

Minutes of the Friends of the Manchac Greenway Board Meeting 2:00, January 30, 2019 @ the Turtle Cove Research Station Office, Galva, LA

ATTENDANCE:

Dwight Williams (Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation), Joey Hebert (Manchac Boating Association), Alma Chasez, Lisa Williams, Terry_____ (Village at Port Manchac), George Becnel, Galen Shum, Tom Dumas (guest), Byron Almquist (Canoe and Trail Adventures), Frank Neelis, Courtney Forbes (Wild & Scenic Film Festival), Greg Za Maurin and Ben Taylor.

MEETING MINUTES:

Approval of 12/12/18 meeting minutes.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Alma Chasez, Treasurer – No activity in account; balance - \$3,030.31.

PORT MANCHAC UPDATE:

Terry_____ reported that his company's initial interest in developing the 100-acre wetland adjacent to the Port has been put in abeyance. Given the recent finding by the Louisiana Attorney General that the Port Commission is free to explore other uses for the facility, it is writing a scope of work and will issue Requests for Proposals (RFP) to Terry's group and others. It is expected that stakeholders (including Friends of the Manchac Greenway) and other interested parties will have input in this process.

GUEST PRESENTATION:

Courtney Forbes described the upcoming Wild & Scenic Film Festival scheduled for showing this fall. This is a three-hour California-based production about the many ways people around the country are enjoying nature and the out-of-doors. It was suggested that local content would probably enhance local interest.

GREENWAY MANAGER:

Ben reported no action has been taken on this matter during this past month as no replies have been forthcoming from either Tangipahoa or St. John Parishes. Ben will attempt to make further inquiries.

RESTORE PROGRAM UPDATE:

Alma reported no word about this effort has been conveyed since the first of the year. Ben will call FMG Board Member Bridget Bailey of Tangipahoa Parish Planning and ask "What up?"

"MANCHAC GREENWAY" EXIT SIGNS:

Ben reported the need to approach the Tangipahoa and St. John the Baptist Parish Councils about their endorsement for special signs on the four interstate approaches ((2) on I-10 and (2) on I-55 southbound and the northbound entrance ramp near Laplace) recognizing the alternate Manchac Greenway route (which is better than the current "Frontage Road" designation). Lisa suggested trying to also re-attempt approaching the Parish 911/USPS about doing this name change.

HOUSEKEEPING:

At Frank's request, Lisa volunteered to store FMG equipment and supplies.

MANCHAC GREENWAY and RING AROUND THE LAKE CONFERENCE(S):

Ben reported that a conference or exposition about the Greenway for the general public is postponed until further developments on the Greenway. Frank has recommended acquiring guidance from the Regional Planning Commission before planning a conference on the Ring Around the Lake. A preliminary invitee list has been made and a venue for this event has been researched.

ADOPT-A-ROAD:

Lisa reported plans for our first quarterly litter pick-up this Saturday on 02/02/19. Participation by the other signees to this program - Bec's on the Lake, NOLA Kayak, New Orleans Kayak Swamp Tours, Canoe & Trail Adventures, Wild Louisiana Tours and Tangipahoa Sheriff's Dept. - are "in the works."

RING AROUND THE LAKE:

Frank reported on his research on the popularity of bicycle tours at various U.S. and overseas locations. He has engaged the Greater New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, Southeastern Louisiana University and tourism officials on reviving this idea and the creation of GIS mapping to indicate where and how this concept would work around Lake Pontchartrain. Frank suggested activities involving area wetland and nautical activities such as kayaking, "boatel" lodging, paddleboard yoga, etc. could be incorporated in these tours.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Galen and George reported the preparations for the new FMG membership program are ready and Ben added that it has been sent to the first part of our mailing list.

OWL BAYOU CANOE LUNCH VEGETATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT:

Frank reported that Entergy has cleared, not only the area around the canoe launch at Upper Owl Bayou but most of the vegetation on its ENTIRE right-of-way from Laplace to the Joyce WMA. This has had the effect of revealing the old Hammond Highway – its old asphalt surface in St. John and the roadbed only in Tangipahoa (its asphalt was "harvested" some time ago). This improvement also helps illustrate the possibilities of incorporating the old 1920s road into our Greenway. Frank also described the possible engagement of an organization that's in the business of restoring utility rights-of-way with natural vegetation. As Entergy has made a wholehearted commitment to enhancing the Manchac Greenway, look for further developments in the future.

OTHER BUSINESS:

It was announced that a half-marathon on the Manchac Greenway from Frenier to Pass Manchac is planned for November 24.

THE NEXT MEETING is planned for 2:00, March 13 at Bec's on the Lake Restaurant on Peavine Rd. in Frenier.