

FRIENDS of the MANCHAC GREENWAY (FMG) BOARD MEETING MINUTES - 2:00, Thursday, January 20, 2022 @ Frenier Landing Restaurant, Frenier, LA

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Tom Dumas, Dr. James Nelson (South Tangipahoa Port Commission), Galen Schum, Frank Neelis (FMG Contractor), Za Maurin, Tara Lambeth (St. John Parish Office of Planning & Permits), Dwight Williams (Pontchartrain Conservancy Outreach), Lisa Williams, Ben Taylor and Lucien Gauff (St. John Parish Assessor).

APPROVAL of 8/26/21 MEETING MINUTES:

- Approved by consensus

FINANCIAL REPORT:

- Galen reported no activity in our bank account, however, he noted expenditures are anticipated since Frank's contract had commenced on 1/1/22.

- Galen stated he will be sending out FMG membership renewals soon.

FMG CONTRACTOR REPORT:

- Frank Neelis described how he found over 1,500 possible **biking grant opportunities** at the library in Baton Rouge and was offered librarian assistance to help refine his search for a grant appropriate for the Manchac Greenway.

- A presentation about the proposed **Louisiana National Estuary Research Reserve** (LA NERR), in which the Pontchartrain Basin is nominated to be the location, is scheduled **February 1**, 6:00-8:00 at the Southeastern Louisiana University Student Union Annex or by webinar. Other meetings are planned in the Basin on Feb. 3 and 11. See <https://www.laseagrant.org/deltanerr/town-hall-meetings/> for information.

Frank noted that the LA NERR search criteria include any appropriate site in the Pontchartrain Basin and that both Tangipahoa and St. John Parish governments have each submitted letters endorsing the project. He also made note of sites on the Manchac Greenway where the project could possibly be located including Port Manchac, the Ruddock Boat Launch, Shell Bank Bayou, Turtle Cove Environmental Research Station at any of the three Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Wildlife Management Areas on the Greenway and at State Parks in St. Tammany.

MASTER PLAN:

- Mr. Gauff reported that he has made some headway in ascertaining the true **ownership of property on the Greenway** with the presentation of deeds and documentation by minor property owners and by research his office has done with Greenway's major property owner, the Louisiana Dept. of Transportation and Development.

Additionally, Entergy has a right-of-way on the LA DOTD's unused New Orleans-Hammond Highway which they recently cleared to access their lines and poles after Hurricane Ida. The FMG is advocating the use of this old asphalt roadbed, with its new, spectacular views of the surrounding wetlands for the Greenway and a section of the Ring Around the Lake Bike Trail.

- Ms. Lambeth updated us on the **St. John Parish Master Plan for the Manchac Greenway** by reporting a State of Louisiana Feasibility Study has been commenced, funds from the Restore Act

(from the BP oil spill) paying for the plan are in process and work continues to fund restoration work on the shoreline at Sunset Park on the Greenway. Ben inquired if Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance can be sought to fully restore Sunset Park in the manner that Lakeshore Drive in New Orleans was restored after Hurricane Katrina; if some of the wetland mitigation credits for the destruction of wetlands necessary to construct the W. Pontchartrain storm surge protection levee could be used for Greenway projects and if there has been any effort by St. John Parish to prompt the USCE to add maintenance trail on top of this levee to St. James Parish. Ms. Lambeth pledged to check on these matters. Frank noted the role of the Pontchartrain Levee District in Lusher.

- Lisa reported she and Ben recently surveyed the old Hammond Hwy. by ATV to examine its condition and for possible locations for **planting cypress**. The road's surface was surprisingly smooth, a collapsed bridge was passable and the vegetation on the shoulders was severely beaten back to reveal a grand view of the swamps and marshes. Mr. Williams noted Pontchartrain Conservancy is willing to assist with cypress planting but always requires property owner's permission. Frank mentioned Entergy has a manual for planting on its rights-of-way and suggested lower-profile vegetation including Pond Cypress might be planted on the side of the road where their power lines are located.

MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH/EVENTS:

- Marketing/Web site - Ben and Phillip Hextall continue to gradually upgrade the **manchacgreenway.com** website. Tune in to see what's new. (Note: mistakes will be made, please let us know if you spot any so we can correct them.)

- The first quarterly FMG **Adopt-A-Road** litter pick-up will be held on February 19, 2022. Meet at 9:00 at the Joyce WMA Swampwalk Boardwalk to commence your Mile of Fun™. Orange litter bags will be distributed.

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Dr. Nelson reported the Port Commission continues to pursue the transition of the **Port Manchac** facility from light industry to recreational and educational use. A complete presentation of a proposed layout for this improvement was made by Dana Brown and Associates on 2/8/22 at 12:00 at the Port Commission Office in Ponchatoula. Dr. Nelson also mentioned the Executive Director of the commission is pursuing a proposed blue hydrogen CO2 storage scheme under Lake Maurepas.

- **Ring Around the Lake / Louisiana Bootlace Trail** - While he will be concentrating on promoting the Manchac Greenway, Frank stated he will also continue to pursue these larger projects as opportunities arise and by contacting key parties concerned with this project such as the LA DOTD and the Greater New Orleans Regional Planning Commission.

NEXT MEETING:

2:00, Thursday, February 24, 2022 (tentatively) @ the Gator's Den "Roundtable," Galva, LA

