

FRIENDS of the MANCHAC GREENWAY (FMG) MEETING MINUTES

2:00, Wednesday, November 18, 2020 - on the Turtle Cove Office Dock

ATTENDANCE

Dwight Williams - Pontchartrain Conservancy, Lisa Williams, Frank Neelis, Galen Schum, Tom Dumas, Ben Taylor, Greg Za Maurin and the St.JtBP Planning & Zoning Dept.- Devin Foil, CFM, Wesley Gillen, Intern and Rene' Pastorek, Director,

APPROVAL 07/29/20 MEETING MINUTES

FINANCIAL REPORT (Galen):

- Bank balance: \$2,811.00, with little action in the account.

MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH (Galen):

- There has been no current activity to report.
- There was a discussion about FMG retaining the services of a Non-Profit Marketing organization that can deliver a suite of services including advertising, fundraising, membership and money management software (eg. *Flipcause*). No conclusions were made. It was suggested our organization's size and budget may complicate the proper management of this vendor and we are meeting many of our goals.

FUNDING:

- Entergy Environmental Grant - Frank reported on the \$10,000.00 cash donation Entergy has made to FMG from this grant. Yay Frank! There were few restrictions on its use except, of course, a commitment to responsible reporting on what we spend the money on. Discussion was made on how best to leverage this money to do the most good toward reaching our goals. Priorities include the grant's original purpose of Vegetation Management on the Greenway, improved FMG outreach and a Comprehensive Greenway Master Plan, which should encompass all these things. It was decided to meet soon to discuss further action.
- Marathon Petroleum Foundation grant application - Our previous contact at Marathon is no longer there and Ben will make inquiries as to the status of our previous grant application.
- A plan was advanced for the services of a knowledgeable local grant writer to guide FMG to likely sources of funding for specific projects on the Greenway. All that would be required from this vendor would be modest funds to help cover access to data-bases and a list of projects.
- A previously applied-for grant from the Ecolab facility in St. James Parish had failed because of Hurricane Harvey's floods in at their headquarters in Houston and Ben will make inquiries if this funding offer is still viable.



MASTER PLAN

- Messrs. Foil and Pastorek described the St. John Planning Dept.'s Manchac Greenway Active Transportation Study funded by the Restoration Act. This is a well-thought-out plan for realizing many of the aspects of the Greenway that the FMG has been advocating and it was felt our organization needs to harmonize its activities with this plan. The plan's outline accompany's these minutes and readers are encouraged to read and comment on them to Mr. Foil - (985-651-5565, d.foil@stjohn-la.gov). FMG wishes to express its gratitude to St. John Parish for allocating \$150,000.00 to see this project through. Further meetings on this and other topics will be planned soon to help determine the entities that need to be coordinated in this effort. A levee-top bike path to the Greenway and to St. James Parish on the new USCE levee are included in this plan. It was noted the bike path trough the spillway awaits the reconstruction of the road surface after the spillway opening last spring.

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS:

- Shell Bank canoe launch - A load of asphalt scrap was recently sighted at this location and it remains to be seen if it will be applied toward expanding parking here or if it is being inventoried for use elsewhere.

- Lisa described a plan for making improvements to the North Pass Boat Launch and a cypress planting program on the Greenway. The proposal at the boat launch are to clear brush and trees between the boat ramps and the highway for landscaping an expanded picnic area, extending the dock along the shore, improve foot access and the relocate the Sheriff's surveillance trailer. This program should fit in with Tangipahoa Parish's recently executed Joint-Use Agreement with the Louisiana Dept. of Transportation and Development for this site.

In addition, cypress tree plantings are sought at the boat launch area, the incomplete Carter-Regan Rest Area at the Manchac Interstate Exit and at equalization channels on the Greenway. The Pontchartrain Conservancy has offered free trees with nutria guards and we need to find groups to help do the planting. Cooperation with the LA DOTD is sought to coordinate for the mowing of these areas.

- Ruddock Mini-Park - needed maintenance to the site is sought.

- Port Manchac Recreation and Education facility planning awaits possible committee assignments and coordination with SLU Turtle Cove.

- It was noted the fall mowing of the entire length of the Greenway by the LA DOTD contractor was recently accomplished and the Greenway is looking good because of it.

- A few "No-Dumping" signs have recently popped-up on the Greenway and should help remind folks of the purpose of the project is for the public's enjoyment.



MANCHAC ISTHMUS RESTORATION AND PROTECTION

- Dwight Williams described cypress forest restoration efforts by the Pontchartrain Conservancy (formerly LPBF) and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana (CRCL) on the Manchac Isthmus, principally at the eastern end of Jones Island. Besides laborious hand-planting by school groups and volunteers, an aerial seeding program was attempted recently and, unfortunately, without success. A second such effort may be attempted with closer attention to the tree's annual cycle. Both of these organizations may be contacted about volunteering for these efforts.

ACTIVITIES

- Our last Quarterly Adopt-A-Road pickup will be at 9:30, Saturday, December 12, 2020. Please meet in the Joyce WMA Swampwalk parking lot for bags and safety vests.

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 2:00, January 20, 2021 on the Turtle Cove Office dock on Galva Canal.

