

Manchac Parkway Sign In Sheet

Turtle Cove Research Station

3/11/15

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Minutes from Manchac Parkway Meeting

March 11, 2015

Frank Neelis opened the meeting and had everyone around the room introduce themselves. He thanked everyone for attending and thanked Rob Moreau for providing the facility. He gave a brief history of how concept had developed as the idea of having a fishing pier on the Tangipahoa side of Pass Manchac. Recognized Councilman Cortez of Tangipahoa.

Rob Moreau, Turtle Cove Director and host of the meeting gave a welcome speech. He then introduced the concept of a Pontchartrain "E" trail using an app on a phone. He urged the group to use the Southeastern Galva facility whenever we needed and pointed out that there is internet with no password required and also a built in power point devise.

Greg "Za" Maurin introduced the steering committee: Himself, David Hargrave, Frank "Bucky" Neelis, Ben Taylor and Dwight Williams.

Joey Lamonte, DOTD permit officer, stated we will need to develop a joint use agreement for both Tangipahoa and St John parishes. The agreement will have to state how our plan will affect the right of way. The agreement will then be presented to District 62, then to the state office in Baton Rouge and if approved will go to the Federal government who has final say. He was advised by his superior at DOTD "Don't hang us into anything yet". He will work with us to set up meetings with DOTD. He gave information on how process works with examples.

Ben Taylor, LPBF Board member from Tangipahoa and park ranger at Camp Salmon gave a brief history of the area and of the Lake Maurepas Society which began a parkway push several years ago. He pointed out that the area didn't fit into what the State thinks a "park" should look like. Also stated the area is already in use as a parkway but needs enhancement.

Stacey Palmer, National Park Service, gave an update on some of the projects the NPS are currently working on in the area. She stated that NPS could assist us in identifying partners and help us to set goals. Was also pointed out that name recognition of the National Park Service can also help.

Dwight Williams, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, gave a short history of the "Save our Light" effort to save the Manchac Lighthouse tower. Although the group failed the copula of the light is safe at the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Maritime Museum in Madisonville. It was hoped to bring it back to Manchac as part of a fishing pier. He also stated that LPBF could function as the groups 501(c)(3) to give tax breaks to donors of the project. LPBF could also handle the banking but if it grows to grant management a small amount of indirect would have to be charged.

Randy Meyers, Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries, stated part of his job is to help with fishing access for the public. He mentioned the three Wildlife Management Areas: Maurepas, Manchac & Joyce. Also mentioned that money from the Breaux/Wollop Act could be used to promote fishing access.

Alison Lapuma, Director of planning Tangipahoa Parish presented maps of the area. Also had detailed photos of the area at the I-55/Hwy. 51 intersection where a major problem will exist for the Bike Trail.

She met with Tangipahoa Parish President Gordon Burgess and stated he is in support of the effort. Frank pointed out the same area south of Ponchatoula that could provide linkage for biking and running could possibly be included for birding.

Ray Herndon, Conservation Fund stated that with the Manchac preserve over 140,000 acres are protected. They are still looking at additions and would be interested in other key properties. Randy gave an example of how the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries has worked with the Conservation Fund.

Frank added that Jay Addison, Land Trust for Louisiana had also pledged his support.

Lawrence Manerman stated he just hosted the first Environmental Advisory Council meeting at Southeastern University on Jan. 30th. He stated he would coordinate support between the two organizations. He also writes for the Daily Star. He can help open lines of communication to use the resources of the university to help expand support. Pointed out that students are a major resource.

Rev. Donald August, St. John Citizens Advisory Committee said a road to Frenier Beach could be used again if it had a railroad crossing. Also stated we should develop programs around the history of the area and the Storm of 1915 in which four towns were destroyed. He stated he has reviewed the concept with others in St. John parish and all support effort.

Rob Moreau showed the book "Back Door to the Gulf" which SLU sells.

Herb Holloway, Southeastern Business Research Center stated they could help with economic impact statements and help with grant writing. They also do demographics and GIS. Mrs. Holloway explained her biking activities and how she has to go outside of the parish to find good biking opportunities. She pointed out there are nationwide web sites that note biking routes.

Councilman Cortez announced there will be a litter pick up on Hwy. 51 in Tangipahoa on March 28 and urged participation. Za announced there will be a litter pick up on the St. John section on April 11th.

Robby Miller, president of the Hammond Economic Development pointed out how this project could benefit the local economy by having events that will impact eating and lodging businesses. Also mentioned he is running for Tangipahoa Parish President.

Frank then stated he thought the resolutions from governing bodies would be the first order of business but that can wait until we are further along in the planning process. To help in the planning process he suggested a big community meeting for public input. That effort would create the Community Awareness Committee which would decide how to proceed.

Other suggested committees:

Community Organization Committee

Economic Impact Committee

Infrastructure Committee

Funding Financial Committee- grant writers.

Stacy Palmer suggested that it seemed like some of these committees could be combined. Also Economic Impact should also include business involvement.

Frank said these were just his ideas; nothing was written in stone (or set in cement).

Was also suggested to enlarge steering committee

Questions arose about safety and litter issues.

Lawrence Manerman suggested we have a formal brainstorming session with a facilitator.

Frank stated the steering committee will meet soon and put together the next step.

Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.