

**Friends of the Manchac Greenway Board Meeting Minutes/Newsletter
2:09, December 12, 2018 @ Bec's on the Lake, Frenier, LA**

MEETING MINUTES:

Minutes of 11/17/18 meeting were approved.

IN ATTENDANCE:

- BOARD: Greg "Za" Maurine (Chair), Galen Schum (Vice Chair), Ben Taylor (Sec.), Terry Abadie (St. John the Baptist Parish Economic Development), Frank Neelis, Alma Chasez (Treas.) and George Becnel (Webmaster and Host)
- GUESTS: Louisiana State Representative Gregory Miller, Clay James (LA DOTD), Dr. Molly McGraw (SLU Geography), Dr. James Nelson (Port of Manchac Commission) and Tom Kane (Canoe & Trail Adventures),

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Alma declared that after various deposits and debits the bank balance was \$3,030.31.

GREENWAY MANAGER:

Ben reported that a list of ideas about what a Greenway Manager could accomplish and the position's possible management and funding arrangements were sent to Joe Thomas, Tangipahoa Parish Chief Administrative Officer. Terry recommended also contacting Laverne Toombs, St. John the Baptist Parish Chief Administrative Officer.

RESTORE PROGRAM:

Alma reported that the consultant ELOS and Engineer Meyer for this project are currently doing their research and that the next meeting of the oversight committee will be on an as yet unannounced date some time after the 1st of the year.

TOURISM:

Rep. Miller made note of the import role the region's tourism industry will have in bringing attention to the area's unique wetland resources and that such efforts are underway. Tom Kane mentioned his company collects a modest fee from clients for use of an area canoe launch and these monies are donated to the adjacent public park. He suggested such an arrangement could be made at the Shell Bank canoe launch on the Greenway, as it enjoys hundreds of out of town guests each month. He also mentioned existing state legislation that allows fees to be collected for access to State Wildlife Management Areas.

RING AROUND THE LAKE:

Frank Neelis gave a presentation on his work to research and promote this regional tourism asset with a large, detailed map of the proposed route. He introduced Dr. Molly McGraw who is helping develop GIS map layers for this project and is coordinating with the Greater New Orleans Regional Planning Commission to harmonize this data. Molly offered to make a "zoomable" version of this map available for the Manchac Greenway web site.

Frank's chief aim is that by delineating and promoting the already existing route around Lake Pontchartrain, over half of it made of dedicated bike trails, and the many sub-routes to various nearby attractions, we will eventually engender its use by the lucrative national and international bike tourism industry.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:

Galen led a discussion about the details of a proposed new Friends of the Manchac Greenway Membership Program. Alma reminded the groups that such a thing was previously published in our tri-fold brochure. The proposed rates decided on were STUDENT MEMBERSHIP - \$20 annually, INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$ 25 annually, INDIVIDUAL LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP - \$200 (ONE TIME FEE ONLY), FAMILY MEMBERSHIP - \$ 50 annually, SENIOR MEMBERSHIP (age 60+) - \$ 20 annually and CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP - \$ 250 annually. . George offered to post a new membership application on our website and link it to the PayPal collection system.

PORT MANCHAC UPDATE:

Dr. James Nelson announced that his nomination to the Port Manchac Commission by Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards has been accepted and he looks forward to bringing new perspectives on this important Greenway neighbor. He sees the Port's future is in developing other uses for the site beyond its past Intermodal Transportation role and that barge traffic, which has been relatively rare there, will not longer happen.

MANCHAC GREENWAY CONFERENCE:

Two public conferences featuring a variety of topics about the Greenway are envisioned for St. John and Tangipahoa Parishes. Ben reported on his research of venues at Southeastern Louisiana University and it was suggested he also examine those available at Chappapeela Sports Park.

ADOPT-A-ROAD:

Organizations currently committed to picking up litter on the Greenway include -

- Manchac Boating Assoc. at Pass Manchac and North Pass
- Middendorfs Restaurant at the I-55 Manchac Exit
- Friends of the Manchac Greenway - Joyce WMA area. (Lisa & Ben to coordinate.)-
- Bec's on the Lake – 1st mi. Their signs are posted on the road.
- NOLA Kayak – Shell Bank area
- New Orleans Kayak Swamp Tours
- Canoe & Trail Adventures – Shell Bank area. Their application had been misplace and delayed.
- Wild Louisiana Tours – Shell Bank area. Their signs are posted on the road.
- Tangipahoa Sheriff's Dept. – Owl Bayou

"MANCHAC GREENWAY" SIGNS:

Ben reported that in order to change the "Frontage Road" signs at the Greenway's north (I-55) entrance to "Manchac Greenway," an ordinance would have to be passed by the Parish Council to direct the Parish's 911 system to make this change and that a self-imposed 5 year moratorium for such changes was recently enacted by the Council. Well, la tee da. We will leave the bland, uninformative "Frontage Road" sign alone for now and see if we can get a special, separate sign posted for the road's new identity. (Similar to the "Republic of West Florida Highway" signs on I-12 and the "Ronald Reagan Highway" signs on U.S. 190.) We'll also look into any necessary name change ordinance in St. John Parish for the southern entrance to the Greenway.

LIONS CLUB SUNSET PARK CLEAN UP:

Za reported the _____ group from _____, who had previously volunteered for the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, took such a liking to the Manchac Greenway they asked to do work here on their next visit to Louisiana. Za made arrangements for the group to assist the Laplace Lions Club (who recently adopted Sunset Park on the Manchac Greenway) to plant trees and spruce up the park before taking a canoe trip on the Greenway on 12/18.

OWL BAYOU CANOE LUNCH VEGETATION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT:

Frank reported that Energy has plans to not only commit resources to this location but also the entire length of the east side of the Greenway as part of a modified Right-of-Way Maintenance schedule. The project goals include removal of invasive plants, select vegetation removal to open up scenic views as well as the routine protection of power lines

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at a location to be announced.