

HMPU 2020
First Public Evening Meeting
November 12, 2019
Evening Meeting 1 Notes

The Meeting came to order at approximately 6:15 after some technical difficulties. Jennifer Gerbasi, the presenter, stated the purpose of the meeting and thanked the members of the public for coming out on this Tuesday evening to participate. The presenter's slide show will be made available and all of the documents from the resource library were made available onsite.

One resident recited that we needed more gages in the west to measure the threat from the Atchafalaya, and the Bayou Chene floodgate capacity. It was his opinion that it wasn't having the same impact as when it was first installed.

Another resident mentioned flooding in Bayou Black that had stayed in the front yard for days softening the soils between the culvert and the driveway surface, and washing it away when the water receded. She stated that she had approached the Parish, and was told that this was her responsibility. The Parish can come and rectify the situation, but she would be charged for those services. The speaker mentioned the Hanson Canal, Elliot Jones, and Bayou Black Pump Station projects, and invited her to the Bayou Black Area Analysis meeting the next night at the Devon Keller Community Center.

There was a long discussion about two major projects to 1) bring sediment to the Parish to make up for sediment transfers that occurred until the Mississippi River was dammed, stopping the overflows each year. That discussion is captured for the most part in the following submission which was read into the record:

My name is W. Alex Ostheimer, I live at 101 Oak St here in Houma, LA next to the Intracoastal Canal and the following are my opinions:

While I understand and respected that this project list is necessary for money and it certainly it is better than doing nothing, I believe it does little to solve the real problem.

The land is settling and the water is rising. We need dirt and lots of it. I believe the only economical way to get it is to let the Atchafalaya River bring it to us or at least as close as Morgan City where we can put it into the slant pipelines and start building.

Mother Nature and perhaps God himself is certainly doing their part to help us.

1. The freeing of the Mississippi River to divert must be planned, organized, and built. This should eliminate loss of life and all the silt down the Atchafalaya, maintain a viable shipping channel and continue to provide fresh water source for those who need it on the river. Not to mention reduced flooding on the upper river.

2. The silt should be harvested from the river in the Morgan City area, both above and below, since we know it is already being deposit there, remember the island just below the bridge after the water went down a few years ago.
3. We need an exemption from the government to build useable land that we can form or develop.
4. We need to start this as soon as possible.

Thank you

Alex Osteheimer.

After the submission of this project idea, the presenter suggested that this type of regional project would best be considered by the Watershed Initiative group that is considering expenditures to reduce flooding on a watershed basis. The statewide program funded with \$1.2B at this time, with \$600,000,000 available for our region to compete for might be the scale necessary for such an undertaking. The sediment pipeline feasibility project was discussed briefly, and it was agreed that the project would be brought to the attention of Pat Gordon of SCPDC as SCPDC is the Fiscal Agent of the region at this time. There is no Watershed Coordinator yet in the knowledge of the presenter.

The presenter submitted for the consideration of the group the suggestion from OEP made in a separate meeting that the tunnel under the GIWW could threaten Houma should a vehicle explode there from accident or a purposeful act. This was supported with some nods, but the conversation turned to the rerouting of traffic out of the GIWW in town to the loop in the Gulf.

The suggestion is that there is traffic in the GIWW that was not intended, such as barges that are too large for the twists and turns of the GIWW, and create opportunities for erosion of the bank, widening of the channel, and accidents with shoreline properties. The solution that was discussed first in 1971 was a loop that bypasses the City of Houma by going around the whole of the Parish towards the Gulf in a long U-shaped arc . Mr. Osteheimer asked that this be investigated to take all large shipments and hazardous cargo. There was no discussion about what the "hazardous cargo" might be.

The members of the public were thanked for their interest and participation and invited to participate in the future in the Bayou Black meeting or the Steering Committee meetings that were posted on the community calendar, the next one taking place November 15 from 9:30-11:30 at the OEP building on Government Street above Highway 90.

With that, the meeting was adjourned.