

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for April 22, 2021, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held both in-person and via teleconference on April 22, 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 10:03 a.m. Mr. Ogrydziak welcomed those attending via teleconference. 32 virtual and in-person members and guests were in attendance. Mr. Ogrydziak opened the floor to CAPT Wike, MSU Port Arthur Commanding Officer.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- CAPT Wike welcomed those in attendance. She commented on the declining number of COVID cases in the area, stressing the importance of waterways awareness as recreational events (Riverfest & Orange Boat Races) and boaters return to the water after more than a year hiatus. CAPT Wike said she expects the Coast Guard to move to Phase III “Re-Opening,” hopefully next week.

3. Approval of the January 28, 2021 Minutes:

- A motion was made (Don Burns) and seconded (Larry Kelly), to vote to approve the January 28, 2021 SETWAC minutes. A vote was conducted; the minutes were approved.
- A motion was made (Arid Ismail) and seconded (Bruce Guyote) to vote on Mr. Tad Collier of Moran Shipping joining the SETWAC Managing Board for a 2-year term as the Shipping Agent Representative. A vote was conducted; Mr. Collier’s membership was approved.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- CAPT Tweedel commented on the completion of Anchorage Basin 1 (Lower FINA), while thanking the SNND and the USACE for their work toward seeing the anchorage dredged to full project depth. CAPT Tweedel said the anchorage is already being used on a “First Come; First Served basis.” He further commented the Sabine Pilots and MSU Port Arthur will likely draft “Anchorage Use Requirements” in the future.
- CAPT Tweedel presented a proposed letter to be forwarded to Coast Guard District EIGHT regarding the necessity to shorten the rebuild timeline of Critical Ranges ALFA and UNIFORM. After reviewing the letter, a motion was made (Jim Robertson) and seconded

(Larry Kelly) to proceed with sending the letter to Coast Guard District EIGHT. A vote was conducted; the motion passed.

Education, Research & Workforce Development Sub-committee Report:

- Mr. Erik Stromberg, Lamar University, informed the group of Lamar's Advanced Education and Prospective Undergraduate 'Dash' Degree in Port and Supply Chain Management. Additionally, he addressed available advanced education graduate degrees; Continuing Education webinars for 2021; the CAPM research agenda and the Hurricane Planning draft agenda. (Slides on SETWAC website).
- Mrs. Sade Chick, Workforce Development, addressed the continued development of a Maritime Education Pathway (K-12, Undergrad and Graduate Programs).

Port Welfare Sub-Committee Report:

- Fr. Sinclair Oubre, Port Welfare Public Ad-Hoc, spoke to continuing issues with seafarers' crew change due to COVID restrictions; the administration of COVID vaccines to mariners, and the perennial potential of the "criminalization" of mariners possibly affecting the quality of mariners available for employment.
- Fr. Oubre commented on the upcoming Texas National Maritime Day Gala and observance on May 21-22, 2021.

Commercial Fisheries Report:

- Ms. Nikki Fitzgerald, Texas A&M AgriLife, commented on "Safety for Shrimpers" after completing 7 CPR courses for 60 total mariners, and 8 MOB training sessions for 48 fisherman. Ms. Fitzgerald indicated 50% of the local fleet is now certified in CPR.
- Ms. Fitzgerald informed the group that 22 shrimpers participated in a "hurricane tour" to familiarize themselves with the upper reaches of the Sabine River, and to scout for possible hurricane safe harbor areas prior to the start of the 2021 hurricane season. The fisherman indicated they are now open to using this portion of the waterway for storm refuge.
 - o Jim Robertson asked if the Shrimper's were aware that this area is also used by the towing industry during storm refuge. Mr. Ogrydziak recommend that Mr. Robertson and Ms. Fitzgerald work together to raise awareness of this issue across the two industries.

Waterway Maintenance and Improvement Sub-committee:

- Mr. Larry Fountain, SNND gave an update on the SNWW Deeping Project, indicating that Anchorage 1 is done; Anchorage 8 is 95% complete for engineering and should be awarded 4th quarter of FY-2021, and Anchorage 4 should be awarded in early 2022. Prior to those contracts being awarded, a contract will be awarded for a "Cultural Resource Survey" to look for shipwrecks and artifacts in the waterway.
- Mr. Fountain further indicated the USACE was awarded \$86 Million for offshore dredging associated with the Deeping Project. SNND is to concurrently include a dredge that, while working with the USACE dredge, will pick up where the Corps dredge stops and will half-

cut to Cheniere LNG. The end result will be the first usable, half-cut channel of the Deepening Project from offshore to Cheniere LNG.

- o Mr. Ogrydziak asked Mr. Fountain for an update on the progress of the fireboat initiative. Mr. Fountain indicated all funds available through SNND are obligated as the Navigation District is accountable for half of the cost of pipeline removal and the Deepening Project. As a result, there has been no movement on the fireboat initiative.
- o Mr. Kelly added there is a bill in the Texas House to clear authorization of waterborne fire units in ports other than Houston, however, there is no money attached to the authorization.

Dredge Operations Report:

- Mr. Tim White, USACE, spoke to ongoing and future dredge operations including SNWW PA-11 Training Dike rehabilitation; PA-8 improvements; Neches River improvements; SNWW entrance to Sabine Pass deepening, and deepening of the Port Arthur Ship Canal to Taylor's 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)" full-scale exercise planned for May 6, 2021. The SETX Regional Planning Commission is the exercise lead.
- Mr. Hanson passed that the local Port Readiness Committee (PRC) plans to hold a military out-load exercise on September 7, 2021.
- Mr. Hanson hopes to have an update on the Port Security Grant Program awards as of the next SETWAC meeting.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- Aids to Navigation Team Sabine provided a list of 10 current discrepant aids to navigation.

5. New Business:

- Ensign Thomas Usseglio, USCG, presented the MSU Port Arthur Hurricane Brief (Slides on SETWAC website) ahead of the 2021 hurricane season.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, presented upcoming activities scheduled to take place on the SNWW including the Port Neches Riverfest Boat Races and Fireworks display (May 1-2), and the DSRA Boat races in Orange (May22-23).
- Mr. Whalen reminded the group the Safety Zone in Taylor Bayou remains in effect.
- Mr. informed the group that the final report on the Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment is available for review. The report has been provided to participating stakeholders. The report will be posted on the SETWAC website, the VTS Port Arthur website and the USCG NAVCEN website.

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, July 22, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn:

- Mr. Ogrydziak adjourned the meeting at 11:13 am.