

PROCEEDINGS OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS EXPRESSWAY COMMISSION HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013, AT 10:30 A.M., IN THE GNOEC CONFERENCE ROOM, VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA BUILDING, 3939 NORTH CAUSEWAY BOULEVARD, SUITE 400, METAIRIE, LA

PRESENT: Lawrence M. Rase, 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. Phillpott; Eileen Barthe'; Georgie Bagnetto; Red Thompson; Robert Graham; Stacie Heffker; Perry Daigrepoint; Sgt. Michael Viola; Colt Bruhl; Ryan Robinson; Steve Spohrer, Cary Bourgeois, James Martin, Gavin Gillen & Bob Boagni, GEC, Inc.; Burgess McCranie, McCranie, Campbell, Sistrunk, Anzelmo, Hardy, McDaniel & Welch; Mike Power, The Becknell Law Firm; Denis Milliner, Bank of New York; Kathy Gambino & Jim Lynch, Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Svc.; 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

ABSENT: Michael R. Lorino, Jr., Vice Chairman

The Chairman called the meeting to order.

Mr. Rase noted Mr. Lorino is absent because he is testifying in Court.

On motion by Ligi, seconded by Romig, the minutes of the regular meeting held on May 1, 2013 were accepted as written. Mr. Rase, 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 May that of the forty water quality samples, thirty-one (78%) met primary contact recreation standards. Three locations exceeded on the South Shore and six exceeded on the North Shore. In response to Mr. Dufrechou's inquiry as to the Bayou St. John project, Dr. Calvin stated it is completed at Robert E. Lee and now they will be working at the mouth of Bayou St. John to create a small area of wetland.

On behalf of the Causeway Police Charitable Foundation, Mr. Gillen reported that as of the meeting

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on Monday the Foundation was not sure if it would be able to hold its next event, which would be the skeet shoot. He stated they do have another location set up now and it looks like it will be a bigger success than last year. Mr. Rase asked Mr. Gillen if he has met with Mr. Kramer, of the private firm that has taken over Southeast Hospital, adding that Mr. Kramer is very interested in the Foundation continuing with the hospital. Mr. Gillen stated he has not but will talk with Mr. Rase about it after the meeting.

Mr. Dufrechou reported for May fifteen vessel openings, one brake incident and three test openings at the drawbridge.

Mr. Dufrechou stated fog season is over and the cones have been put away.

Mr. Dufrechou reported Police and MAP responded to 399 breakdowns on the Causeway Bridge and 61 breakdowns on the Huey P. Long Bridge. He added this is about 130 more than the average. Mr. Dufrechou complimented the MAP and PD folks for keeping everybody moving and safe.

Mr. Dufrechou reported nine accidents on the Causeway Bridge - four southbound, four northbound and one at the North Toll Plaza; only one in wet weather. On the Huey P. Long Bridge, he reported twelve accidents - six eastbound, six westbound; one in wet weather.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of the North Toll Plaza truss, adding at the last meeting it was anticipated that the truss would go up the first week in May. Mr. Bourgeois explained that because of some flaking on the truss surface, it was sent back to be sandblasted to roughen the surface.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides and reported that on May 6 a vehicle overturned around 1:00 p.m. going northbound at the ten-mile marker. He showed the vehicle flipped completely but the driver was fortunate and did not have to go to the hospital.

Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of an incident on May 23 in which a truck and trailer jack-knifed

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around the nine-mile turnaround that resulted in a southbound bridge closure from 7:00 - 7:40 a.m. Mr. Dufrechou stated on the afternoon of May 23 there was a four-car collision just before the drawbridge going southbound. He showed a video of the accident, taken by the camera at the bascule, in which one of the vehicles was knocked into the lake. Mr. Dufrechou stated Sgt. Mike Viola was the ranking officer at the time. He stated MAP operators, Ryan Robinson and Colt Bruhl, and Sgt. Viola responded immediately and within ten minutes the driver was rescued from the water. Mr. Dufrechou congratulated the two MAP guys and Sgt. Viola and his crew for getting a save that day. Sgt. Viola stated everything went smoothly with the help of MAP, all departments cooperated and the gentleman was taken out of the water within a matter of minutes. Mr. Dufrechou stated the best thing about this organization is when something hits the fan, there is an unbelievable team effort - MAP, Police, Dispatchers, Camera Operators. Mr. Dufrechou pointed out in the video the railing taken out by the vehicle when one vehicle hit the other knocking it up on the railing, then the vehicle hit the pole and went over. Sgt. Viola stated it was the silver vehicle and explained the first vehicle, the striking vehicle that knocked the vehicle in the water, was a 2012 Buick LCR, black in color. Sgt. Viola stated reports indicated, once they did the investigation, that the gentleman in the black car, the striking vehicle, said he was traveling southbound in the left lane when a vehicle cut him off and he went into the right lane without looking, hit the silver vehicle, pushing the silver up on the rail; he rode the rail and when he hit the pole with the camera he went into the lake. Sgt. Viola pointed this out on the video, adding that when the driver hit the pole with the camera on it, he hit it so hard that he actually dislodged the camera up top. Sgt. Viola stated vehicle three, the vehicle that went into the lake was a 2012 Dodge Avenger, silver in color. Sgt. Viola stated while vehicles one and two were up on the rail, the

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previous vehicle, the green one, saw what was going on, was in the right lane and made a turn to go into the left lane without looking; he and the white car hit and both went into the crossover. He stated all of this went down within a matter of a few seconds. Sgt. Viola stated when he arrived on the scene the young man, Matthew Meyer, was floating on a spare tire from his vehicle and within a matter of couple of minutes Mr. Bruhl and Mr. Robinson, MAP operators, got him out of the water. Sgt. Viola stated St. Tammany Search and Rescue was on the scene. Mr. Dufrechou added St. Tammany got there within an hour with divers. Mr. Dufrechou stated the southbound bridge was opened after an hour for a little while and then closed again to pull up the vehicle. He stated the northbound bridge was closed only fifteen minutes. Sgt. Viola stated all departments worked fantastically together with no problems. Mr. Dufrechou stated the southbound reopened around 6:00 p.m. after the car was recovered from the lake. Mr. Rase asked customarily do we get the cars out from the bridge or do we use a barge. Mr. Dufrechou stated it depends on where it is located, adding if it is easy enough to do quickly and not going to impact traffic, it will be done from the bridge. He stated in this instance it was southbound in the afternoon so we do not have traffic problems there. Mr. Dufrechou stated yes, we have used barges in the past and in fact you might remember with the dump truck that was one of the things that probably would have happened; what facilitated this is it was a lighter vehicle. Mr. Dufrechou stated the good news is everybody made it. Mr. Dufrechou stated MAP operator, Ryan Robinson, has only been with the Causeway about a month and a half. In response to Mr. Dufrechou's inquiry, Colt Bruhl stated he has known Matthew Meyer, who went overboard, since he was five years old. Mr. Dufrechou stated he would think it was a welcome sight for Mr. Meyer to see Mr. Bruhl's face when he came out of the lake.

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Mr. Dufrechou stated that on Saturday, June 2, about midnight, northbound there was a vehicle fire right at the end of the bridge and the occupant got out right away. He stated Sgt. Viola's team responded and put out the fire. He stated Mandeville responded as well. Mr. Dufrechou stated the bridge was closed about twenty minutes that evening.

Mr. Dufrechou stated also on June 2, later in the morning, there was a bridge closure for about an hour because of severe weather.

With respect to erecting the truss on the North Shore, Mr. Dufrechou stated it is scheduled for Monday night, June 10, and Tuesday morning, June 11, during which time the southbound bridge will be closed for about two hours from midnight to 2:00 a.m. for the truss to be erected.

With respect to the truss on the South Shore, Mr. Dufrechou stated it is the last major element of the Corps of Engineers' project and will be erected this Friday night. He stated there will be a lane closure going north beginning at 10:00 p.m. and at midnight the northbound bridge will be closed to actually erect the truss over the lanes. He stated the old variable message sign will be put on top and the bridge should be open by 4:00 a.m. Mr. Dufrechou stated the first media releases have already been put out. Mr. Dufrechou showed slides of the truss on the North Shore, which is about ninety-six feet long, and the truss on the South Shore is about forty-five feet long.

Mr. Dufrechou stated on Monday, June 3, he is very proud to say they submitted two TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grants. Mr. Dufrechou stated he has a tremendous deal of gratitude to Mrs. Lopreore for fighting a federal computer system for four days to get properly logged on, to Mr. Bourgeois and the GEC guys, as well as Mr. LaSalle for putting together a tremendous package in a very short period of time. Mr. Dufrechou stated this is for two grant applications. He explained one is for safety striping; restriping both bridges entirely, some

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resurfacing work, resurfacing of the approach roads on the North Shore, as well as some work on the call boxes and the HIL lights - all of which is about a \$10 - \$11 million proposal, with cost sharing of up to 50% from the Causeway. Mr. Dufrechou stated the second is to upgrade the railing, adding that we have the safest bridges in the country, nonetheless, we are trying to always enhance safety and this would upgrade the railings to 21st Century standards. He stated the cost is \$28 million and is a separate proposal with the cost share of 20% by the Causeway. He stated both made the deadline and there is confirmation from the Federal DOT that they were both received. Mr. Dufrechou stated he and Mr. Rase spoke with Senator Vitter about ten days ago and he acknowledged his support. Mr. Rase stated he has a letter from Senator Vitter. Mr. Dufrechou stated Senator Landrieu called yesterday morning and pledged her support. He stated she will send a letter to DOT acknowledging that she would like to see this project go forward. Mr. Dufrechou stated it was a tremendous amount of work in a short period time and thanked GEC, Mrs. Lopreore, Mr. LaSalle and the Causeway staff; he is very proud of them. Mr. Rase stated it is good that they are in there trying everything they can as far as finances go, but reality is the Causeway's chances on these are probably not that great. Mr. Dufrechou stated they are in competition with everyone almost in the United States of America, with \$470 million totally on this and it is not only entities like the GNOEC but every state also. Mr. Dufrechou stated where he thinks the Causeway does have a better chance is, they are talking a pretty strong cost share for one of them, the U.S. Government seems to be gearing some of these grants more toward neighborhood access type operations more so than safety and major roadways. He added, nevertheless, it is the best avenue to go right now. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry as to when they will find out, Mr. Bourgeois stated usually before September, before Labor Day. Mr. Rase read Senator Vitter's letter addressed

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to Ray LaHood, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the GNOEC's two proposals submitted for the fiscal year 2013 TIGER discretionary grant program. Senator Vitter asked the DOT to give its full consideration to the proposals. Mr. Rase stated, with Senator Vitter's and then Senator Landrieu doing a similar letter, his hopes would be that on the 50% matching one that the Causeway would at least get a good look on it. Mr. Dufrechou stated there are two good proposals in there and he is very appreciative of the engineers and staff - everyone who participated. Mr. Dufrechou stated during Hurricane Isaac the access ramp to the nine-mile turnaround was lost much like in Hurricane Katrina. He stated there are three alternatives that are being considered to replace the ramp - one is to relocate the concrete deck sections remaining; the second is to use the ACROW spans in the middle deck section similar to what was done on I-10 after Hurricane Katrina; and the third is basically a catwalk, foot path, from the existing turnaround to the access ramp. He stated concurrently the engineers are estimating a fourth alternative, which would be to put a stairway from the elevated road at the nine-mile down to the turnaround and may be done internally. Mr. Dufrechou stated he would like to offer this for the Commission's consideration as strictly an advertisement for bids. He added there are insurance funds that will cover this. In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry regarding the relocation issue, Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Becknell is aware of the relocation potential also and is involved in it. **On motion by Katz, seconded by Romig, based on the recommendation of the Consulting Engineers and the staff, the project titled Restoration of Access to the Nine-Mile Turnaround is approved for advertisement for bidding. Mr. Rase, Mr. Romig, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion.**

Mr. Dufrechou presented Plan Change No. 7 of the North Toll Plaza Lane Modifications project, which installs the new treadles and drainage for all five of the lanes, removes the old toll equipment

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and weigh-in-motion system that has been inoperative for many years, replaces concrete in existing lanes one through four, and modifies the foundations of the toll booths in the existing four lanes. Mr. Dufrechou stated there is the not to exceed price of \$255,000 for it and recommends it for the Commission's consideration. **On motion by Ligi, Plan Change No. 7 provides for installation of the new toll system treadles and accompanying drainage in all five toll lanes; the removal of the existing toll collection equipment and weigh-in-motion system and replacement of the concrete pavement in lanes one through four; modifications to the foundations of the toll booths in lanes one through four; relocation fo the impact attenuator backup blocks and accompanying work. Based upon the recommendation of the staff and Consulting Engineers, the Commission authorizes the General Manager to complete the execution of Plan Change No. 7 in an amount not to exceed \$255,000 and ninety additional calendar days.** In response to Mr. Katz's inquiry about the additional ninety days, Mr. Dufrechou stated ninety days were requested but he and Mr. Bourgeois have a conference call with Barriere after this meeting, and he and the staff are not recommending the ninety days; they want the work completed before the school system opens in August. Mr. Dufrechou stated he recommends everything but the ninety day calendar extension; he recommends the not to exceed amount of \$255,000 and delete the ninety calendar days. **Mr. Ligi amended his motion to eliminate the ninety additional calendar days.** Mr. Katz asked about the credit the Commission is owed because of shifting a little bit of work. Mr. Dufrechou stated Mr. Bourgeois is working that out with TRMI. **Mr. Katz seconded the motion. Mr. Rase, Mr. Romig, Mr. Katz and Mr. Ligi voted in favor of the motion.**

In response to Mr. Rase's inquiry as to when vehicles will go up for auction, Mr. Graham stated not this year - not until next March.

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Mr. Rase extended Mr. Lorino's apologies for asking that the meeting time be changed to 10:30 from 10:00 a.m. because he had a meeting with the Corps, and then he was called to testify in Tampa, FL up to 3:00 p.m. today and was unable to make it at all.

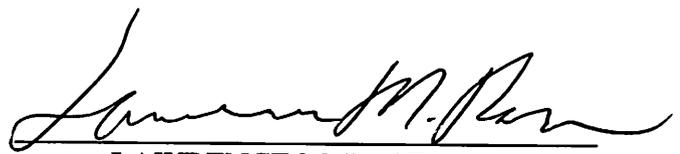
Mr. Rase announced the next meeting will be Wednesday, July 3, at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Spohrer of GEC stated he brings tidings from Secretary LeBas with LA DOTD and read her letter thanking the Commission for its help on the successful and safe completion of the Huey P. Long Bridge widening project. Secretary LeBas invited everyone to the festivities on Father's Day, June 16, for the ribbon-cutting; invitations were also sent by e-mail. Mr. Spohrer read a letter from Verdi Adam with GEC and Chairman of the LTM Board of Directors, also thanking the Commission for its interest and help during the project. Mr. Dufrechou mentioned Sgt. Roy Jacob, Cpl. Sean Bancroft and the entire Huey P. Long Bridge police, stating he has put them particularly in some very hard operations for over a year, forcing people to do the right thing even when they did not want to and when the signage was questionable. He stated the police force and MAP guys have done a magnificent job throughout that time. Mr. Rase stated as a follow-up, in hearing the reports and 400 people being taken care of in a month, it is amazing what goes on on these two bridges; the average guy probably has no idea about all this stuff.

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



LAWRENCE K. KATZ
SECRETARY



LAWRENCE M. RASE
CHAIRMAN

DAVID VITTER
LOUISIANA

DEPUTY WHIP

Environment and Public Works
Top-Ranking Republican

Armed Services

Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

Small Business and Entrepreneurship

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 31, 2013

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The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U. S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Dear Secretary LaHood,

It has been brought to my attention that the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission (GNOEC) has submitted two proposals to the U. S. Department of Transportation for the *FY 2013 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) V Discretionary Grant* program.

The Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge is one of three primary entry/exit routes for metro New Orleans from the north. The Causeway is also the longest bridge over water in the world, serves as a vital artery connecting Interstate 10 and Interstate 12, and as a principal hurricane evacuation route. Additionally, the Causeway was the only route useable by first responders returning to New Orleans immediately following Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Isaac in 2012.

Their first project is the *Safety and Access Enhancements on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge and Approaches*. It is my understanding this project includes resurfacing the Causeway Approach Road system, construction of a shared use path on the East Approach Road, replacement of the Motorist Information Variable Message Signs (traffic/emergency information system) and Emergency Call Boxes and Pavement Markings. The estimated total cost is approximately \$11 million, and the GNOEC could provide a 50% cost share.

Their second project is the *Bridge Rail Modifications on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway*. It is my understanding this project will upgrade Bridge rails that were designed in 1953 to current standards by increasing elevation of rails to prevent uncontrolled vehicles going overboard. The estimated cost is approximately \$28 million, and the GNOEC could provide a 20% cost share,

I commend the Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission for its efforts to improve safety and access enhancements on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway Bridge and ask that you give your full consideration to the two proposals referenced above. A report of the final decision would be helpful and appreciated. Please contact me through Ms. Brenda Moore in my Metairie office with any questions. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



David Vitter
United States Senate

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Bobby Jindal, Governor
Sherri H. LeBas, P.E., Secretary

May 6, 2013

Mr. Lawrence M. Rase, Chairman
Mr. Michael Lorino Jr., Vice Chairman
Mr. Stephen G. Romig, Treasurer
Mr. Lawrence K. Katz, Secretary
Mr. Anthony V. Ligi Jr., Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Carlton Dufrechou, General Manager
Mr. Nick Congemi, Chief of Police
Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission
P.O. Box 7656
Metairie, LA 70010

Re: Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project

Gentlemen:

This letter is to thank you for your agency's help on the successful and safe completion of the Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project. The police support and advice provided by Chief Nick Congemi and his officers in the realm of traffic control and speed control have gone a long way toward our planned, successful history of no serious automobile accidents. From the beginning, their officers have been on the project in a very visible way. This has been a night and day, seven days a week operation since we started in 2006 and they have been there with us.

On the planning side, from the time many years ago that we started the weekly traffic control meetings, the Commission has been ably represented by its Executive Director Carlton Dufrechou, Chief Congemi, or one of their lieutenants. We are grateful that they took the time from their busy schedules to help with the planning of the traffic control.

We thank you for GNOEC's interest and help, and we invite you all to the festivities on Father's Day, June 16, when our team gives back to the Greater New Orleans area this wonderfully functional and highly significant Mississippi River crossing.

Sincerely,

Sherri H. LeBas, P.E.
Secretary



June 6, 2013

Mr. Lawrence M. Rase, Chairman
Mr. Michael Lorino Jr., Vice Chairman
Mr. Stephen G. Romig, Treasurer
Mr. Lawrence K. Katz, Secretary
Mr. Anthony V. Ligi Jr., Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Carlton Dufrechou, General Manager
Mr. Nick Congemi, Chief of Police
Greater New Orleans Expressway Commission
P.O. Box 7656
Metairie, LA 70010

Re: Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project

Gentlemen:

Over the seven years of the Huey P. Long Bridge Widening Project your agency and many of your staff have provided our team great service. This letter is to thank you for your agency's help and their help towards the project's successful and safe completion. Chief Nick Congemi and his officers provided skilled support and advice. The work has a successful history of no serious automobile accidents. Since we started in 2006 no night has been too dark, and no day too wet or cold or hot; they have been there with us.

Carlton Dufrechou, Chief Congemi, or one of their lieutenants took the time from their busy schedules to help with the planning of the traffic control at our weekly meetings.

We thank you for GNOEC's interest and help. We join DOTD in inviting you all to the festivities on Father's Day, June 16. You will be pleased with what you see in this vastly improved Mississippi River crossing.

Sincerely,
Louisiana TIMED Managers

Verdi Adam, P.E.
Chairman of the Board