Meeting of False River Watershed Council

By Stafford Chenewert

The False River Watershed Council met in a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at the Court House Annex. Members of the Council present for this meeting were: Major Taliaha, Jerry Hix, L. J. Grezaff, Stephen Tenun, Bajan

Warm-weather Mardi Gras lures record crowds to New Roads;
Estimated 100,000-plus jam city for hallowed parades

By Carnivale Mysterious

By any measure, New Roads’ Mardi Gras 2017 festivites were among the hottest ever from the fever-pitch excitement of souvenirs "thrown" being hurled by float riders into masses of humanity jamming the streets, to some of the wildest marching band music and dance moves ever experienced in the festival’s history and, of course, all of the mercury peaking just below the record high of 82 degrees Fahrenheit recorded on Fat Tuesday 1982. In keeping with the remarkably warm winter season of 2016-2017, would-be revelers seemed to anticipate an especially "hot time in the old town" for New Roads' parades, sprucing up lawns and residences weeks in advance, and parking vehicles and improvised reviewing stands along the route as early as the Wednesday before the big day. Even the Baton Rouge media's perennial "wish" for rain on New Roads' Mardi Gras apparently had little effect, as the day was marked by an exponentially heavy stream of auto traffic pouring into the city from all points of the compass, before 7 a.m. and well into the Lions Carnival parade’s mid-afternoon cruise.

More than 200 law enforcement officers from myriad agencies were on hand to help funnel the confluence of traffic into town until mid-afternoon, and out of town in early evening, as well as marshaling parade route intersections and forming roaming patrols throughout the festival area throughout the day.

Community Center parade makes history

The 95th New Roads Mardi Gras was celebrated once again this year as another historical event loved by tens of thousands from both near and far. One event that delayed the popular Community Carnival Club Parade and the revel of the King and Queen also made history as the first time an incident of this nature occurred.

As the King and Queen’s float was slowly being pulled near the judges’ stand for the unveiling, the float got too close and became stuck. It took several minutes worth of nagging back and forth as the Mayors and others worked to free the judges’ (Continued On Page 2)
Meeting of False River Watershed... (Continued From Front Page)

Stacy Russo-Nichols, a Financial Advisor with Northwestern Mutual, has qualified for membership in the Million Dollar Roundtable (MDRT), an international, independent association of nearly 19,000 leading life insurance professionals. Russo-Nichols has received the MDRT designation, recognizing her as a top producer in her field.

Local Financial Advisor receives Industry Honor

This picture was taken at Lake Side Village. Notice how far back the lawn gave way when the seawall failed.

This picture was taken at Kyle Olinder’s property on the island shows how a natural shore line can be enhanced.

Submitted two options, which included estimated construction costs. Option one studied by the group would involve pumping the sediment to L.J. Grazzini’s property located north of New Roads between Martin Drive and the old Cretol pecan grove. This project would necessitate the construction of a containment dike. The cost for this plan is approximately $1.7 million dollars. The second proposal recommends pumping the sediment to the Mississippi River via a pipeline installed in the Ventress bayou. The price tag for the second proposal is estimated at $1.9 million dollars. The next step in the process is securing the necessary permits.

It is estimated some 200,000 cubic yards of sediment will have to be pumped from False River. During the public hearing portion of the meeting, approximately twelve individuals voiced their concerns about the drawdown and damage to their bulkheads. Angel Bain, co-owner of Sun Perch Villa on the Island side of False River, didn’t speak about her bulkhead, but the negative impact the drawdown had on her business. During the many meetings dealing with the two drawdowns, only Mr. Arthur Ewing raised the “negative impact” issue.

Miss Dianne Deville of Oscar, Louisiana, one of the individuals to speak at the meeting, consented to an interview with this writer. Miss Deville stated it cost her $20,000 to repair her bulkhead following the first drawdown. Following the second drawdown, an additional 10 feet of her sea wall gave way. When questioned about damage to her property and home she responded negatively, but added she was bringing in an engineer to assess the site. Miss Deville strongly believes the second drawdown caused her seawall to fail. She also stated she will continue attending the False River Watershed meetings.

The bulkhead that appears to have suffered the most damage is located at Lake Side Village at 2215 False River Drive. Not only did 200 feet of the wall give way, but also the ground appears to have caved in toward the townhouses. In some places the townhouses show large cracks reaching back to about 24 feet from the buildings. In a telephone interview with Mr. Jimmy Greimillion, president of the homeowners association, he frankly admitted part of the bulkhead was more than 25 years old and in need of updating. Mr. Greimillion stated they had some minor issues with the wall two years ago and he attributed the failure to both “age and water.”

During the meeting one Council member suggested property owners should consider a return to “a natural shore line.” One individual responding to this idea said, “That ship has already sailed.”

Returning to a natural shoreline in some places appears to be a sound alternative as shown in a photograph taken at Kyle Olinder’s property in Jarreau, Louisiana.

Repeatedly throughout the meeting both Representative Major Thibaut and Senator Rick Ward said they would be willing to inspect each failed bulkhead. Several times during the meeting members of the Council explained to the audience that addressing the bulkhead failures is not the responsibility of the False River Watershed Council.

The False River Watershed Council will hold its next meeting in the Police Jury meeting room on March 8, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.