

## **Friends of the Manchac Greenway (FMG) Board Meeting, April 18, 2018, 2:00 pm, Turtle Cove Classroom, Galva, LA**

In attendance: Frank Neelis, Ben Taylor, Dwight Williams (Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation), Galen Schum, Greg Za Maurin, Alma Chasesz, Terry Abadie, Diane Esordi, Melinda Holloway, Dr. Rob Moreau (Southeastern Louisiana University Turtle Cove Research Station) and Lisa Williams.

- The recently released “Potential Economic Impact from the Ring Around the Lake” study commissioned by FMG and completed by Herb Holloway and William Joubert of the Southeastern Louisiana University Small Business Economic Development Center was distributed and discussed. It should be a very useful tool in advocating for our Greenway and the larger project to which it must eventually be connected. (See attachment.)
- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Za 1<sup>st</sup>, Galen 2<sup>nd</sup>).
- Alma gave a Treasurer’s report; recent expenditures were described and the organization’s current bank balance is \$2675.40. She then led a discussion of the need and cost for the organization to acquire general liability and board and officer indemnification insurance policies. Alma also called for any grant applications from the group to be copied/forwarded to her.
- Ben mentioned a recent motorist/bicyclist incident on the Greenway and suggested the group might want to step up its advocacy in addressing immediate public safety issues on the Greenway – namely, bicycle safety education/motorist warnings and pedestrian safety/motorist warning at the curve before the Shell Bank canoe launch. Discussion ensued.
- Frank gave a report on the FMG table at the Strawberry Festival in Ponchatoula the previous weekend. He, Galen and Melinda gave out information on our project and made contact with some of the estimated quarter million attendees. Possible participation by the group in the May 5 Manchac Spring Fling to benefit the Special Olympics was also discussed.
- Frank and Melinda reported on their recent contact with the organizers of the Cycle Zydeco event in Acadiana, the possibilities of this endeavor being expanded into our part of the state and its potential intercourse with the Greenway.
- Frank reported on his recent contact with a representative of the Canadian National Railroad (from their real estate division in Jackson, MS) and the apparent openness to examining a proposal to allow the Greenway limited access (by way of a wooden causeway) through a sliver of their property between the I-55 and the railroad rights

of way on the approach to Ponchatoula (the “Squeeze”). Frank followed up with a letter to this CN office.

- Frank reported on the success of the recent Clean Sweep litter pick-up event that brought together elements from Tangipahoa government, Entergy and various other groups. Two permanent changes arose from this effort - an announcement by the Louisiana Dept. Transportation and Development to commit to contracting a regular litter patrol on the Greenway and the removal, by the Parish, of old, fallen bridge girders from Upper Owl Bayou at the new Greenway canoe launch. This site has experienced an amazing transformation from the cleanup.

- Frank and Za described a similar cleanup planned next weekend on the southern part of the Greenway with the annual St John the Baptist Parish Keep America Beautiful campaign. Litter collection at Shell Bank Bayou is planned with the assistance of canoeing groups. Frank inquired with StJBP planner Terry about the possibilities of acquiring paving materials from the parish for new parking areas at this rejuvenated site.

- Frank displayed one of the award plaques he and Ben prepared as a way to show FMG appreciation to several of the entities that helped in these Greenway clean-ups.

- Recommendations are being sought from FMG and others on how best to re-plant the area (the spoil bank) between Port Manchac and I-55 next to the Greenway. The area had been haphazardly cleared previously and Frank plans to consult with local silviculturalists on recommendations.

- Diane led the group in a discussion to establish a Mission Statement for the FMG. She proposed this statement: “ The Friends of the Manchac Greenway was founded to protect and preserve the Manchac Greenway as a natural and recreational resource through advocacy, conservation and education.” After some discussion and proposed tweaking it was adopted (Alma 1st, Ben 2<sup>nd</sup>). Alma made a motion to also formally adopt this into the FMG Bylaws (Ben 2<sup>nd</sup>).

- Diane reported on the disposition of the FMG web site and asked that a FMG letter be sent to Amber Narro, one of the originators of the site and its current owner, to request transfer of ownership to FMG so we can make further improvements to it.

- For the umpteenth time, the matter of a FMG Paypal account, the use of a credit card scanner, as well as a way to coordinate these functions with other FMG digital activities, was discussed.

- Galen described the need for organizing the structure of FMG Membership including the possibility of establishing different levels of membership, “gimmes” (incentives & awards), etc. A new committee was born.

- Lisa showed a new aerial photo display of the once abandoned and now Tangipahoa Parish-managed Carter/Reagan Rest Area at the I-55 Manchac Exit and discussed plans to develop landscaping proposals for the tract. Frank has also put together a team of experts and interested parties to advance ideas for this project.

- Adjourn

The next FMG meeting is scheduled for 2:30, May 23, 2018 in the Tangipahoa Parish Planning Office meeting room on Club DE-Luxe Rd. in Hammond.