss and foundations for the new toll collection system in the amount of \$195,464.39 and 70 calendar days. The Commission authorizes the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 6. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Romig, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion.

Mr. Dufrechou presented Plan Change No. 8, in the amount of \$3,154.74, which is for the reconnection of the Monroe Street Overpass drainage system to the subsurface drainage system on the East Approach. He explained it had to be disconnected for the Police U-turn. On motion by Ligi, seconded by Katz, Plan Change No. 8 provides for the reconnection of the Monroe Street Overpass drainage system that was disturbed by the construction of the Police U-turn to the subsurface drainage system of the East Approach Road. Based upon the recommendation of the Staff and its Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorized the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 8 in the amount of \$3,154.74 and no additional calendar days. Mr. Rase, Mr. Lorino, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Romig asked for the record to show that he is recusing himself from this vote.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the call box system was updated in 2000 and almost \$6 million was invested in it. Mr. Dufrechou stated there has been an existing maintenance agreement with Harper Electric but it was discontinued last year; the maintenance was about \$160,000 annually. He stated the reason it was discontinued was it was thought to be cost effective to save the \$13,000 plus per month. Mr. Dufrechou stated in doing a recent reassessment, repairs are needed to the call box

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system and the hazardous incident lights (HILs) for the cost of about \$20,000 in materials and about \$15,000 of labor. He stated the funds are available. Mr. Dufrechou stated with the Commission's concurrence, he would like to recommend getting the repairs done immediately; it is part of the safety items for the bridge and he thinks it is very timely that they be done. Mr. Dufrechou stated they are looking at longer term improvements to make the system more maintainable. Mr. Katz asked if they can inquire if there are other companies that are qualified - maybe pre-qualify one or two other companies to have options for the future. Mr. Dufrechou stated they will definitely look into it, adding it is his appreciation that because it is a legacy system there are very few, if any, however, they will investigate it again. Mr. Rase asked about Mr. Brooks with Harper after Mr. Harper passed away, adding he understands Mr. Brooks has done a good job. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Harper's passing is one of the reasons the Causeway took the maintenance contract away from the company. Mr. Dufrechou stated he and Mrs. Lopreore have met with Mr. Brooks several times and he is doing a very admirable job and has recognized the problem. Mr. Lorino stated Mr. Brooks is the new owner; the problems were with the old. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry about the age of the system, Mr. Dufrechou stated he thinks the first thing they do is go to the engineers and ask for advice. Mr. Dufrechou stated what they are doing right now is the engineers are already looking into trying to develop alternatives to the system; until there is a replacement, the system needs to be kept operational. In response to Mr. Ligi's inquiry as to how many calls are received on the call boxes, Mrs. Lopreore replied 266 annually, which is more than they thought.

Mr. Rase asked Chief Congemi when they will be getting the new cars. Chief Congemi replied he has no idea; Mr. Graham or vehicle maintenance is more qualified to answer. Mr. Graham stated they were ordered in April, are expected in by mid-June and should be equipped and ready for the

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police by the end of summer. In response to Mr. Rase's inquiry, Mr. Graham stated yes, they are from Lamarque Ford - piggybacking on Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office state contract.

Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Becknell and Mr. LaSalle had gone to Washington, D.C. last month at the Commission's request to investigate funding opportunities. He stated they came back and said the most likely in the near term would be TIGER grants. Mr. Dufrechou stated he has asked them, as well as Mr. Adam and his firm, to get together to focus on existing projects - the near term projects that are on the books - the re-striping of the bridge, the resurfacing of the East and West Approaches on the North Shore, as well as the other projects. Mr. Dufrechou stated there are very specific criteria, adding they should come back hopefully within the next ten days with an estimate of what it would cost to put the application together; the due date is June 3, 2013, so it is rapidly approaching. Mr. Dufrechou stated if the Causeway were successful in doing this, it will be a cost share; it could certainly be much like the toll collection system and the drawbridge project. Mr. Dufrechou stated it will enhance the Causeway's ability and basically accelerate getting these projects done. He added, if anything, it increases the revenue.

Mrs. Lopreore reported receipt of a partial loss payment of \$1,450,000 on the claim for Hurricane Isaac, adding an additional payment is expected. She stated the deductible was \$1 million.

Mrs. Lopreore stated Mrs. Lambert met with a Louisiana Workers' Compensation Co. representative who presented a check in the amount of \$56,773 which is a dividend check from LWCC. Mr. Katz stated that is about one-third of the Causeway's premium cost.

Mr. Rase asked when they start changing out the units will they be auctioned, adding the reason he is asking is Madisonville might be looking for a unit. Mr. Rase stated as everybody knows, between entities they can move vehicles around - Causeway to Madisonville to Abita Springs, etc.

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Mr. Dufrechou stated yes. He explained when the vehicles are declared surplus, the Causeway tries to get as much revenue as it can from them, but if it has the opportunity and if other agencies are interested in them, they can come in to look at them. In response to Mr. Rase's inquiry as to when, Mr. Graham stated they try to hold the auctions in the spring so it could possibly be March. He stated they use a lot of the equipment from the vehicles incorporated into the new ones. Mr. Graham stated it takes a while to get everything out so the auction will probably be next March.

Mr. Rase announced the next meeting will be held Wednesday, June 5.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



LAWRENCE K. KATZ
SECRETARY



LAWRENCE M. RASE
CHAIRMAN