

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2011, AT 10:00 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Pat Brister, Chairman; Lawrence K. Katz, Vice Chairman; James E. Ravannack, Treasurer; Frank L. Levy, Assistant Secretary Treasurer

OTHERS: Carlton Dufrechou; Debbie Lopreore; Cheryl H. Lambert; Chief Nick Congemi; Melissa M. Phillpott; Eileen Barthe'; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Perry Daigrepoint; Stacie Heffker; Sgt. Roy Jacob; Sgt. Mike Viola; Phil Meyers, Cary Bourgeois, Jim Martin, Shelby P. LaSalle, Jr., & Carmelo Gutierrez, GEC, Inc.; Mike Power, The Becknell Law Firm; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Steve Bowes, Sisung Investment Services, Inc.; Bennett Powell & James Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management; Kelly McHugh, Kelly McHugh & Associates, Inc.; Gavin Gillen, Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc.; John Shires, Professional Engineering Consultants Corp.; Polly Greene, St. Tammany Farmer

ABSENT: Lawrence M. Rase, Secretary

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

On motion by Ravannack, seconded by Levy, the minutes of the regular meeting held May 3, 2011 were accepted as written. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.

On behalf of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Mr. Dufrechou reported for May of the fifty water quality samples taken, forty-seven samples (94%) met primary recreation criteria. There were two failures on the North Shore and one on the South Shore. He pointed out it is in direct relation to the lack of rainfall and no pollution going into the lake. Mr. Dufrechou stated the lake is an arm of the Mississippi River now with the Spillway open. He stated the Morganza Spillway should be closed this week; the Bonnet Carre' probably in about two more weeks. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mr. Dufrechou stated the waters do not mix; there is a line of demarcation - brown from the river and green for the lake. In response to Mr. Ravannack's inquiry, Mr. Dufrechou stated it should clear by late fall.

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On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Gillen reported the luau fund-raiser held in May was a success. Mrs. Brister agreed it was a nice event.

Mr. Dufrechou reported the North Channel Bascule Span Repair work will begin on June 13. He stated to avoid commuter delays all work will be done at night 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The work should be completed by early July.

Mr. Dufrechou reported there are two projects underway by Jack B. Harper that are close to being behind schedule. They are the North Channel Emergency Span Motors and VMS/Call Box/HIL System Migration. He stated the engineers are working with Harper to get them on schedule.

On the Florida Triangle/Turning Lanes West Causeway project, Mr. Dufrechou stated advertising is anticipated in June.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the fiber optic RFPs should be out this week.

Mr. Dufrechou stated the North Plaza Trench Drain Repair project was authorized and will probably be added to the Transportation Equity Act (TEA 21) projects.

With respect to the TEA 21 projects, Mr. Dufrechou stated there is conceptual work underway to add a fifth lane at the North Toll Plaza. He stated staff and engineers are discussing the existing plaza, whether or not to renovate the existing canopy or replace it, and which would be the most cost effective and have the least impact to the commuters. Mrs. Brister mentioned the patron fare display signs at the plaza should be relocated so they are better seen by commuters.

With respect to the Purchase of Spare Structural Components project, Mr. Dufrechou reported the job has been completed ahead of schedule. **On motion by Levy, seconded by Ravannack, based on the recommendation of the staff and its Consulting Engineers, the Commission accepted the project titled Purchase of Spare Structural Components. The General Manager is hereby**

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authorized to complete the execution of the certificate of acceptance with Boh Brothers Construction Co., LLC. Mrs. Brister, Mr. Katz, Mr. Ravannack and Mr. Levy voted in favor of the motion.

For the month of May, Mr. Dufrechou reported thirty-three openings, no pin motor incidents, no gate incidents, three drive fault incidents and two test openings for the drawbridge. He stated fog season is over so there were no fog operations. Mr. Dufrechou stated Police and MAP responded to 293 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and forty-five breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge. Related to the LA DOTD I-10 project, Mr. Dufrechou stated on May 4, trucks delivering four large reinforced concrete beams to the job caused massive backups for evening commuters.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on May 5 the surplus equipment auction was held, which generated approximately \$20,000. On May 6, approximately \$25,000 dividend was received from Louisiana Workers' Compensation Corporation. Mr. Dufrechou stated on May 12, a trailer packed with cardboard caught fire on the bridge. He stated the bridge was closed for about two and one-half hours.

Mr. Dufrechou reported on May 13, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management was notified of the Causeway's intent to extend its existing agreement for one year when the initial year concludes in July 2011.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on May 25 there was a Huey P. Long incident with the westbank traffic signal resulting in excessive traffic delays for about three days. This was due to the inaugural operations of LA DOTD's new traffic signal on the westbank.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on June 1, there was a pile delivery associated with the hurricane protection project that reduced the southbound traffic to one lane exiting the bridge. Traffic was backed up

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about three miles on the bridge. After the second day, it improved. He stated all pile driving activity will start after 10:00 a.m. daily.

Mr. Dufrechou stated last night at about 11:30 p.m. there was a vehicle fire on the northbound bridge. It was put out rapidly and the bridge was reopened. Mr. Dufrechou reported today a vehicle flipped over southbound about eighteen miles from the North Shore. Traffic was backed up but is out of the way now.

Mr. Dufrechou showed a presentation of the incident on May 4, 2011 in which a tractor-trailer truck hit and dragged a vehicle on the Huey P. Long Bridge. Sgt. Roy Jacob stated during the present construction on the HPL the lanes at the top are about eight feet wide, which is challenging for large trucks but it can be done. Sgt. Jacob explained the incident was the result of driver error because the driver looked down to check his GPS. Sgt. Jacob pointed out the damage to the vehicle, adding that the driver of the truck said he did not know he had hit the car and was dragging it along for about two hundred feet. He stated the injuries were minor to the passenger in the car. Sgt. Jacob stated Officer Joe Amadeo handled the incident. He added the roadway was cleared in about twenty minutes. In response to Mr. Dufrechou's inquiry, Sgt. Jacob stated completion of the HPL widening is scheduled for 2013.

Mr. Dufrechou showed a presentation of the vehicle fire on the Causeway Bridge on May 12, 2011 that was handled by Sgt. Mike Viola. He stated the vehicle was a pickup truck loaded with cardboard. Mr. Dufrechou showed the vehicle in the far left lane approaching the toll booth at the North Plaza. Mr. Dufrechou stated he held a debriefing to review details of the incident. He stated the video tape showed the size of the trailer packed with cardboard, adding in the future they will keep their eyes out for anything that looks like it might be overloaded. Mr. Dufrechou stated the

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fire happened about three miles from the South Shore. Sgt. Viola stated there was a blowout on the driver's side rear trailer; it was about a twenty-nine-foot trailer that had a little diesel forklift on the back of it. Sgt. Viola stated the investigation revealed that the gentleman did not know his rim was on fire and was just driving down the bridge. Sgt. Viola stated as a result of the tire failure, there were sparks produced from the rim dragging on the cement, which ignited all of the cardboard on the trailer - compressed cardboard, like boxes. He stated as the vehicle passed Crossover 7, which is about three miles from the South Shore, Officer Brian Schuyler noticed it and pulled out of the crossover, following the vehicle to about the two-mile marker where he actually did a stop on the vehicle. Sgt. Viola stated once Ofc. Schuyler stopped the vehicle, he aggressively fought the fire until the fire department arrived. Sgt. Viola explained the smoke shown in the presentation is actually Ofc. Schuyler's chemical fire extinguisher. He stated two other officers, who had just completed their shift, without hesitation helped fight the fire. Sgt. Viola stated they are not equipped to put out fires; they do have fire extinguishers but with the limited resources they have with the chemical and water fire extinguishers they had it somewhat under control until the fire department arrived. Sgt. Viola showed the aftermath mess out on the bridge. He stated in the twenty-four years he has been with the Causeway, they have never had a situation like this, adding it happened at the worst of times right during the beginning of the rush hour commute northbound. He stated when the fire department arrived, State law dictates that they take over the scene. Sgt. Viola explained the problem was with the boxes being compressed and they have air holes that created more problems. Sgt. Viola stated as Mr. Dufrechou indicated earlier, everybody was put to work, even he was out pulling debris off the Causeway wrecker; everything in the Causeway's arsenal was used to cleanup the bridge. He stated Mr. Graham and Mr. Thompson came out with the dump truck, trailer and a

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bobcat to load up the debris. Sgt. Viola pointed out on the presentation how the load on the truck had already shifted, which attributed to the tire failure. Sgt. Viola stated the southbound bridge was shut down; the incident happened a little after 2:00 p.m. He added his shift was just coming on at 3:30 p.m. and Chief Congemi immediately sent his team out on the bridge. Sgt. Viola stated they had traffic backed up behind the scene for about a mile; people were on the bridge for a while, which was one of their main concerns. Sgt. Viola stated he shut down the northbound bridge to try to bleed traffic off because people had been on the bridge since it was shut down at 2:15 p.m. and it was not reopened until about two and one-half hours later. He added people were out in the heat, running out of gas and having flat tires. Sgt. Viola stated his team was pulling and flipping the traffic through Crossover 7 to send the motorists back north. He stated during that process they had five or six people who ran out of gas in the crossover, plus there was a vehicle with a flat tire, so they wanted to get people out of the road. Sgt. Viola stated in itself the situation was bad but it could have been worse with everybody behind them and they had all the people tied up in different locations to give a hand. He stated fortunately everything worked out well. Sgt. Viola added they did inconvenience a few motorists for an hour, but people who cross the bridge every day know that every once in a while they will be inconvenienced. Mr. Dufrechou stated it had to be done and was in the interest of safety, which is always the priority. Mrs. Brister asked if there is a policy to avoid allowing such vehicles on the bridge. Mr. Dufrechou stated yes, adding they had a debrief after. Mrs. Brister asked about vehicles with loads like this getting on the bridge. Mr. Dufrechou stated he spoke with Mr. Thompson. Mr. Thompson stated toll collectors are instructed to look for unsecured loads and if they see something that is questionable, they are to call one of the police officers. Mrs. Brister stated big trucks have to be covered and asked if there is something that can

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be done to make sure whatever loads go across the bridge, they are covered or secured. Mr. Dufrechou stated in this instance the trailer appeared to be overloaded and that caused the failure of the tire and the resulting fire. Mr. Dufrechou stated there may be some that slip through in the future but hopefully the toll collectors will be more aware. Mr. Dufrechou stated he is very proud of the Police, MAP, Camera folks, everyone who was out on this one; Chief Congemi worked the field too. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry regarding fire extinguishers, Mr. Dufrechou stated because of the extent of the fire Jefferson Parish Fire Department was needed. He added they are looking into fire bottles in the vehicles. Mr. Graham stated all vehicles have a two and one-half gallon extinguishers but a fire of this size needs a fire department. Mr. Dufrechou stated the entire staff pulled together on this one.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on May 25 the Huey P. Long commuters experienced delays due to the traffic light in a new location in the West Traffic Circle. He stated the timing of the signal was the problem. Mr. Dufrechou stated one of the HPL Sergeants was on the scene and asked the LA DOTD people for a key to the signal box for the timing, but he was denied a key. Sgt. Jacob stated traffic problems began at 6:07 a.m. Corporal Bancroft made a few calls to LA DOTD. Sgt. Jacob stated the lights had been cycled for the bridge itself when it is ultimately completed, which caused the backup in every direction. He added they could not override the box either, which meant the police could not direct traffic against the signal light cycling. He stated Cpl. Bancroft had Dispatch call DOTD to get a representative on the scene to regulate the light. Sgt. Jacob stated by that afternoon, the police had three keys on hand. Sgt. Jacob explained how the light is regulated to accommodate traffic coming from different directions at different times. He stated it has been a few weeks now and the light cycle is regulated much better, as when the police were running the lights themselves.

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Sgt. Jacob stated it was a big missed communication but the Causeway Police Department is the one who got the brunt of it and they do not deserve it because they try to do their best. Mr. Dufrechou pointed out they not only got the brunt of it, but also corrected it. Sgt. Jacob thanked all those who worked with him during that time. Mr. Dufrechou thanked Sgt. Jacob, Chief Congemi, and Mrs. Lopreore, who called DOTD several times; it is a testimony to police and MAP folks. He stated dispatchers get the brunt of complaints also and are instrumental in handling incidents. Sgt. Jacob agreed it cannot be done without good people and takes a joint effort from everyone.

Chief Congemi mentioned he and Mr. Dufrechou recently toured the Audubon Bridge in St. Francisville arranged by Mr. LaSalle. Mr. Dufrechou stated it is a \$400 million bridge that was opened in advance because of the high water in the Mississippi River about a month ago. He stated the average traffic count is only 4,000 a day. There are four lanes on the bridge itself.

Mrs. Lopreore mentioned again the detour coming up in the next two weeks. She stated it is being publicized, adding Egan Insurance will begin displaying the message on its reader-board this Thursday. Mr. Dufrechou stated it will start on Monday evening, June 13, through the next Thursday; northbound will have a detour starting at 8:00 p.m. until 6:00 a.m. at the bascule; the subsequent week will be Monday through Thursday southbound. He stated this is because of the deck repair work at the bascule. Mrs. Lopreore stated notices have been sent out by e-mails, traffic alerts, radio, signs and the Coast Guard. In response to Mr. Levy's inquiry, Mrs. Lopreore explained traffic is detoured through a crossover.

Mr. Ravannack referred to hurricane season and asked if plans are being coordinated with the Corps with respect to the hurricane protection work at the south end of the bridge. Mr. Dufrechou stated there is a meeting with the East Jefferson Levee District next week on storm protection. Mrs.

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Lopreore stated the meeting is scheduled for June 22. Mr. Dufrechou stated it is his understanding that Boh will be out of the area at least two days in advance of any storm. Mr. Ravannack stated just like LA DOTD, the Corps of Engineers does what it wants to do, but the Causeway faces the responsibility for the bridge and its motoring public. Mrs. Brister asked that the Commission be informed of any hurricane plans. Mr. Dufrechou stated they are pretty much similar to last year in that there will be sand bags across the toe of the bridge at the very last minute, which will be determined by the East Jefferson Levee District. In response to Mr. Ravannack's inquiry as to who plans the meetings, Mr. Dufrechou stated the EJLD, adding the Causeway does its own internal meetings as it does every year. Chief Congemi stated it is a delicate dance right now there are so many things going on - meetings with St. Tammany, one planned with Jefferson Parish EOC, the EJLD and own internal meetings taking place. He stated they try to plan as much as they can and try to see anything someone may miss, but usually when one lays down plans something goes wrong anyway and you have to improvise like they do on this bridge on a regular basis and on the Huey P. Long Bridge. He stated they will be prepared and have a meeting scheduled coming up.

Mr. Levy referred to the I-10/Causeway Boulevard work, heading west on I-10 to exit onto Causeway Boulevard north, the signs for Veterans and Causeway Boulevards are in a location that is much too late for motorists to see; it is really a problem especially for motorists unfamiliar with the area. Mr. LaSalle stated that is the LA DOTD's work.

Mr. Katz asked if management tries to get some reimbursement for damages to the bridge and property. Mrs. Lambert stated she reports all costs related to incidents resulting in property damage to Trinity Insurance Services for recovery from parties responsible for the damage. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry, Mrs. Lambert stated yes, labor costs are included.

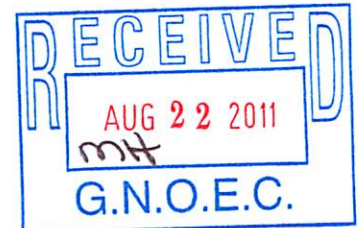
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Mrs. Brister stated the next meeting is scheduled for July 5 and will be changed. Notices will be distributed accordingly.

There being no further business, on motion by Levy, seconded by Ravannack, the meeting was adjourned.


PATRICIA P. BRISTER
CHAIRMAN


LAWRENCE M. RASE
SECRETARY



James M. [unclear]

RECEIVED
G.N.O.E.C.