

WEST GALVESTON ISLAND PROPERTY OWNER'S ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 16, 2002

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the West Galveston Island Property Owners' Association was held on March 16, 2002. The meeting was called to order by Jerry Mohn, President at 9:00 A.M. A quorum of was established by the Directors in attendance: Jerry Mohn, Sidney McClendon, Al Birdwell, Bill Aimone and Dan Daigle. Susan McKirahan with C.K.M. Property Management, Inc., Vic Pierson, Mayor of Jamaica Beach, Diane Puccetti, City Council Member, and Andrea Madison from the Planning Department, were also in attendance. Jerry Mohn introduced Amanda and Stephanie, 8th graders who have a special project for their school on coastal erosion. Later in the meeting when Congressman Lampson arrived, Tessa Duffy, Galveston County Emergency Management Coordinator, Edie Oehlers, President of the Gilcrest Community Association on Bolivar Island, and Johnny Johnson, City Manager for Port Arthur were introduced.

Upon motion duly made by Al Birdwell, and seconded by Bill Aimone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLVED THAT, the Board approved the Minutes of February 16, 2002, as presented.

Al Birdwell gave the financial report. There is \$6,000 in cash. Membership invoices for dues will go out at the end of the month. There are a couple of new members. Last years collection was \$20,000.

Upon motion duly made by Al Birdwell and seconded by Bill Aimone, the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

RESOLVED THAT, the Board approved the financial report as presented.

Sidney McClendon stated that the Executive Committee of the CCC (Coastal Coordination Council) was held in Galveston the end of January and presentations were made by him, Tessa Duffey, Marty baker, John Arrington, Kathy Love, Jerry Mohn, and County Judge Jim Yarbrough. The CCC also had a meeting in Austin on March 5 and Sidney McClendon and Jerry Mohn attended and made presentations. The main purpose was to address rules and procedures on the use of GEOTUBES for shoreline restoration. A film was shown that depicted the beach as narrower in front of the GEOTUBE than other places. Basically according to the views of the GLO is that a narrower beach denies public access. The GLO is opposed to the GEOTUBE because if you did not do anything to the beach, you will lose beach. Our answer is nourishment. Once the new rules are published in the Texas Register, the public has six weeks to make comments.

Mr. McClendon indicated the GEOTUBE is an issue for us alone on the Texas Coast. It is not so much an issue for other areas. The CCC really does not understand them. We receive a lot of opposition and we need to focus on addressing our concerns and needs. With elections coming up, we need to support the candidates who understand what our problems are and will support us in our projects. At the last Council meeting, it was authorized by the executive committee to prepare a study of legal initiatives they want to start. The new rules and policy changes on the GEOTUBES will be posted on the GLO website. We need to react to the issue of our infrastructure if these policies are passed.

John Barrett, public member of the Coastal Coordination Council, who is on the opposite side of the fence, stated that they want discretion of whether they want GEOTUBES on the beach. If there is no public

comment on the new rules and policies, the CCC could cut off funding from the Texas Department of Transportation, FEMA, etc. Sidney has written to the GLO concerning their proposed policies. The GLO has responded and Sidney will answer the GLO comments and he recommended that we all respond to the GLO of the concerns.

Mr. McClendon advised the \$4.4 million Feasibility Study by the Corp of Engineers is in the start up stage to help in the nourishment of the beach. There is a dispute between Jefferson County and Galveston County on the engineering firm to use. The County wants to do the project the same as the Corp of Engineers.

Discussion was held on the recent GLO sponsored "Texas Coastal Treasures" conference held in Corpus Christi, February 24-26. Sidney McClendon and Jerry Mohn attended the conference and reported on the topics of discussion and areas of interest to the WGIPOA. It was indicated that of the four GLO sponsored conferences the last eight years, this was the best. A highlight of the conference was a report by a Florida academia that there are more success stories with GEOTUBES than failures.

The Lobbyist to be used for the coastal erosion matters in Austin is Clay Pope, which the WGIPOA will support through the City of Galveston. With a Lobbyist in Austin acting on behalf of the Galveston interests, we will finally have a voice and affect on shoreline matters. The status of the beach access plan being prepared by the City of Galveston is that a summary is being completed of comments and can be seen at www.cityofgalveston.org. The staff will go through the comments. Mr. McClendon reviewed the huge sand bank sources off Galveston Island and Bolivar and Texas A&M at Galveston calculated that we could harvest the sand at a cost of \$15 a cubic yard.

Terry McNearney, Chairperson of the WGIPOA EMS task force reported that an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) is now assigned on all three shifts for Station 4 ambulance unit at Jamaica Beach. We now have full time Paramedic and EMT for emergency services, which will eliminate delays in waiting for an EMT or driver to come from Galveston for a non-threatening 911 emergency.

Council Member Dianna Puccetti advised she will continue to work for public safety issues as well as infrastructure improvements on the West End of the Island. Ms Puccetti also mentioned the Comprehensive Plan for the West End has been reviewed and comments were submitted, we expect approval by the end of April.

Jerry Mohn introduced Howard Marlowe of Marlowe & Company. Howard founded the American Coastal Coalition organization and is currently a consultant for the American Shore & Beaches Association. Marlowe & Company is active in lobbying for coastal issues to include beach nourishment. To see examples of their successes contact marlowe@mail.netlobby.com.

Howard Marlowe is employed by Galveston County and he works mainly with the Corp of Engineers and Texas Congressman Lampson and Texas Senators Hutchinson and Graham on legislation critical for the County. The one major topic he is concentrating is the Feasibility Study the Corps is undertaking to study and propose solutions for the coastal erosion problems from Sabine Pass to San Luis Pass. The cost is \$4.4 million and it is projected to take three years to complete. Another graph showed since 1995 The Federal Government has given to various States like New Jersey, \$168 million, and even a "Coastal State" like Illinois received \$87 million. Prior to 2001, Texas never received any Federal money the last twenty years. Through the efforts of Congressman Nick Lampson, Texas received \$100,000 in 2001 and will receive \$700,000 in 2002.

Howard Marlowe had some handouts - color picture graphs. The one chart showed that \$125 million is available in 2002 from the Federal Government for shoreline restoration project. This is a small amount when you consider the total budget the Federal Government has for water projects is \$4.5 billion. Mr.

Marlowe first began a discussion on the dismissal of Assistant Secretary Mike Parker of the Corp of Engineers by the White House. Parker, civilian head of the Army Corps of engineers, earned the ire of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently over his testimony before several Congressional committees. OMB felt that Parker did not do enough to defend the President's extreme cut in the civil works budget for the coming fiscal year. His outspoken support of the importance of water resource projects had irritated Administration officials. This will be a big blow to the coastal community. He was an outspoken advocate for the Corps and believed deeply in the Corps mission, including shore protection. Without his dynamic leadership and political skills, the Corps will certainly be hampered by the traditionally anti-shore protection OMB. Mr. Marlowe is disappointed with the Bush Administration since not much funding for beach erosion will be authorized. If money is to be appropriated, now is the time to begin the request because June is the budget time for the projects. The House and Senate then revise the proposed budget and possibly by October 1, a Bill will be introduced to support the budget. The Congressmen and Senators need to know your feelings and for them to support beach and bay restoration programs and the best way to contact them now is by

Email and Fax since "snail" (postal) mail is usually irradiated.

Mr. Marlowe indicated the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2003 contains two changes in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that will adversely affect the coastal community. First, it proposes increasing flood insurance premiums for coastal residents to reflect the additional flood risk caused by beach erosion. Adding coastal erosion rates into flood insurance premiums is unfair to coastal residents. Under this plan, FEMA would calculate the risk of coastal flooding an area, and then assess additional fees based on that rating. This would drastically increase insurance premiums. This proposal reflects a recommendation from the Heinz Center study issued two years ago, and ignores the decreases in coastal erosion that occurs when beach nourishment is undertaken. Coastal residents consistently pay more in flood insurance premiums than they receive in damage payments, thereby subsidizing the program for victims of river flooding, who receive more money in damage payments than they pay in premiums. This change would put even more of the already lopsided burden on coastal residents.

Second, the change also proposes dramatically increasing the insurance rates for many second and vacation homes. Both of these provisions primarily target coastal residents, and place a disproportionate share of the cost of the NFIP on coastal property owners. The second proposal would significantly raise premiums on second homes and vacation homes. There is no data that suggests these homes suffer any greater losses than primary residences. Moreover, many owners of these properties rent them out to vacationers. Raising the cost of flood insurance will result in a commensurate increase in the rental cost. This works against reinvigorating the tourism industry, which Congress and the President have identified as key to securing our economic security. Beach tourism generates \$60 billion in federal tax revenue each year, increasing the cost of a beach vacation could substantially reduce that number.

Mr. Marlowe advised the coastal communities need to mobilize and have their voice heard in Washington. Currently, 54% of the population lives within 5 miles of the coast line and this is increasing by 3600 people daily. In Texas alone, 5.8 million people live along the coast and 4.1 million are in the Houston-Galveston metro area. The coastal people need to speak out and this is the reason for someone like Mr. Marlowe to interact with the legislators on a continuous basis.

Jerry Mohn introduced Congressman Nicholas V. Lampson. U.S. Texas Congressman Nick Lampson discussed Bill HR 3842 that he and Congressman Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ) have introduced in Washington, The National Recreation Act. The legislation is aimed at ensuring that recreation benefits are considered equally with storm and hurricane damage mitigation in formulated beach restoration projects. Under current law, the Army Corps of Engineers does not include recreation when determining the cost-benefit ratio for projects. This will be a major step forward for communities seeking projects, as recreation benefits are

substantial, contributing tens of billions of dollars to the national economy each year. The Bill simply states that beaches whose primary benefit is public recreation will be given the same consideration for Federal assistance as beaches whose primary benefit is either storm damage reduction or environmental restoration. This bill will benefit eroded beaches in all parts of the country. It opens the Federal beach restoration program to all eroded beaches that have public access. Ironically, that was the stated purpose of the program when it was established in 1946 - to restore eroded beaches and promote public recreation. This bill directs the Army Corp of Engineers to consider the recreation benefits of beach restoration projects to be primary benefits, just as the Corps treats storm damage reduction and environmental restoration benefits. The value of beach recreation and the revenues that it produces at the regional and national level is just as important as other primary benefits, and this legislation ensures equal treatment. This Bill will greatly benefit Galveston since all the beaches are recreation. Congressman Lampson requested people to Email and Fax their Senators, Congressmen, and the President, to support HB 3842 to ensure that our beaches receive the protection they deserve. Congressman Lampson said by nourishing the beaches in Miami, Florida, the City receives \$200 for each dollar spent and Galveston should benefit in the same manner.

Congressman Lampson also discussed Bill S 1987, "The Corps of Engineers Modernization and Improvement Act of 2002", that was introduced by Senator Robert Smith (R-NH) to institute so-called "reforms" in the Army Corps of Engineers. The bill would enact a variety of changes that are detrimental to all Corps' clients, especially coastal communities. One of the major provisions of the legislation was shifting the Federal cost share with a community 65% by the U.S. and 35% by the local entity to 35%-65%. Coastal communities in need of nourishment to protect their eroding beaches will no longer be able to turn to the federal government for assistance. This will have a harmful impact on the nation's economy, natural resources, and recreation infrastructure. The Corps is especially vulnerable with the ouster of Assistant Secretary Mike Parker. The Administration may now be willing to go along with some of Senator Smith's reform efforts. If the coastal community wants to ensure these measures are not enacted into law, we must speak out strongly against them. Please contact your congressional representatives and tell them that you oppose S 1987. Let's not let politics get in the way of treating our beaches and water resources with the respect that they deserve.

Congressman Lampson also stressed the importance of the public putting pressure on TEXDOT to become more involved in coastal erosion issues. He spoke primarily of the need of TEXDOT to become involved in a restoration project to rehabilitate and active Highway 87 on the Bolivar peninsula and the elevation of FM 3005 on Galveston Island. The City of Galveston passed a resolution that the TX Dot look at FM 3005. TX Dot has not marked any money for FM 3005. Congressman Lampson believes people should be tenacious and place pressure on TEXDOT because it will get you through the maze and eventually accomplish the objective.

We need to be sure that the people are in control of the decisions and are informed of our needs. Members of the House and Senate must support it before it goes to the President. You can write to Bill Graham or Kay Bailey Hutchinson and let them know of your support for House Bill 3842 and Senate Bill S 1987.

Tesa Duffy, Sidney McClendon, and Jerry Mohn thanked Congressman Lampson for all his effort and cooperation. He was worked tirelessly for our efforts. This is the first time in Texas that a study was done at the effort of Congressman Lampson.

With no further business coming before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Date Secretary
