

Spring Bayou Lake Commission Minutes June 17, 2019

The June 17, 2019, Spring Bayou Lake Commission meeting was called to order by Chairman Jimmy Landry at 6:00 pm in the Avoyelles Police Jury Meeting Room. Chairman Landry said the Opening Prayer and led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Secretary Terry Laborde called the roll of commissioners & guest. Those present were: Chairman Jimmy Landry, Vice-Chairman Rayford Laborde, Secretary Terry Laborde, Commissioner Artha Hale, Commissioner Roland Dugas III, Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere, Juror Trent Clark, and Police Jury President Col. Charles Jones. Absent were Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux, Commissioner Jules Bordelon, Commissioner Mayor Kenneth Pickett, and Juror Mark Borrel. Also in attendance were Ronald Coco, Bill Jupp, Mike Ducote (President of the Spring Bayou Restoration Team), Scott Laborde, Jacques Goudeau, and James Franks.

Chairman Landry checked the by-laws which state a simple majority of commissioners are needed for a quorum. The first items of discussion were the Spring Bayou issues of the Grand Lac “Junk-Yard” and the Boggy Bayou campgrounds.

Col. Charles Jones began by an update on the “Junk-Yard”. According to Col. Jones, the Avoyelles Police Jury has the authority to request termination of utilities for noncompliance of regulations. The issue was that the justification was sent to the property owner by email only. Col. Jones spoke with the compliance officer who requested written justification. Vice-Chairman Laborde cautioned about utility meters being turned on without proper procedures, but Col. Jones said proper processes are being followed by the parish. Additionally, Col. Jones stated the property owner is in violation of the junk-yard ordinance, but there was a miscommunication or lack of communication with the property owner of the “Junk-Yard” issue.

Concerning the Boggy Bayou campground issue, Chairman Landry said a meeting was conducted between the Spring Bayou Restoration Team and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries. At present, the utilities to the campground are turned on in some campsites, but the fees are being paid on the “honor-system” by campers. There have been no improvements to the sites or electrical repairs. Col. Jones stated his opinion that keeping the campsites open is an asset to the parish. After Col. Jones requested a clarification concerning 30-amp and 50-amp connections, Vice-Chairman Laborde explained the difference is in the required electrical hook-up according to the interior camper requirements (appliances, etc) of the more modern campers.

As for the installation of the water level markers, Commissioner Hale stated he and Civil Works Director Kevin Bordelon are waiting for water levels to drop to properly install the strategic markers. Additional assistance would be appreciated.

In a separate issue, Chairman Landry reported the SBLC Master Plan was unanimously adopted by the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury in their July 2019 meeting. The next step is to send copies of the Master Plan to individual, state, and federal entities to demonstrate the insight and rationale for projects of the Spring Bayou Lake Commission in an attempt to secure funding for projects. Commissioner Dugas questioned Chairman Landry about the timeline with NRCS and others. Chairman Landry responded that he was not aware of specific deadlines, but he anticipated some very soon. He said letters of support and intent will be sent over the upcoming days to seek potential partners/supporters. Vice-Chairman Laborde suggested a letter be sent directly to the United States Department of the Interior after obtaining support from Louisiana's senators and/or representatives. Jacques Goudeau suggested preliminary consultations be held to obtain insight and cautioned as to whom the letters would be sent because some high profile individuals may not be in favor of the commission's priority of obtaining water for the complex instead of drainage. Here commissioners and the audience made suggestions such as Bill Jupp's suggestion of the National Geographic Society, Commissioner Landry's suggestion of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation, James Frank's suggestion for private contributions and a "fund-me-page", Vice-Chairman Laborde's suggestion for B.A.S.S. & the Wild Turkey Federation, and Jacques Goudeau's suggestions to specific public individuals. Col. Jones suggested the possibility of obtaining a portion of the parish hotel/motel fund to be used for administrative cost. Commissioner Lamartiniere suggested sending the letter to the Louisiana Department of Tourism. Other suggestions were received from the audience.

Chairman Landry informed everyone of the meeting for the Water Initiative Project to be held at Paragon on the 18th.

Col. Jones said of the possibility of obtaining \$270,000.00 from a Capital Outlay Grant for repairs and maintenance of the Little River dam and control structure. Vice-Chairman Laborde asked if some of the monies could be used to dredge at the gates of the control structure. The dam was built for use during a drawdown. Discussion immediately switched to Col. Jones's idea of the parish purchasing a small dredging barge for continuous small dredging operations. He indicated Pan-American Engineers could propose specifications for such an operation. Commissioner Hale cautioned of the operation cost involved with such a plan. Commissioner Dugas added that the siltation has been an accumulation since the 1950's and removal should be taken in carefully planned steps a little at a time with possibly using contract labor. The LDWF plan to dredge 1.25-miles of Boggy Bayou towards Little River has been estimated to cost up to \$450,000.00. Jacques Goudeau suggested the commission entertain the idea of a drawdown then use bull-dozers once the land has dried. Commissioner Dugas suggested the sediment be moved out as slurry to elevated property where it could be allowed to dry and finally sell it for road construction or to private individuals that could be used as high quality dirt. Commissioner

Lamartiniere emphasized his suggestion to possibly raise the level of Little River dam as the money was originally targeted for the dam & control structure before the money slips away. Secretary Laborde suggested adding to the height of the capping on the dam and installing gate-like structures to this added capping which can open & close as needed to assist in regulating water levels. The commissioners were informed that Chris Dausat had submitted a bid to use his equipment to clear the vegetation and sediment in the immediate area adjacent to the control structure. Jacques Goudeau then informed the commissioners of a Texas company which can survey and map the bottoms of the bodies of water in the Spring Bayou Complex using sonar and computers to draw detailed maps. According to Goudeau, the cost would be approximately \$35,000.00 if the Texas company did the work with their equipment, but a cost of approximately \$8,000.00 for just the rental of the boat and equipment. The process would record the depth of the water, the depth of the sediment above the hard river bottom, and an analysis of the sediment. Juror agreed this was a proper starting point to determine the problem at hand. Commissioner Hale added his familiarity of Louisiana entities capable of doing this analysis.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Hale presented a motion at 7:20 pm to adjourn. Vice-Chairman Laborde added a second and the motion was unanimously accepted.