

MINUTES
FALSE RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2016

The False River Watershed Council met in a regular session at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at the Courthouse Annex Building in New Roads, Louisiana.

Thomas Van Biersel called the meeting to order and directed Ms. Jeanne Hendrix to call the roll:

Present: Messrs. Major Thibaut, Cy D'Aquila, Jerry Hix, Jimmy Lyles, L.J. Grezaffi, Stephen Tassin, Bijan Sharafkhani, Thomas Van Biersel, Arthur Ewing, Jimmy Chustz

Absent: Messrs. Rick Ward, Randy Myers, Ron Pourciau, Kyle Olinde, and Ms. Carrie Castille

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Mr. Ewing and seconded by Mr. Chustz:

Resolved, That the agenda of the meeting of July 19, 2016 be accepted for approval.

Unanimously carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Mr. Thibaut to approve minutes of June 15, 2016. Discussion by Mr. Ewing regarding corrections to minutes.

Motion by Mr. Thibaut to approve and seconded by Mr. Ewing:

Resolved, That the minutes of the June 15, 2016 minutes are accepted with a correction for approval.

Unanimously carried.

UPDATE PROPOSED FALSE RIVER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT - PHASE II

Engineer Gerald Babin gave an update on land available for the disposal of silt. He looked at property owned by Mr. Spike Major. He is concerned about the grade of the property. A containment levee would have to be used. Funds for the project would be released by the 21st at the earliest. Mr. Thibaut informed the group that the bond commission would approve funds on as needed basis. Mr. Babin noted a retainment dyke of 14,000 ft would cost approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000. Dyke material would come from the land itself.

Mr. Thibaut expressed that it was his understanding that additional \$900,000 would complete the project. Mr. Babin indicated that if this property works the total cost to pump silt material would be approximately \$1.9m.

Mr. D'Aquila inquired as to if the parish could perform dyke work for a savings on the project.

Mr. Thibaut asked Mr. Babin to inquire as to this option because a local match is required for Capital Outlay funding.

Size of the containment dyke would be 2-2.5 feet over the entire property depending on topography.

Mr. Thibaut inquired as to why other properties were not considered.

Mr. Babin explained that these property owners wanted financial compensation which is not allowed when using state funding. Properties with pits would raise issue with USACE. Once there is vegetation overgrowth it's considered to have returned to wetlands. Mr. Babin indicated that other than pumping, a 20-acre island is the next option. Permits and design would put the project starting around January 2017 depending on the USACE. Dredging would begin in spring of 2017.

Mr. Van Biersel stated that this is a two-phase project and six months is the best they have done with permit processes. This is not going to be the same process as with Phase I because before it was only dealing with state lands. Mr. Babin indicated that time frame for starting process is September 2016.

Mr. Van Biersel stated that pumping out the silt would remove about 25% less material than if an island is constructed. Mr. Babin said the south flats cost \$512,000 just on containment dykes.

Mr. D'Aquila expressed concerns about impact on fisheries. WLF representative indicated that out is better but neither option would have a large negative impact on fisheries.

Mr. Grezaffi asked that the record reflect that he would be against an island on this end of the river because of the economic impact on property owners.

Mr. Babin stated pricing will determine alternatives. It was then requested by the council members for Mr. Babin to give various options and related costs, including volume removed. Mr. Babin also indicated he would run an advertisement looking for property.

UPDATE FALSE RIVER NITROGEN IMPACT MITIGATION PROJECT

Mr. Kevin Gravois gave an update on the M1 design. The plan has been reviewed and should be done by end of July. Design of the plan is based on working with the property owners. M2 design will be done by end of August. Once property owners are in agreement with the plan, M1 work can go out for bid because it has already been permitted.

Mr. Thibaut said that total allocated funding is \$1M with \$300,000 for M1 and \$300,000 for M2. The police jury would be approached about maintaining. A lake authority would also be an option and would take legislative action to create.

Mr. Gravois indicated that the remaining funds had been used for permits, reports, water quality study and other required processes.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR HOMEOWNERS:

Mr. D'Aquila discussed his research on shoreline stabilization methods and permitting in other states. Soft/Natural slope with rocks and vegetation is first recommended option. And while there are many options, hard side bulkheads were not approved unless certain conditions were met. In all situations permits were required.

Mr. Thibaut indicated that the public needs to be getting proper permits and information on what permitting processes are currently required.

Mr. D'Aquila indicated that the parish needs a permitting process, including approving stabilization design, and enforcement. The parish would have limited liability by statute. Standards may include materials used and natural shoreline. Natural shoreline is also a lower cost option than typical vinyl bulkhead construction. Sloped shoreline helps control wave energy produced by river traffic.

Mr. Thibaut and Mr. Ewing requested more information on options/resources for property owners with current vinyl bulkheads.

Mr. Hicks raised concerns regarding development of property along the river and controlling dirt going into the river.

Mr. Van Biersel stated that silt barriers needed to be required for property owners along the river.

Mr. Thibaut recommended talking to contractors to present guidelines to the police jury.

Mr. Ewing asked about researching a sewer project for the island.

Mr. Thibaut indicated that DEQ is working on this and asked for a cost analysis.

Mr. Van Biersel indicated that currently DHH requires changing of sewer system upon property transfer.

Mr. Thibaut said it could be done in sections as funding becomes available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL PRIVILEGE:

Mr. Thibaut informed the council that an open house has been scheduled for August 2, 2016 at the Cottonport Community Center from 5:00-6:30 p.m. A notice has been placed in the Banner.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Betty Fontaine expressed concerns over drawdown and possible economic impact to property owners/businesses.

Mr. Bill Ruiz expressed concerns over level of drawdown, and information on website regarding meetings and project information.

Mr. Rick Lambert expressed concerns over drawdown and whether it should not be done until after M1 and M2 projects are completed.

Ms. Angel Bain expressed economic impact concerns over drawdown.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.