

Spring Bayou Lake Commission

Meeting Minutes of December 17, 2018

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jimmy Landry at 6:00 pm.

Jimmy Landry led with the opening prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secretary Terry Laborde called roll. Members present were: Jimmy Landry, Terry Laborde, Dr LJ Mayeux, Roland Dugas III, Philip Lamartiniere, & Jules Bordelon. Absent were Rayford Laborde, Artha Hale, Mayor Kenneth Pickett, Juror Mark Borrel, Juror Trent Clark, & Police Jury President Charles Jones. Also present were: Scott Laborde, Jacques Goudeau, Kevin Bordelon, & Ronald Coco.

Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux made a motion to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2018 meeting as distributed by Chairman Landry. Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere added a second and the vote was unanimous to accept the minutes.

Chairman Landry urged all committee members who attended the Ethic Certification meeting at the LSU Cooperative Extension office in Mansura recently to get their certification certificate and send to him. Otherwise, the class could be taken on-line. Regardless, a certificate must be received by the Jury by December 31st.

Chairman Landry updated everyone on his contact with Tommie Seaton from Senator Cassidy's office for assistance with our efforts in Spring Bayou. Meetings with Chairman Marshal Pierite from the Tunica-Biloxi tribe, and representatives from the Grand Cote National Refuge are also being sought.

Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux updated the committee on his contacts for possible funding of projects through Ducks Unlimited in partnership with NRCS by meeting with the Lafayette office of Ducks Unlimited. Commissioner Dr Mayeux met with Dr Aaron Pierce concerning the Rice Stewardship Program and monies left over from the BP settlement. Dr Mayeux said the program provides expertise to rice farmers by assisting in getting water to the farmer's croplands. He spoke of the possibility of the same approach to maybe get water to Spring Bayou. He said the program is solution oriented using scientific-based problem solving solutions. Dr Mayeux plans to meet again with the group in mid-January. Commissioners Bordelon and Dugas cautioned a very objective approach should be used in meetings with this group.

Commissioner Terry Laborde updated the committee on progress & information regarding the control structure at the end of Little River. He stated the correct procedure is for the Spring Bayou Lake Commission to make a recommendation to the Avoyelles Police Jury who will in turn vote on the decision to open and close the gates of the structure. Director Kevin Bordelon and Engineer Ron Bordelon are planning to officially determine the height of the top of the dam and then correlate that elevation with the water level marks planned to be installed in the

complex. Commissioner Laborde continued he had recent conversations with Biologist Jody David from LDWF and submitted a few questions to him. David responded that the only time the control structure was opened in the past was to conduct draw downs for aquatic vegetation control. The gates may be opened during high water events when the water below the structure is well below the lake level. David said raising the spillway height is not impossible, but in doing so we would have to look at the area that would be inundated and how that would affect timber, homes, and camps. In the mid to late fifties, the spillway was designated and set by the mean elevation of the Spring Bayou area. Three feet below pool stage would be the minimum not to affect fish populations. The channel that was dredged in 1989 was 12 to 14 feet deep and this allows fish to inhabit this area during lower water levels. He agreed with Laborde that there are other factors that play a key role including water temperature and oxygen levels. It has been assumed that the dam had been set at an elevation of 41-feet. Jacques Goudeau agreed with Commissioner Laborde that an official elevation should be taken of the top of the dam and LDWF should be involved with engineers. Ronald Coco added that, in his opinion, due to the accumulation of sediment, if the water level dropped 3-feet there would be little water left. Jacques Goudeau and most of the audience added that a formal opinion and set procedures needs to be set by LDWF because things have changed over the years.

Chairman Landry and Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux suggest that the committee get fully informed and determine an exact plan for alternate water sources such as reservoirs be fully explored prior to meeting with landowners along the water way. Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux suggested an exact plan needs to be determined and the reasons for the procedures determined prior to talking to landowners about plans. Commissioner Philip Lamartiniere reminded the committee of the procedure to purchase land in Little California where the Nature Conservative was involved. He said a consideration should be made to analyze property in Rapides parish for reservoirs or pumping stations. Chairman Landry associated this with the procedure with the Indian Creek complex.

Jacques Goudeau spoke to the committee regarding funding. He said attention should be given to describing what is happening to the Spring Bayou complex over the last years in comparison to just leaving the complex alone and do nothing. Recommendations were made to send letters of intent from the Avoyelles Police Jury to restart the project compared to other organizations.

Jacques Goudeau and Chairman Landry attended a video conference with the Corps on December 13th focused on understanding the studies to revitalize the Spring Bayou project and how to proceed. The original authorizations the Corps was tasked with were ecological restoration and flood and drainage. Navigation and agriculture supply were not considerations. According to Goudeau, the underlying question in any successfully funded Corps project is “in regards to ecological restoration, what are you trying to restore?” In discussing the cost-sharing exception, the project is likely eligible for a lower cost-share percentage than the original 35%.

Commissioner Laborde questioned the date for the next meeting since it falls on the MLK federal holiday schedule. There were no objections and the meeting will continue at 6:00 pm on the third Monday of every month.

Commissioner Dr LJ Mayeux made a motion to adjourn at 7:12 pm. Commissioner Laborde added a second and the motion was unanimous.