

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2012, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Lawrence K. Katz, Chairman; Lawrence M. Rase, Vice Chairman; Stephen G. Romig; Treasurer; Peter F. Egan, Secretary; Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Assistant Secretary Treasurer

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Debbie Lopreore; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillipott; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Perry Daigrepoint; Phil Meyers, Cary Bourgeois & Jim Martin, GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Bill Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Andrea Calvin, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation; Rene Chopin, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.; Bennett Powell, Kathy Gambino & Jim Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management; Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr.; Leon Smith; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer; Robert Rhoden, The Times-Picayune

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

On motion by Egan, seconded by Romig, the minutes of the regular meeting held November 7, 2012 were accepted as written. Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Romig, Mr. Egan and Mr. Lorino voted in favor of the motion.

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Dr. Calvin reported for November that of thirty-six water quality samples taken, twenty-five samples (69%) met primary contact recreation standards. There were six samples exceeding on the South Shore and five exceeding on the North Shore.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Gillen stated the Christmas party for residents of Southeast Hospital will be on Friday, December 7, at 10:00 a.m. He added this may be the last Christmas party since the future of the hospital is unknown at this time. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Gillen did a magnificent job with the skeet shoot fund-raiser, netting about \$3,500. Mr. Dufrechou thanked everyone for their contributions and help.

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Mr. Katz welcomed and acknowledged commuter Leon Smith as a friend of the Causeway. Mr. Katz stated Mr. Smith's relationship began with an angry phone call. Mr. Smith stated yes, many phone calls and to dispatchers also - daily when there was a major problem. Mr. Katz stated Mr. Smith was a tremendous ally of Mr. Dufrechou, the staff and the GNOEC. Mr. Katz explained that, for over a year, Mr. Smith kept track of commute times for them, reported it weekly by faxing them in and then those numbers, in turn, were used as data which was presented to the Corps of Engineers and also the Causeway used them to coordinate staffing, service and to reduce times of commuting and make changes to help the other commuters. Mr. Katz stated a lot of people who drove the bridge do not know what a help Mr. Smith was, but he was a huge asset to the Causeway and to the many thousands of people who drive it every day. Mr. Katz thanked Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith stated the guys did a great job out there and the dispatchers were very attentive to his complaints when he called and asked why he was sitting miles out on the Causeway. Mr. Smith stated there are thousands on the Causeway and maybe a few hundred turning on 6th Street, which is where he works at the Lakeway Center. Mr. Smith stated he thinks the police out there did a great job and the ones on 6th Street and the entrance to Lakeway Center worked out smoothly. Mr. Smith stated it was just an ordeal they had to go through, but he thinks Mr. Dufrechou stayed on top of everything. Mr. Smith stated he is one of thousands of commuters who do it every day; it is a great bridge to cross; a real safe bridge; the police are so attentive; any time there is a breakdown it is just nice to know someone is going to take care of you in just a minute or two. Mr. Dufrechou stated they really appreciate Mr. Smith's data, adding it was invaluable and Mr. Smith delivered his commute logs for over a year. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Smith's data was truly helpful, particularly when they had to argue with the Corps or the Parish on

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traffic signal times and even helping Boh push through this part of the project. On behalf of the Commission and staff, Mr. Katz presented Mr. Smith with expressions of appreciation for his help.

Mr. Smith stated he really appreciates this and the Causeway guys do a great job.

Mr. Dufrechou reported nineteen vessel openings and one test opening for the drawbridge in November.

Mr. Dufrechou reported Police and MAP responded to 253 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and 31 breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on November 9 all of the southbound exit lanes were reopened and traffic is flowing. He stated the new backup point is West Esplanade Avenue and is no longer on the bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated with the exception of the pile driving going on today, there is no impairment southbound or northbound in the evening. He added this is the last pile driving that will take place for the gantry at the toe of the southbound bridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on November 22, Thanksgiving Day, tolls were lifted going southbound for four different periods - a total of forty-nine minutes between 4:30 p.m. and 6:15 p.m. because traffic backed up. He stated about 2,197 vehicles passed through during that duration for a loss of revenue of about \$6,600. Mr. Dufrechou stated he made the decision because he was concerned about people getting back and forth, adding he is sorry about the loss in revenue but he thought it was the best thing to keep the traffic moving for the holiday.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on November 29, he and Mrs. Lopreore met with Mayor Villere of Mandeville.

Mr. Dufrechou stated Mayor Villere is requesting that the Commission consider incorporating portions of Mandeville's proposed bike path into the Causeway's East Approach Overlay project scheduled for 2014. He stated it is primarily striping that Mandeville is requesting. Mr.

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Dufrechou stated they will be meeting with the Regional Planning Commission and Mandeville to explore the options; if this is done, it would be that the Causeway does the road work and Mandeville has the striping; and, more than anything else, incorporate this job to do it simultaneously for a savings. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mandeville is also considering a crosswalk on the West Causeway Approach and is working through the Regional Planning Commission. He stated the Causeway's engineers have reviewed the initial conceptual drawings and basic comments are it looks great. Mr. Dufrechou stated at this point Mandeville is trying to secure funding for the crosswalk.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on Monday, December 3, the guys on the Huey P. Long Bridge prevented a jumper - a male trying to walk up the bridge from the westbank; two officers intercepted him and he was taken to a hospital.

With respect to the commute traffic summary, Mr. Dufrechou stated the current average morning southbound commute time is back down to forty minutes.

On the Hurricane Protection Project, Mr. Dufrechou stated the Causeway is in the hole for almost \$2.7 - \$3 million for the scheduled work that the Causeway funded. He stated the State finally forwarded the GNOEC packet to the Corps of Engineers on November 15 and the Corps confirmed Monday that it does have it. He added that does not mean the Corps is doing anything with it, but it has confirmed that the real estate folks and the project management people have it. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. McCranie and Mr. Bourgeois dedicated a lot of time putting the information together. Mr. Dufrechou stated the final pile driving being done by Boh Brothers should be completed today.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of an accident that took place off the bridge on November 14 at

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Florida Avenue on the North Shore involving a panel truck and other vehicles. He stated Causeway guys were the first on the scene and passed it to Mandeville.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of the construction work at the North Toll Plaza - the pull out bay as one exits the northbound bridge; the new U-turn lane under Monroe; near Mande's on the west side of the East Approach; looking toward Lewisburg, the paving is complete, curbing is not complete; looking north on the road heading toward the toll plaza; drainage work is complete there and paving is ongoing for two more weeks; and the canopy extension for the 5th Lane, which will be the first lane to have the new toll equipment placed in it in January. Mr. Dufrechou stated the conceptual drawings of the canopy have been delivered to Mandeville Planning and Zoning for review.

On the North Toll Plaza Lane Modifications project, Mr. Dufrechou presented Plan Change No. 5, which will provide for the addition of the gantry/truss and foundation to support the new toll equipment in an amount not to exceed \$200,000. He stated this will be an addition to the DOTD project, an 80/20 split, so the actual cost to the Commission is \$40,000. **On motion by Egan, seconded by Lorino, Plan Change No. 5 provides for the addition of a sign truss and foundations to support the new toll collection equipment over the toll collection lanes. 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. 5 in an amount not to exceed \$200,000. Mr. Katz asked Mrs. Lambert for a roll call vote. Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Egan and Mr. Lorino voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Romig abstained. The motion passed.**

Mr. Katz announced the January meeting will be rescheduled to Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. The appropriate notices will be published and distributed.

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Mr. Katz stated the Causeway receives some complaints but also gets a lot of compliments on how it conducts business. Mr. Katz shared an e-mail from commuter Melinda Keller to Mr. Dufrechou on December 3 in which she wrote of her interesting experience on the Causeway. Mrs. Keller complimented two officers, Corporal Matt Haley and Sergeant Mike Kelly, for their above and beyond service last Wednesday evening, November 28, at approximately 6:30 p.m. Mrs. Keller wrote that she experienced engine trouble and was forced to pull into Crossover 4. While waiting for the tow truck, she was very distressed but felt safe as there was a manned motorists assists truck there and Corporal Haley, who had made a traffic stop. Mrs. Keller stated she was comforted by Corporal Haley, who stayed with her until the tow truck arrived a short time later. Mrs. Keller wrote when she arrived home after the ordeal, she looked at her hand and saw that her 11.5 carat citrine stone had fallen out of the ring she was wearing that had been left to her by her mother. After searching everywhere to no avail, she called the Causeway Police Dispatch operator who was most kind and understanding as she cried her way through her explanation. Mrs. Keller wrote that she asked if Corporal Haley could look in the crossover and by some slim miracle find the stone. She stated not long after, she received a call from the gracious Dispatch operator who said there was good news that Corporal Haley and Sergeant Mike Kelly did indeed find the stone by flashlight. Mrs. Keller wrote that the ring is worth far more to her in sentimental value than dollar value and represents the love her daddy had for her mother when he went out on Christmas Eve some time in the 1970s and bought this ring as a gift for her mom. Mrs. Keller stated even though it is broken in two now, she is eternally grateful to Corporal Haley and Sergeant Kelly for the treasured stone they returned to her. She will have the stone reset in some way so it will continue to inspire her with the love of her mother and daddy. Mrs. Lopreore stated the Dispatch operator was Carla Baker. Mr.

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Katz stated Mrs. Baker did a nice job.

Mr. Katz moved to present a proposed slate of officers for 2013. Mr. Katz stated he would like to offer Mr. Rase as Chairman, Mr. Lorino as Vice Chairman, Mr. Egan as Secretary, Mr. Romig as Treasurer, and himself as Assistant Secretary Treasurer. Mr. Lorino seconded the motion. Mr. Katz, Mr. Rase, Mr. Romig, Mr. Egan and Mr. Lorino voted in favor of the motion.

There being no further business, Mr. Rase adjourned the meeting.



PETER F. EGAN
SECRETARY



LAWRENCE M. RASE
CHAIRMAN