

SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes for July 26, 2018, Full-Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Southeast Texas Waterway Advisory Council (SETWAC) was held on July 26, 2018 at Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, TX. The current SETWAC Charter is dated April 26, 2018. 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:

- The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am by SETWAC Chairman Larry Kelley. Mr. Kelly welcomed all participants and observers. 64 people were present. All SETWAC members, and other's in attendance, introduced themselves to the membership. Mr. Kelley turned the floor over to the Captain of the Port.

2. Remarks by the Captain of the Port:

- Captain Jacqueline Twomey gave welcoming remarks. She spoke on the new TWIC Reader Rule, indicating that a "stay" had been instituted on the implementation of the TWIC Rule, and that it would not become effective in the near-term. CAPT Twomey recommended facility operators remain in contact with the MSU POC, Chief Petty Officer Swain for updates. A PSIB will be initiated when more delineated guidance pertaining to the TWIC Rule is initiated.
- CAPT Twomey recognized the Jefferson County Sherriff's Department for the late-night, emergency response efforts toward keeping the waterway safe following the breakaway barge incident at Tubal Cain.
- CAPT Twomey spoke to the ongoing maintenance work at the Calcasieu Lock and the back-up of vessels waiting to negotiate the Lock. CAPT Twomey thanked USACE for doing a phenomenal job in managing the back-up and remaining abreast of the vessel Que. She stated, "The lock project and vessel que has high visibility within both organizations and is being tracked daily."
- CAPT Twomey introduced CDR Pierre (new Executive Officer) and CDR Ferguson to the membership, and publically thanked CDR Lovejoy for his service to the MSU, the Coast Guard and the local community.

3. Approval of the April 26, 2018 Minutes:

- A motion was made, and seconded, to approve the April 26, 2018 minutes.

4. Committee Reports:

Navigation Sub-Committee Report:

- Captain Charles LaHaye, Sabine Pilots, reported on the Waterway Suitability Assessment recommendation for Sabine Pass LNG. CAPT LaHaye informed the membership that after considering projected delays and increased vessel traffic resulting from the project, the Sub-committee recommends SETWAC issue a “Letter of No Objection” to the COTP.
- CAPT LaHaye requested a vote on SETWAC’s approval of the “Letter of No Objection.” - A motion was made and seconded to approve the “Letter of No Objection” for the Sabine Pass LNG WSA.
- CAPT LaHaye deferred to Mr. Scott Whalen, Director of VTS Port Arthur, for an updated report on the disestablishment of the Sabine Federal Anchorage. Mr. Whalen informed the membership that the Notice of Inquiry period was closed. A Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) will be published and additional comments solicited before the implementation of a final rule disestablishing the anchorage.

Port Education, Research, Port Welfare & Workforce Development Subcommittee Report:

- In the absence of Mr. Stromberg and Fr. Sinclair Oubre, CAPT Twomey addressed the “Shrimper’s Meeting” at the Seafarer’s Center on May 27 2018. She commented on the shrimp fleet’s continued search for safe moorings during storm evasion.
- Mr. Larry Kelly commented on Lamar University’s “GLO Resiliency Study,” indicating that Lamar is looking for work ideas/contributions from waterway operators that their students can study to understand port resiliency, and to recommend new initiatives that may benefit waterway users, facilities and the port as a whole. CAPT Twomey commented that the “Resiliency Study” is a good opportunity to bring visibility to the area and local operations.

USACE Waterway Maintenance Report/Dredge Operations Sub-Committee:

- Mr. Randy Reese, SNND, commented on the Sabine-Neches Navigation District’s efforts to fund waterways expansion. He reported that funds for Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED) for the deepening and widening project were “bumped” by Congress to \$2.3 Million, thus completing PED. He further stated that the next step is to seek “Construction General Funds,” which will start the project, for the 2019 work plan and the 2020 budget.
- Mr. Sherrill, USACE, commented on the status of 2017 dredge operations including maintenance pipeline dredging at the Texaco Island Intersection and Sabine Pass, and PA-11 shoreline stabilization.
- Mr. Sherrill further commented on 2018 dredge contracts to include the Sabine Bank Outer Bar and Bank Channel, private industry dredging and continuing to await mooring buoy replacement (Est. OCT 2018).

Waterway Security Sub-Committee Report:

- Mr. Jeremy Hanson, USCG, reported on the new TWIC card, its comparison to the 2007 design and authentication features, and he reviewed the “FAQ” describing changes resulting from the new card.

ATON Status/Projects Report:

- BMC Harold Zurlo, Officer in Charge, ANT Sabine, reported the ANT is currently addressing 4 aids to navigation that had been recently destroyed. He also informed membership of the recent recoupment of a \$100K judgement against a vessel. USCG is looking at the master who hit and destroyed a range and failed to report it to the Coast Guard.

5. New Business:

- CAPT LaHaye, Sabine Pilots, proposed a Navigation Sub-committee Benchmark Channel Usage Study, indicating that the deepening/widening project will ultimately result in more and larger vessels frequenting the port, and that the Navigation Sub-committee intends to conduct studies of new traffic patterns and potential delays because of the increased traffic. The intent of said studies is to understand, plan for, and to develop solutions for these delays before they actually happen. Mr. Kelly offered full SETWAC participation in the studies; CAPT LaHaye to email invites to participate in meetings on the topic.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, updated membership on the KSC Railroad Bridge safety zone, which is in place to effect the replacement of the bridge fendering system that was destroyed during Hurricane Harvey in 2017. The project is to run through December 31, 2018.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, reported on the Calcasieu Lock. GICA, USACE, and the Coast Guard is monitoring the vessel que continuously. The Lock back-up has economic and storm-evasion concerns that have high-level visibility.
- Mr. Scott Whalen, USCG, thanked the membership for updating industry hurricane plans and informed them that Industry Hurricane Planning Info for the port has been placed on the VTS website. Mr. Whalen commented on the PCT “Communications Exercise” that was conducted prior to the commencement of the hurricane season. The results of the test indicated there may be some conflict with service providers such that many PCT members did not properly receive the text message initiating the PCT exercise. As such, another PCT exercise may be conducted in the near future to ensure 100% reliability.
- Mr. Buddy Hicks commented on the new Harbor Assist Tug (triple rotor) in use by Sea Bulk.
- Mr. Kelly and CAPT Twomey expressed their gratitude to all who either took part in, or helped to facilitate the “Camp Seaport Activities” that recently took place throughout the Port.

6. Next Meetings:

- The next working group meeting will be held at the Sabine-Neches Navigation District offices on Thursday, October 11, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.
- The next full committee meeting will be held at MSU Port Arthur on Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.

7. Adjourn:

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

