

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 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. Phillpott; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Perry Daigrepoint; Cary Bourgeois, GEC, Inc.; Bill Becknell, The Becknell Law Firm; Andrea Calvin, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation; Steve Bowes, Sisung Investment Management Services; Rene Chopin, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.; Bennett Powell, Kathy Gambino & Jim Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer; Robert Rhoden, The Times-Picayune

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

On motion by Romig, seconded by Lorino, the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 3, 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 in October of the forty-five water quality samples taken, thirty-eight (84%) met primary contact recreation standards. She stated the counts were higher in a few locations. Mr. Katz stated Dr. Calvin was recognized by *Gambit* as one of its 2012 forty people “under forty” for her accomplishments and contributions to the City of New Orleans.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Romig stated the skeet shoot fundraiser went well. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Gillen did a good job and hopefully the fund-raiser will make money that will be used for the Christmas party for the residents of Southeast Hospital.

With respect to the Corps project, Bridge Modifications/Hurricane Protection Work, Mr. Dufrechou

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stated the Causeway's reimbursement request to the federal government has been at the state level for ninety days. He stated as of October 29, 2012 they have not transmitted back to the Corps of Engineers yet; it is \$2.7 million that the Causeway anticipates getting back for expenses funded as a result of the project.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on the Discretionary Bridge Program projects, authorized but not yet underway, the Bascule Control System and Piling Encapsulation Utility Vaults may be bid in the first quarter of 2013. He stated the South Channel Fender Repair is also part of the program but may be delayed until the second quarter because of damages from Hurricane Isaac.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides on the last of the completion of the restoration on cable removed from its rack during Hurricane Isaac. Mr. Dufrechou stated he is really proud of the maintenance guys; it was almost a three-week continual event of retrieving the cable from the lake and putting it back in the trays, and several of the guys were out there on a daily basis. He stated all the cable is back up and power restored from both North and South Shores.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of an incident on the morning of October 16 northbound in which a truck was broken down on the bridge with Corporal Tate Gallo stopped behind it in his unit with lights flashing, when another truck almost rear-ended the unit. Mr. Dufrechou stated this is another instance of why it would be so beneficial to have shoulders on the bridge, adding this is a frightening situation and there are about ten rear-ends a year. Mr. Dufrechou stated Causeway folks were there, thank goodness timely, which was critical for all drivers.

Mr. Dufrechou reported for October at the drawbridge there were thirty-one vessel openings, one drive fault incident and two test openings.

Mr. Dufrechou reported Police and MAP responded to 298 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge

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and 48 breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge. He added they are averaging about 4,000 breakdowns on an annual basis to which assistance is provided. Mr. Dufrechou stated the police and motorists assistance folks are out there in traffic, not on the side or shoulder of a road, and they also do water rescue.

With respect to the incident on October 16 and in response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mr. Dufrechou stated the individual should have seen the lights of the police unit. Mr. Dufrechou stated when approaching a stalled vehicle, even with hazard lights on, it can look like its moving, particularly in daytime environments, and one does not know until right on the stalled vehicle. Mr. Katz asked if there is anything, such as a flashing light or something portable, that can be carried and put out. Chief Congemi stated these things happen so quickly and they have to pull up and respond very quickly to see what the problem is in order to get a wrecker there and all those things, so they do not really have time to put out any other devices. He stated they may be in a position where the vehicle is stalled for a long time, they have cones in the car, and there are other emergency vehicles but these things happen very quickly and it is very dangerous work. Mr. Dufrechou stated one thing that may help a little bit, while the police cars are very conspicuous when their lights are flashing, the police will be switching to some type of SUV-type unit. Mr. Dufrechou stated Chief Congemi really wants Tahoes big time, but there are some who think there are other products that might work almost as well - one way or the other, they are much higher profile. Mr. Dufrechou added the current units are very conspicuous but hopefully because of the higher profile the SUV will be more visible.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on October 24 there was a truck fire northbound around 5:30 p.m. that happened immediately off the bridge. The truck was carrying insulation. Mr. Dufrechou stated it caused traffic backup exiting the bridge for about an hour and a half.

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Mr. Dufrechou stated on October 25 at around 4:30 p.m., a southbound tractor trailer truck accidentally dumped crushed concrete over a half mile of the bridge causing delays southbound. He stated police, motorists assistance guys and maintenance forces responded. Mr. Dufrechou stated the entire event was less than forty-five minutes and the bridge was reopened.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on October 30 at 6:30 a.m. Corporal Joe Amadeo was brushed by the side mirror of a passing truck while operating the signal light at 6th Street. He stated Corporal Amadeo was taken to East Jefferson General Hospital, released after being treated and is back on duty. Chief Congemi stated Corporal Amadeo was extremely fortunate.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on October 31 David Stein retired after twenty-eight years of service with the Causeway. He stated Mr. Stein began in tolls and worked in maintenance.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the first fog convoy southbound was on November 2. Fog procedures were used on Monday as well.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on Sunday, November 4, at about 10:10 a.m., a call was received about a vehicle stopped on the southbound bridge about five miles from the North Shore that initially was thought to be a vehicle in distress. Chief Congemi stated what actually took place was an attempted suicide; a lady jumped over the side of the bridge. He stated Officer David Copeland, who has only been with the department less than two months, used his field training to acclimate him to the bridge in rescuing the lady. Chief Congemi stated Officer Copeland told him later that he recalled what he saw in the training film on how to do this type of rescue, going through the normal chain of events in putting on his flotation device, throwing the rope ladder over, throwing the safety ring to the individual, and then went into the water. Chief Congemi stated the individual was splashing around, did not drown, but unfortunately as a result, Officer Copeland was injured, which typically

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happens. Chief Congemi explained Officer Copeland rescued her, holding on to her, and while holding onto the ladder, the swell wave action suddenly dropped and his shoulder was pulled. Chief Congemi stated all in all, it was a great effort between maintenance and police officers out there, and they were able to get her in successfully. Chief Congemi stated he wants to remind everyone they often hear about complaints about police officers speeding on the bridge but they get a lot more aid and assistance than complaints. He stated Sergeant Jean Jordan with the New Orleans Police Department was the one who initially reported this and she stayed throughout the event and assisted with the rescue operation. He stated Jefferson Parish responded also. Mr. Dufrechou stated two Jefferson Parish officers assisted as well as Causeway Corporal Joe Amadeo, Officer Terry Guillory, and MAP operator H. P. White. Mr. Dufrechou stated the jumper was actually out of the water in just seventeen minutes and transported to a hospital on the South Shore. Officer Copeland is okay and back on duty. Mr. Dufrechou stated unfortunately this did require closing the southbound bridge and while it was closed breakdowns occurred, so the rescue itself only took about thirty minutes but there was another hour to get the other vehicles broken down and debris out of the traffic. Mr. Dufrechou pointed out the spectacles/glasses left by the lady on the side of the bridge near the railing before she went overboard. Mr. Dufrechou stated he wanted to make note of what Chief Congemi alluded to - it is Police, MAP, Dispatchers, Camera Operators; he and Mrs. Lopreore got the call right after it happened; Georgie Bagnetto came in to help the Dispatchers; there is a team that works phenomenally well; the folks were on the scene in less than five minutes and had the individual out of the water in less than twenty minutes; she is fortunate they were able to get to her so quickly and respond so rapidly; the folks did a great job.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on November 5 there was a severe weather closing for about twenty minutes

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in the evening.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on the morning of November 6 there was a DWI about 1:30 a.m. Chief Congemi explained Officer Mikel Melton responded to a DWI, stopped the Cadillac Escalade in Crossover 4 and immediately went into his field sobriety testing and the person was impaired in some way. Chief Congemi stated Officer Melton gave him his rights and handcuffed him. Chief Congemi stated after Officer Melton handcuffed him, as he was attempting to put him in the car, some way the person slipped one hand out of the handcuffs and began wrestling with Officer Melton. Chief Congemi stated Sergeant Thea Andras responded to assist and while they were in the process of getting the cuffs on again, the man bit Officer Melton severely. Mr. Dufrechou added the man bit Officer Melton twice. Chief Congemi stated Officer Melton had to go to the hospital for an examination and also to get a tetanus shot. Chief Congemi stated the job is fraught with danger. Mr. Dufrechou stated they are proud of Officer Melton.

As an update to the North Shore construction for the toll plaza, Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of the ongoing work, including the 5th Lane, the old canopy removed, the 4th Lane, the median excavated to construct the 5th Lane, the east side exiting the northbound bridge for the police pull-out bay, the east side of the Monroe overpass near Mande's Restaurant at the new roadway, looking back to the north - there is one lane in the morning coming from the East Approach to the toll plaza underneath the overpass, the area of Copal Street where there was a delay because of a waterline that has been relocated, the U-turn underneath the overpass is excavated, looking north same site there is a small potential of having two narrow lanes for morning traffic, and the Corps' work on the South Shore exiting the bridge. On the Corps project, Mr. Dufrechou stated Boh Brothers anticipates finishing the striping on the southbound lanes today or tomorrow and they should be open for traffic by

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Friday, which is about two months ahead of schedule, and will restore the exit capacity to prior to the project beginning. He added it should be two months before the final work of the project is completed. Mr. Bourgeois stated it may be more than that because they have received the task order to design the actual sign that goes on the canopy. He stated the majority of the work should be done in about two months.

Mr. Dufrechou stated there was a fire yesterday evening during the commute. He stated the Causeway folks responded very rapidly and the fire was put out.

Mr. Dufrechou stated they did go before the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget on October 19, 2012.

Chief Congemi stated on October 22, near midnight, officers arrested a young man going 138 mph on the bridge. He stated at that high speed there is tunnel vision and one does not see most things in the road, like tires, two-by-fours, and things like that. Mr. Dufrechou stated they will have the annual reports for the Commission in January and will still be the safest roadway, not only bridge in the country, but probably roadway in the Gulf Coast and southeast. Mr. Dufrechou stated accidents have gone up a little bit this year primarily because earlier in the year there was work on the South Shore and the delays, but even with that they will be phenomenally low.

Mr. Rase stated an attorney across the lake, Howard Daigle, sent word to him that he received first class telephone service from Keith regarding his toll account - please put a note in his personnel file.

Mr. Rase stated it is nice to hear the good things. Mr. Dufrechou agreed, adding it is all about customer service.

In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry regarding the purple martin area, Mr. Dufrechou stated he has not heard anything more from the planners at Washington University. Mr. Romig stated he has not

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either but will follow-up with Councilman Cynthia Lee.

Mr. Katz announced the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 5, 2012. He stated at the end of the meeting the Commission will have officer elections.

There being no further business, on motion by Egan, seconded by Romig, the meeting was adjourned.



PETER F. EGAN
SECRETARY



LAWRENCE K. KATZ
CHAIRMAN