**December 14, 2020 Commission Meeting Minutes**

The Lafourche Parish Game and Fish Commission met on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 3:00 pm in the Parish Council meeting room in the Mathews Parish Government complex.

**Call to Order**

Call to order was announced by Chairman Vince Guillory. Vince Guillory then made a few brief comments. First, we must vacate this room before 5 pm; consequently, we must be brief when discussing agenda items. Second, although we have not had a meeting since February, I and Shontelle (our Secretary) have been busy conducting routine business and other projects. Third, the Commission will hopefully meet monthly for the next several months to discuss unfinished and new business.

**Roll Call**

Present: Oray Savoie, John Guidry, and Vince Guillory. Absent: Jake Cheramie and Marty Vedros. Vince Guillory announced that there was a legal quorum.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Vince Guillory mentioned that he would move the agenda item “election of chairman and vice-chairman” to the last business item. John Guidry moved to approve the agenda and Oray Savoie seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

**Approval of February, 2020 Minutes**

Oray Savoie moved and John Guidry seconded to approve the February minutes. All in favor; motion passed.

**Secretary’s Report**

Vince Guillory listed work activities of the Secretary from February to December: paperwork for camp sales; lease payment notices in early December; monthly financial reports; updated camp lease holder spreadsheet; miscellaneous phone calls; paid monthly bills; sent minutes and agenda to Clerk of Court; sent minutes to Daily Comet for publication; and, paid IRS quarterly taxes.

**Financial Reports**

John Guidry moved to accept the monthly February through November financial reports and Oray Savoie seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

**Public Input**

None.

**New Commission Member**

Several months ago, Marty Vedros, a soon to be retired 7 and 7 offshore oil field worker and outdoorsman, was appointed to the Commission.

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M**aintenance Dredging Permit**

A request for an extension for the Commission’s maintenance dredging permit for Camp Canal and Nolan Toups Canal was submitted to the State Department of Natural Resources and US Corp of Engineers in the spring. Approval from the State was received in October, although the Corp paperwork has not been received yet. The permit was extended to August 15, 2023. Use of the dredging permit will be available to individual camp lease holders once the Corp paperwork is received.

**NEP Grant Proposal**

In late spring, the Commission partnered with Ducks Unlimited and Lafourche Parish Government and submitted a grant proposal to the National Estuary Program Coastal Watershed funds for our Lake Fields restoration project. Total grant funds requested was $250,000. Unfortunately, we were notified in November that our project was not funded.

**Commission Bylaws Revision**

At our last meeting, a motion was approved to change the language for our regular meetings from “each member shall participate in regular meetings at least once every month or sooner” to “meetings shall be held as determined by the Chairman or by a majority vote of Commission members”. Vince Guillory commented that that additional items of the bylaws are no longer appropriate and should be changed, and that it will be addressed in future meetings.

**Lake Restoration Project Update**

In late 2019, Ducks Unlimited was contracted to provide cost estimates, preliminary engineering, and drawings and then to apply for a State coastal use permit. Considerable progress has been made and completion is targeted for spring of 2021.

**Amended 2020 Commission Budget**

The 2020 Commission budget included funding for the Lake Fields and Lake Long restoration project, but only a partial payment to Ducks Unlimited was made in 2020. In addition, anticipated revenues from alligator eggs and alligator tags were not met because of reduced demand for alligator products. Vince Guillory presented an amended 2020 budget to reflect these changes. Oray Savoie moved to adopt the amended 2020 budget and John Guidry seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

**Proposed 2021 Commission Budget**

The proposed 2021 Commission budget was presented by Vince Guillory. A discussion was held concerning anticipated alligator egg collection and hide revenues. Because of the dramatic reduction in alligator hide prices and subsequent increase in alligator populations, Oray Savoie suggested that the Commission explore issuing a smaller number of alligator tags to recreational trappers to numerous individuals instead of one commercial trapper. Vince Guillory stated that he would explore this option with the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. John Guidry moved to adopt the Commission 2021 budget with $2,500 allocated to alligator revenues and Oray Savoie seconded. All in favor; motion passed.

**Encroachment Of Adjacent Property Owners Onto State Lands**

On an earlier field trip to inspect a camp lease, a commercial barge was parked within state lands on the eastern shoreline of Umbrage Canal. State law states that “no game and fish commission may regulate the movement, mooring, position of any commercial industrial vessel on navigable waterways within its jurisdiction”. The barge has since been moved. In addition, site clearance work had taken place on a very narrow strip of state lands property. No action was taken by the Commission.

**Partial Transfer Of A Camp Lease**

Since our last meeting, several lease holders requested permission to: allow an individual to build a camp on a portion of their lease and then have their lease agreement be modified to reflect the change in frontage; and, to add another person as co-owner of their camp. Both of these requests were denied until a full Commission meeting was held. A suggestion was made to allow a lease holder to transfer their camp to an immediate family member without incurring the new lease fees. Board members were receptive to this suggestion and it will be added to the agenda at our next meeting.

**Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

A suggestion was made by John Guidry to defer the election of chairman and vice-chairman since, while there was a legal quorum, the current vice-chairman was unable to attend. Chairman Vince Guillory agreed and deferred this agenda item.

**Other Business**

There was an of an inadequate camp sewer system submitted by a camp lease holder. Vince Guillory stated that because of this issue and that there are several new board members, that he would schedule, is possible, a field trip by board members to inspect the camp and also to view the Lake Fields and Lake Long state lands under the jurisdiction of the Commission.

A camp owner brought up an issue concerning duck hunter blinds closer than 500 feet from camps as mandated by a Lafourche Parish Ordinance. Vince Guillory stated Board members may be enforced first by the Parish Sheriff’s Water Patrol but the State Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division could also enforce a Parish hunting Ordinance. Chairman Vince Guillory stated that a request would be sent to the Parish Water Patrol and Department of Wildlife and Fisheries for enforcement assistance of the Parish Ordinance before the opening of the 2021 waterfowl season opening.

**Next Meeting / Agenda Items**

Vince Guillory stated that because of State restrictions related to COVID-19 restrictions the Commission did not meet throughout most of 2020. Consequently, the Commission needs to meet monthly for several months for unfinished business. Untill the Lockport Town meeting rooms is available, meetings will be held at the Parish Council meeting room in Mathews from 3-5 pm. Suggested agenda items for the next meeting included: election of chairman and vice-chairman; revision of Commission bylaws; transfer of camp leases to immediate family; etc. Oray Savoie moved to adjourn and John Guidry seconded. All in favor; motion passed