

West Galveston Island POA

Board of Directors meeting

The West Galveston Island POA Board meeting was held on October 17, 2015 at the Courtyard by Marriott, Galveston, Texas. Jerry Mohn, President called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. A quorum was established by the attendance of Mike Thibodeaux – Acapulco Village, Joan Newton – Bermuda Beach, Boyd Carr – Isla Del Sol, Bet Jennings – Laffites Cove, Jeannie Mason – Palm Beach, Ron Pearrow – Pirates Beach & Cove, Charley Jones – Sea Isle, Peggy Zahler – Spanish Grant Beach, Jay Lendrum – Dunes of West Beach, and Paul Voinis – Sportsman Road. Susan Gonzales with CKM Property Mgt was present as recording Secretary.

Corporate Sponsors in attendance were Peggy Zahler- JSC Credit Union, Susan Gonzales – CKM Property Mgt. and Peggy Rapp - Rapp Management provided the financial reports. Officials and Candidates in attendance were Jimmy Fullen – Constable PCT 4, State Representative Wayne Faircloth, Judge Michelle Slaughter, Judge Lonnie Cox, Galveston Police Lt. David Torres, Joe Jaworski, Brian Maxwell – City Manager, and Carolyn Sunseri – Council member Pct 6.

The Board reviewed the minutes and the financial report. Motion by Peggy Zahler and seconded by Charley Jones, the Board approved by unanimous vote the Minutes of September 2015 and the financial reports.

Community Policing – Lt. David Torres advised during the winter months’ owners need to look out for their neighbors. Report immediately any suspicious activity. The more calls the better. The group heard about Lt. Torres rescue of a lady threatening to jump off the Causeway Bridge and the group gave a standing ovation.

Announcements: The Galveston Island Nature Tourism Council will hold its “Holiday with the Cranes” on December 11 – 13, 2015. The Galveston Historical Foundation will on “Living on the Edge” Conference at the Ashton Villa on October 22 –23, 2015.

WGIPOA Newsletter – Peggy Zahler stated the next issue will be the Mardi-Gras issue at the end of January.

District 6 – Carolyn Sunseri stated that on the west end many communities participated in National Night Out and she visited as many communities as she could that evening. Fire Station # 7 has move to the City Building on Stewart Rd – Renovation to begin soon. The City has placed the Streets, water, sewer and drainage as a priority for the west end. Under the Access Plan there is some money from the Restore Act from BP Oil Spill. The plan is that this money should go to coastal projects only.

Dr. Neil Frank – Hurricane Ike and more... Dr. Neil Frank, former Director of the National Hurricane Center, and Chief Meteorologist for over 20 years at KHOU TV in Houston.

At the National Hurricane Center Dr. Frank reviewed the U.S. coastal census figures to determine how many people in certain communities had been through a major hurricane (at least a Category 3). Because of the rate of development along the coast, it turned out that only about 25 percent of the people had experienced a hurricane. Frank was deeply concerned that people would not understand the dangers posed by hurricanes. He developed a slide presentation and began seeking every opportunity to deliver talks in which he educated people on the dangers of hurricanes and what to do when the National Weather Service issued hurricane warnings for their community.

In the mid 1970s, the National Hurricane Center organized the first national hurricane conference to bring government officials and members of the news media together to share information about how best to inform the public and increase hurricane preparedness. The national hurricane conferences became an annual event and draw about 1,500 attendees.

Dr. Frank provided photographs of the coastal areas affected by Ike before and after the storm. These photos illustrated the damage caused by hurricane Ike. He stressed the importance of the dangers posed by hurricanes and how they should respond to these storms.

Dr. Frank stated he has seen many changes in forecasting, primarily in the tools that meteorologists have at their disposal. Most important among these are the improvements in meteorologists' observation systems. The combination of satellites and aircraft today has vastly improved meteorologists' ability to forecast the path and strength of tropical storms and hurricanes. Another improvement is the use of numerical models. Forecasters gather data and using these models are able to forecast weather reasonably well for a three to five-day period. Meteorologists also use models to forecast the movement of hurricanes. A third significant development has been Doppler Radar. Doppler Radar adds a second key component in that it can tell if the rain is moving towards the radar or away. The ability to indicate movement has improved weather forecasters' ability to warn people in the path of potentially dangerous storms.

The rate of improvement in hurricane forecasting has not been able to keep up with the rate of increase of coastal populations. The need for more accurate forecasts has far exceeded the ability of meteorologists to provide that kind of information. The technology simply does not exist that can allow forecasters to predict, with any degree of accuracy, the path of a hurricane far enough in advance to allow for the masses of coastal inhabitants to evacuate safely. The primary danger for coastal residents is the storm surge. According to Frank, approximately nine out of ten people who perish in a hurricane drown in the storm surge. The problem, then, is when to order evacuations? Hurricane Rita, in 2005, provided many lessons for residents of southeast Texas, including the fact that it takes a good thirty hours to evacuate the most flood prone areas.

One glaring need, according to Frank, is for improved building codes not only in the coastal communities but farther inland too. It is possible to build homes and other structures to better withstand the force of hurricane winds. But, people need to learn from the lessons of history and use good sense in where they build too. Frank worries

that in Galveston, the west end of the island resembles the east end before the Great Storm of 1900, with no sea wall to protect those budding communities. Beach erosion adds to the problem. Frank agreed that the IKE DIKE would help.

Just a few facts according to Dr. Frank: There has been 33 years without a major storm, on an average there has been eleven years between hurricanes. When you hear there is a dramatic rise in sea level – Dr. Frank stated not true – the ice in the artic has actually increased. It is natural cycles that are causing the warming. HUD would have paid to replace home if 50% damaged. FEMA – if in first two rows would be eligible for buy out. When FEMA buys out property it goes to the City of Galveston. There is a difference between surge and size of a hurricane. Keep in mind the water may be at 17’ but the storm surge is at least 5’ above that.

- Galveston - 98 homes were lost in IKE – 74 were included in the buy out by FEMA
- There were 9000 homes in Bolivar – 3500 homes were lost
- In Gilchrist (17 miles east of Bolivar Point) experience total destruction from IKE out of 500 homes only 2 survived. FEMA bought out 300 lots. The closing of Rollover Pass is being considered – sand comes in and causes silting which leads to costly dredging
- 1900 Hurricane was Category 4; a Cat 5 would have crested the seawall.
- Katrina’s storm surge was 27’ in New Orleans all the way to Hwy I-10.
- Sandy was like the perfect storm that hit New York.
- In 1886 four (4) hurricanes hit Indianola, Texas and destroyed the town.
- Cat 4 Storm surge – evacuate the west end. Dr. Frank provided comparison pictures of before and after effect of Hurricane IKE. IKE was a cat 2 but did more damage.

After Dr. Frank stated the Ike came from Africa, he was asked “how do we stop Hurricanes “– Dr. Frank “get rid of Africa”.

Other Topics

Walkovers – COG & FEMA – ownership of the walkovers is in question.

Amending Beach Access Plan – COG is looking at amending.

Neighborhood Improvement Projects – let Carolyn Sunseri know of any projects for your community.

Snakes – Be aware – contact Brett Reynolds for snake removal – 281-748-9636

Adjournment at 10:45 A.M.