

GALVESTON BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

FINAL– Galveston Bay Council Meeting Minutes– January 18, 2017

Galveston Bay Council Chair: Nancy Parra (League of Women Voters)

Galveston Bay Council Vice-Chair: Helen Paige (Marinas)

Estuary Program Staff Lead: Sarah Bernhardt, Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP)

The January 18, 2017 quarterly Galveston Bay Council meeting was held at Harris-Galveston Subsidence District, 1660 West Bay Area Blvd., Houston, Texas, from 9:32 AM to 12:30 PM.

Members Present: Caryn Brooks, Jarod Davis, Mark Fisher, Albert Gonzales, Rebecca Hensley, John Huffman, John Jacob, Kristen Lambrecht, Mike Lee, Luz Locke, Helen Paige, Ana Partin, Russ Poppe, Ronnie Schultz, Linda Shead, Bob Stokes, Jeff Taebel, Kirk Wiles, Tracy Woody

Members Not Present/Delegates: Scott Alford, Bill Baker, Andrea Catanzaro, Glenn Clingenpeel, Phillip Goodwin*, Carla Guthrie*, James Harcourt, Kelly Holligan*, Jace Houston*, Doug Jacobson, Brian Koch, Garry McMahan*, Nancy Parra, Aaron Rice, Hanadi Rifai, Mary Beth Stengler, Sharron Stewart*, Matthew Still, Rusty Swafford, Lori Traweek*, Chuck Wemple, Kate Zultner*

(*=Member designated a proxy)

Proxies Present (council member absent/designated proxy):

Phillip Goodwin/Aaron Wieczorek, Carla G. Guthrie/Caimee Schoenbaechler, Kelly Holligan/Kerry Niemann, Jace Houston/David Parkhill, Garry McMahan/Jaqueline Munoz, Sharron Stewart/Mike Lange, Lori Traweek/Scott Harris, Kate Zultner/Mollie Powell

Current Vacancies: None

Other Attendees: Greg Biddinger, Meredith Dang, Lisa Gonzalez, Heather Schiappa, Helen Walters, Len Waterworth, Kim Wright

Additional GBEP Staff present: Cynthia Clevenger, Michelle Krause, Lindsey Lippert, Lisa Marshall, Mary Stiles

Call to Order: Introduction of Members and Delegates

Action Item: Approval of October 19, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Helen Paige (Vice Chair) opened the meeting with approval of the October 19, 2016 meeting minutes and opened the floor for questions and comments. A motion was requested for approval of the minutes. Rebecca Hensley commented she would like to make a change of her comment to the draft minutes. Minutes were approved by Bob

Stokes motioned to approve followed by Rebecca Hensley seconded the motion for approval.

Chair Report:

Ms. Helen Paige reported she will act as chair on Ms. Nancy Parra's behalf. If anyone would like to join other council members for lunch they may do so. Introduced Sarah Bernhardt to report on the program.

Report of the Program:

Ms. Sarah Bernhardt announced Ms. Nancy Parra (Chair) absence is due to the flooding weather in Houston, and Ms. Helen Page (Vice Chair) would act as Chair for today's meeting.

Dr. Sarah Bernhardt reported the GBEP has received early comment letters and emails regarding the Galveston Bay Plan revisions for workshop 1, and subcommittee draft frameworks. As part of the revision process GBEP will respond to all comments formally as part of the public comment process. Anyone who is interested in reviewing the submit comments are invited to contact Ms. Kathy Janhsen at H-GAC or Sarah Bernhardt at the GBEP for copies.

Dr. Bernhardt announced Monitoring Workgroup meeting February 23, 2017, anyone who would like to attend may contact Lisa Marshall with GBEP to join the workgroup.

Dr. Bernhardt announced the works for setting a spring/summer TCEQ Agenda date for approval of vacancies, there are 6 items listed.

Dr. Bernhardt also reported on other program items two other major project accomplishments. The Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan project received H-GAC's Our Great Region Diligence Award on Friday, December 2, 1016.

The Artist Boat closed on December 8th on the additional 46 acres for the Coastal Heritage Preserve on Galveston Island, bringing the total acreage to almost 600 acres for the Preserve. In addition the Artist Boat, in partnership with Texas Parks and wildlife Department were awarded a \$1 million National Coastal Wetlands Grant (9CWPPRA) to conserve additional acreage at the adjacent Anchor Bay subdivision. This habitat will also be added to the CHP.

Ms. Helen Paige introduced the first presenter to the council, Ms. Lisa Gonzales with HARC and Mr. Bob Stokes with Galveston Bay Foundation.

Presentation: Data trends in the Galveston Bay Report Card, Lisa Gonzalez, HARC and Bob Stokes, Galveston Bay Foundation

Ms. Lisa Gonzales reported on the Galveston Bay Report Card to the council and provided a slide presentation outlining the components of the Bay Information Framework. Ms. Gonzales explained the report card process and the overall health of the bay, and provided a website to council member for further information.

The Galveston Bay Report Card is a citizen - driven, scientific analysis of the health of Galveston Bay. Supported by a grant from Houston Endowment, the goal is to engage community members in meaningful discussion about Bay health topics. This is the second year that the Report Card has been published. The grading system of the indicators is easy to understand and similar to a school report card. The overall grade of Galveston Bay remained a C but there were some improvements from the past year. Water quality, which includes nitrogen, phosphorous, and dissolved oxygen, improved from a B to an A. While the overall grade for wildlife was a C as it was last year, the status of brown shrimp and terns both improved. In the category of pollution the overall grade improved from a D to a C in large part because there were fewer oil spills but also because more information was available for toxics in sediment.

Mr. Bob Stokes discussed the outreach efforts being done by the Foundation to promote the 2016 Galveston Bay Report Card. The project is gaining leverage within the community with presentation audiences increasing by 200% compared to the 2015 Report Card. The report card website, GalvBayGrade.org, has received over 14,000 visitors since its launch. The EPA's Gulf of Mexico Program awarded the Galveston Bay Foundation a three year grant to translate the report to Spanish. Translated report will be available at the end of February. Bob also requested that people participate in the public survey to gather input for the 2017 Report Card. The survey is available at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/17GBRC>. The next steps for the Report Card are to translate it into Spanish. The next version will be launched in August 2017.

Questions & Answers

City of Houston asked, "How did you decide on the grades?" Ms. Gonzales responded that the grades were developed in part by indicator work that HARC did through workshops with GBEP in 2005? (Don't think I captured this correctly)

Albert Gonzales thanked HARC/GBF for their work on this project and said it was a really good tool that helps breakdown complex issues for the public to understand. This has been needed for many years.

Presentation: Status of the Galveston Bay Plan Revision and Workshop One Results, Meredith Dang, Chief Regional Planner, Houston Galveston Area Council

Ms. Meredith Dang thank members for the invitation to attend and present on the Galveston Bay Plan Revision process. Ms. Dang reported on the re-cap of workshop #1 which took place in late October of 2016. There were over 50 council and subcommittee members in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to establish prioritization of goals to be utilized as the framework for The Plan Revision and identify any emerging priorities.

The participants cycled through five priority areas were based on GBC subcommittee, plus vision and implementation focus area that examined bigger picture topics regarding the geography covered by the plan and how to set the plan up for success. A digital questionnaire was made available to council and subcommittee members who were unable to attend the in-person workshop. The digital questionnaire posed the

same questions as in the exercise in the workshop, a total of 12 participants completed the digital questionnaire. The results from each exercise have been summarized, ready for review.

The top ranking existing priorities for each focus area were as follows in the workshop:

- Workshop and Sediment Quality
- Natural Resources Uses
- Public Participation and Education
- Monitoring and Research

Update on Subcommittee Session since the completion of the first workshop, the subcommittees have been actively utilizing the outputs from the first workshop to develop framework actions plans. The framework action plans will provide the basis for the Draft Plan Revision content. The frameworks also build upon the existing Plan and SAP and show the linkages to those plans. At their December and January meetings each subcommittee discussed and provided feedback on these strawman, draft framework. They each also had the opportunity to provide any additional feedback during a feedback/comment window following each meeting. H-GAC staff have been updating the frameworks to reflect the requested changes of the subcommittees. H-GAC staff will work with GBEP staff and subcommittee chairs/vice chairs to ensure that the updated framework reflects the direction of each subcommittee. The updated framework for each of the Focus Areas will be sent as background material to the second workshop.

Looking ahead to Workshop #2 the planning is the three workshops that will occur during The Plan Revision Process. The second workshop will focus on vetting the framework action plans that the subcommittees are working with a focus on the implementation feasibility of the identified measures. All council members and subcommittee members are invited to attend the workshop #2 which is planned for the end of February/beginning of March the location is still to be determined.

Linda Shead encouraged council members to attend the workshops for the Galveston Bay Plan Revision. For the first workshop, there was a big difference in the results between those that attended and those that participated online.

Presentation: An update on the Coastal Storm Surge Protection Concept known as “Ike Dike”, COL. Len Waterworth, Texas A&M University, Galveston

Col. Len Waterworth reported to the council that a major hurricane hits the northern six counties of Texas on a simple average of every 14 years. The last major hurricane was Hurricane Ike in 2008 which produced \$30B worth of damage. Over the last 9 years, the risk of hurricane damage has only increased for the expanding population, the improving environment the communities have worked for and business, in and around Galveston Bay. Since Hurricane Ike, Texas A&M University at Galveston has raised private funding to develop a mitigation strategy for hurricane storm damage. The Ike Dike (Coastal Spine) has proven, through modeling to be a feasible concept to protect the 4th largest city in the United States, home of the largest petrochemical

manufacturing complex that sits on the 7th largest estuary. Texas A&M Galveston's fund raising, public engagement and research continues in hopes to find a proactive mitigation strategy for the next hurricane disaster. More information can be found: <http://www.tamug.edu/CTBS/>

Questions/comments

Dr. John Jacobs asked what the Dike would look like if it breaks, any potential for failure research? He specifically asked whether failures had been modeled; he was interested in knowing the risk. Col. Waterworth answered by asking what would the risk be if nothing was done. He stated the Dike has the capacity for a breach and still be OK because the duration of the storm is short. Ms. Gonzales asked the long-term plan for sustainability of the dike system as it seems there is no current funding planned for maintenance and this could potentially encourage more people to move closer to the coast and bay areas. Col. Waterworth indicated that it could potentially cost \$20-\$30 million per year to maintain, however, he stated that the dike needs to get built first to help inform what will go into long-term maintenance. He provided the example of Indianola, as an example of not doing anything.

Ms. Gonzales followed up with asking if freshwater inflow will be considered in the construction of the gate system. Col. Waterworth indicated that the system, according to Dr. Bill Merrell, will be a “leaky system” to allow for continued freshwater inflow.

Col. Waterworth stated, “The dike will be built, but we [the stakeholders], can not decide what color do we paint it?” Meaning what elements do we want/need to need to consider and incorporate to consider environmental, economic, and socio-economic needs.

Linda Shead commented that the plans are impressive, however it was disingenuous to talk about the dike system from the Dutch perspective without mentioning that their dike system, “destroyed their estuary and they now incorporate a multiple line of defense concept.”

Col. Waterworth stated that all of these things, from the Dutch, experiences are and need to be considered in the Ike Design.

John Huffman inquired as to where the storm surge modeling data appears in their report. He asked where does the water displaced by the barrier system go according to the modeling. Col. Waterworth said they are doing modeling to look at how the storm surge data from Ike to inform how high to build the dike system. He said this is a feasibility report and all other data is being considered as well. He commented that the end conditions are important, and that “stack up” does occur for a short duration, but that the water doesn’t “bleed” over the edges as much as thought.

Mike Lange commented that the seawall creates more beach erosion and all the property from the ocean front to the road will not be there according to the report. He was concerned that in places like Follets Island, previously high risk land would be converted to prime real estate. His opinion was that large areas of land should be set

aside to keep this from happening. Mr. Lange also asked how does the report incorporate human nature/reaction to feel secure enough to build right on the wall or dike, and how will wetlands be protected in this process?

Col. Waterworth said they are looking at incorporating the human and socio-economic factors into the report. But from hip point of view, the system should be built and then policies set. Mr. Lange disagreed with that order, and provided the City of Freeport as an example to why that sequence doesn't work.

Albert Gonzalez stated that FEMA should not insure coastal property.(One of the council member's proxy - it was the proxy for the San Jacinto River Authority) asked what the timeline was to build the dike?

Col. Waterworth said there is not a date yet as they are still trying to get federal/state support, but it could be 2034 timeframe. They are working on speeding up the process, because of the need to project.

John Jacob commented, "Saying there's an Ike Dike or nothing is a false dichotomy. There are plenty of things that can be done incorporating multiple lines of defense if the dike fails to protect. That has to be part of the discussion."

Col. Waterworth responded that this is all part of the ongoing discussion with stakeholders and the feasibility process that the Center for Texas Beaches and Shores was given \$2 million to study. The Col. also stated that the NEPA is a public input process.

Linda Shead responded that NEPA is a public reaction process not a public input process. Public engagement should happen before design.

Dr. Bernhardt asked what organization could lead a collaborative discussion on the Ike Dike, and Ms. Gonzales said several groups are looking at the coastal resilience issue that also takes into climate change and drought and should be a part of this collaborative discussion. Ms. Gonzales agreed that there needs to be a group to look at these issues.

Greg Biddinger added that if we wait for a study and funding, it will take too long and the estimated \$6 billion for the dike system is under estimated. Can there be a tax increase from the legislature? Is there other funding mechanisms available? What is industry doing to help pay for the dike?

Col. Waterworth reminded the council that the New Orleans project was funded 100 percent by the federal government and that project was completed. They are looking for a Texas legislator to champion the Ike Dike in both the state and federal governments. As far as industry paying for the Ike Dike, the Col. remarked that industry is providing to the economic value of the region, state and the nation.

Subcommittee Reports: (Subcommittee Handouts included in Packets if available)

Monitoring and Research (M&R) - N/A

Public Participation and Education (PPE) - The Subcommittee meeting on January 17

was dedicated to the CCMP revision process for PPE.

Water/Sediment Quality (WSQ) - N/A

Natural Resource Uses - Lindsey Lippert reported that the NRU meeting on January 12 was primarily dedicated to developing the living resource frameworks for the CCMP revision. In addition, Erin Kinney from HARC gave a brief discussion on the update to the Quiet Invasion Field Guide and website for invasive species in the lower Galveston Bay watershed. She asked for the subcommittee's input and comments on the potential list of species for the update.

Budget and Priorities Subcommittee - Sarah Bernhardt reported that B&P

Council Members Roundtable: News and Announcements:

John Jacob - Putting on Coastal Citizen Academy for local elected officials to educate them in planning tools.

Camiee Schoenbachler (Proxy for Carla Guthrie) - TWDB will host Water for Texas 2017 Conference, 01/23 - 25, 2017, twdb.texas.gov for more details; brochures distributed to members and guest.

Jarod Davis - Will be resigning from his role at GBC due to his roll with Dow. The new GHP new regulatory affairs director will be Mr. Will Nipper. Mr. Davis thanked GBC members and reported he learned a lot as a GBC member.

Kerry Niemann - Regarding RESTORE:

- Bucket One applications are still being reviewed by Commissioner Baker in conjunction with the Governor's Office.

Regarding the NPS Program:

- The draft Texas NPS Management Program update is tentatively scheduled to go to agenda for release for public comment on April 26, 2017. Both the Board and the TCEQ are coordinating closely on this important update. The update is due to EPA in 2017.
- The 2016 NPS Annual Report was submitted to EPA for review and approval on Tuesday, January 17. The report will be published in February, 2017.

Regarding the 2016 Integrated Report:

- The report is currently under review and will be released for public comment in 2017.

Regarding the Water Quality Standards:

- Standards are currently under preparation for the 2017 revision. The revision is on schedule for the standards to be proposed for public comment to the Commission in late spring of 2017.

Regarding the Clean Rivers Program:

The calendar of upcoming Steering Committee Meeting dates may be accessed from the statewide Coordinated Monitoring Schedule. Meetings occur

throughout the year and help to establish monitoring priorities. The 2017 Coordinated Monitoring Schedule has been updated and is available on the TCEQ website.

Linda Shead – On behalf of TSSCWB the new WQMP technician will begin on February 1, 2017 and will work in the Double Bayou and Cedar Bayou watersheds.

Lisa Gonzalez – February 15th - 16th HARC will host with TPWD second annual lionfish symposium contact Leslie Hartman at TPWD, TAMUG there will be a public panel at Moody Gardens; March 8 from 6:00 - 8:00pm People and Nature series, Katherian Hapo reowned “Climate and Coastal Implications” talk.

Public comments: No public comments were received.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 12:20pm

Upcoming Galveston Bay Council Meeting Dates: April 19, 2017, July 19, 2017, October 28, 2017. If there are known conflicts, Council members are encouraged to propose alternate dates to the Council. Proposed dates are all third Wednesday of each quarter from 9:30am to 12:30pm.