

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for January 28, 2021, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held both in-person and via teleconference on January 28, 2021 at Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated January 29, 2019. Printed materials presented at the meeting are available for copying at the office of the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Unit at 2901 Turtle Creek Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642. Meeting information and power point presentations are also available electronically through the SETWAC website www.setwac.org.

1. Call to Order:

- SETWAC Chairman, Mr. Randall Ogrydziak, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Mr. Ogrydziak welcomed those attending via teleconference. 37 virtual and in-person members and guests were in attendance. Mr. Ogrydziak opened the floor to CDR Suffern, MSU Executive Officer.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- CDR Suffern welcomed those in attendance. He informed the group that MSU Port Arthur was kicking off the 2021 hurricane season preps by first conducting internal reviews of the 2020 season. He asked that stakeholders desiring to do so submit any best practices to Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, for consideration.

3. Approval of the October 22, 2020 Minutes:

- A motion was made and seconded, and the committee approved the October 22, 2020 meeting minutes.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, addressed the SETWAC Managing Board voting membership seeking nominations for a primary contact board member for Chemical and Oil refining Docks, an alternate for the Commercial Fisheries Association and a primary and secondary for Shipping Agents. Mr. Whalen further commented there was discussion related to splitting Chemical and Oil Refining into separate subgroups.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- CAPT Tweedel, Sabine Pilots, reported the Martin Midstream WSA is on hold while awaiting comments from the Terminal.
- CAPT Tweedel commented on Anchorage Basin 1, indicating the channel improvement section was complete with some maintenance dredging outstanding in the lower anchorage.

- CAPT Tweedel offered comments on Aids to Navigation, sending a “BZ” to all ATON units that participated in waterway reconstitution following a busy hurricane season.
- CAPT Tweedel commented on the unacceptable time projection (2-5 years) for the restoration of Rear Range ALFA due to the fact that rebuilding it is outside of the capability of Coast Guard Aids to Navigation units and requires contracting.
- CAPT Tweedle requested SETWAC Board approval to draft a letter to be sent through the SETWAC board to Coast Guard entities involved in the range rebuild to stress the importance of the range to safety and ship navigation, and to address the unacceptably long timeline in restoring the range to normal operability.
- Mr. Ogrydziak informed CAPT Tweedel to proceed with drafting the letter for review by the SETWAC board.

Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-committee Report:

- Mr. Erik Stromberg, Lamar University, discussed the results of the 2020-21 Webinar Survey and future workshops. (Slides on SETWAC website).
- CDR Suffern indicated the Coast Guard would be willing to help with the Hurricane Planning Webinar in May 2021. Both the Sabine Pilots (CAPT Tweedle) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Tim White) offered participation as well
- Mrs. Sade Chick, Port of Beaumont, addressed training opportunities and stipends available through the Texas Workforce Commission. Mrs. Chick requested continued collaboration from the group in identifying requisite skills necessary to fill high-demand positions.

Port Welfare Sub-Committee Report:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Port Welfare Public As-Hoc, addressed continued issues with seafarers’ access to maritime facilities.
- Fr. Oubre commented on the “*Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change.*”
- CAPT Chris Horner, Lamar State College Orange, addressed the Ordinary Seamen (I-III) courses available through the Lamar State College Orange Maritime Program.

Commercial Fisheries Report:

- Ms. Nikki Fitzgerald, Texas A&M AgriLife, commented on the completion of CPR/Fist Aid training for 45 commercial fisherman (January 8-12) and man-overboard training scheduled for February 8-11. Additionally, she notified the group of the upcoming Port Arthur Shrimpers Association meeting on February 10.

- Ms. Fitzgerald informed the group of the target audience, funding and requirements of the “Young Fisherman’s Development Act.” She also commented on the ongoing development of the “Gulf Young Fisherman Program.”

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:

- Mr. Tim White, USACE (for SNND) informed SETWAC that Larry Fountain was out on site, readying placement areas for continued work involving the deepening/widening project.

Dredge Operations Report:

- Mr. Tim White, USACE, spoke to ongoing dredge operations including SNWW maintenance dredging; Sabine Pass and Outer Bar and Bank channels, and the PA-11 Training Dike Rehabilitation. The deepening of Anchorage Basin No.1 is complete; however, the lower end of the anchorage requires maintenance dredging. USACE is hoping to expedite the removal of an additional 255,000 cubic yards “inside of 6 months.”
- Future dredge contracts for FY-2021 include PA-8 improvements; maintenance dredging at select points on the Neches river; deepening of the SNWW Entrance Channel to Sabine Pass and the deepening of Sabine Pass to Taylors Bayou. (Slides on SETWAC website)

Area Maritime Security Report:

- Mr. Jeremy Hanson, USCG, informed the group of the SETX AMSC “Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack (CCTA)” exercise planned for May 6, 2021.
- Mr. Hanson passed that the local Port Readiness Committee (PRC) planned to have a military out-load exercise on September 7, 2021. The exercise may/may not take place depending on real-world events between now and the scheduled exercise.
- The annual joint meeting of the Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC) and AMSC will be held virtually via HSIN Connect in March/April.
- AMSC subcommittees and working groups have resumed a normal schedule of 2021 by using HSIN Adobe Connect.
- Strategic planning for the 2021 Port Security Grant Program should be socialized with the COTP prior to application.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- BMC Zurlo, Aids to Navigation Team Sabine, provided the group with a snapshot of current Aids to Navigation discrepancies in the SNWW.
- Between late-February and mid-March, Coast Guard Cutter CLAMP will be working discrepant ATON in the ICW during her transit to Houma. Coast Guard Cutter HATCHET will attend to any discrepant ATON not completed by CLAMP.

- Chief Zurlo indicated Coast Guard District 8 is attempting to establish a Sector Light as a temporary fix for the ALFA Range Rear Light. This may take up to 6 months to build and will show left/center/right of track pending a 2-5 year wait for the rebuild of the RRL.
- The currently discrepant Range Uniform is schedule to be completed in FY-22.

5. New Business:

- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, commented on Response vs. Salvage: A question was posed following last year's hurricane season: When does response become salvage?
 - If "response" assets can prevent the worsening of a situation - the Coast Guard will consider that "Response,"
 - If a dynamic situation worsens such that "response" must transition to "salvage," the decision to do so will be a collaborative effort by all concerned.
- Mr. Whalen delivered the "2020 State of the Waterway" report (Slides on SETWAC website).
- Mr. Whalen reiterated current waterways activities including ongoing fender repairs to the KCS Railroad bridge; the Taylor's Bayou Safety Zone and the NPRM for Anchorage Basin No. 1.

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, April 14, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, April 28, 2021.

7. Adjourn:

- Mr. Ogrydziak adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.