

PUBLIC HEARING  
AGENDA  
March 4, 2002

- I. Receive input from the general public, fishermen, Port users, and other interested parties regarding matters that relate to the port, airport, navigation, and the Greater Lafourche Port Commission in general

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE GREATER LAFOURCHE PORT COMMISSION  
March 4, 2002

The Board of Commissioners of the Greater Lafourche Port Commission held a Public Hearing on Monday, March 4, 2002, at 6:30PM for the purpose of receiving input from the general public, fishermen, Port users, and other interested parties regarding matters that relate to the port, airport, navigation, and the Greater Lafourche Port Commission in general.

President Melancon called the meeting to order and introduced all of the board members that were present, which included John Melancon, Donald Vizier, Wilbert Collins, Ervin Bruce, Beau Martin, Chuckie Cheramie, and Jimmy Lafont. Those members absent were Harry Cheramie and Larry Griffin. President Melancon also introduced Executive Director Ted M. Falgout. He then proceeded to explain the process by which each member of the audience would be allowed to speak or ask questions. The audience had filled in information cards as they arrived, which had their names and indicated their desire to speak. He instructed the audience that he would call on each person separately and they would have a 5-minute time limit in which to speak.

President Melancon then called upon Steven Charpentier who complimented the Commission for putting electricity at the wharfs in Nerby Collins Marina. He also suggested that in reference to Ordinance No. 67, the Commission consider putting stickers on the vessel cabins in the marina with the phone numbers of the contact individuals so that vessel operators would know how to contact another vessel should it need to be moved.

President Melancon then called upon Daniel Lorraine who complimented the Commission for holding this Public Hearing. He then proceeded to thank the Commission for the amicable negotiations regarding the transfer of Sponsorship of the Airport, and he thanked the board for the work that will be performed on the Clovelly Road. He reported that the parish approved the paving of the remainder of the Airport Road, in conjunction with the Port Commission. Director Falgout was recognized, and he reported that engineering on the Clovelly Road has begun. Construction is expected to begin by May or June.

President Melancon then called upon Philip Ledet who spoke to the Commission regarding the Public Tug Dock. He said that the current facility is overburdened, and he wonders what the Commission's plans are for any future facilities that may provide tying-up services in Fourchon. Director Falgout responded that dock space in Fourchon is of prime value, and there currently is no plans for further developing bulkheaded waterfront at which boats can tie for free. However, this issue has been discussed by this Commission recently, and there are several ideas being considered at present. There have been discussions about having vessels pay to dock at the existing facility and also about constructing mooring clusters in Bayou Lafourche. The Commission questioned whether it is more important to have room for emergency work that needs to be performed or to have room to tie-up at all times. Mr. Ledet responded that he sees a greater need for dock space for emergency purposes, and a 24-hour docking limit would suffice. Director Falgout reported that the Commission is still considering this issue and no resolution has been reached yet.

President Melancon called upon Timmy Alario who thanked the board for putting electricity at the Nerby Collins Marina and also for extending the no wake zone to protect the marsh. He then questioned whether trawlers were still able to push through Bayou Lafourche north of C-Port to the Flotation Canal. Director Falgout reported that a dredge would be in Flotation Canal in the next 30-45 days, and then ASCO will be constructing a facility on the corner of Bayou Lafourche and Flotation Canal. He said that once that area becomes congested from activity, then the Commission will revisit placing restrictions on this area.

President Melancon then recognized Farrel Charpentier who spoke to the board about navigation lights at Fourchon. He said that he would like to see a rotating light at Belle Pass and that the range light is not strong enough. The Commission thanked Mr. Charpentier for bringing the problems with the lights to their attention. Since these lights are federal aids to navigation, the Commission cannot directly resolve these issues, but they will continue to stress to Coast Guard the need for improved aids to navigation in the Port.

President Melancon called upon Levi Brunet, Jr. who thanked the Commission for doing a superb job overall and for supporting the fishermen.

President Melancon recognized Elmo Pitre with ASCO who had several concerns to vocalize to the Commission. His first concern was regarding whether the Harbor Police responds to complaints north of the Leeville Bridge. Mr. Pitre said that there was an occasion where a business acquaintance locked his keys in his car in Leeville, and when Mr. Pitre called Harbor Police Dispatcher for assistance, he was informed that the officers do not respond to that area. Chief Frank Terrebonne confirmed that the Officers do respond to complaints north of the Leeville Bridge, depending upon the severity of the situation. Chief Terrebonne did say that the Sheriff's Office does cover that area and that the Commission must draw the line somewhere so as to avoid leaving the Port abandoned to respond to complaints outside of the Port. Mr. Pitre said that he understood this policy and was glad to hear that a severe complaint would warrant Harbor Police presence even north of the Leeville Bridge. His second concern was the turning radiuses in Port, especially along 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> streets, because the truckers are having trouble negotiating the turns into and out of the facilities located on those streets. He requested that the Commission place culverts in the ditches along these streets and fill the property so that the turning radiuses are increased. Assistant Director Davie Breaux said he and the Maintenance Department will examine the problem areas and propose the best solution.

President Melancon called upon Jimmie Martin who questioned how the board justifies spending \$1 million on a new office building after the Commission spent \$750,000 on an office building in Fourchon. President Melancon answered that the Commission's growing Administration justifies this additional space being planned. Mr. Martin questioned why the Port Officers do not follow the state laws. Director Falgout requested that Mr. Martin clarify to which law he is referring, and he responded speeding. He stated that numerous people have spoken to him about this. Chief Terrebonne said that the officers do fully comply with this law, and anyone who sees an officer behaving otherwise should call the Commission office to report such behavior. Several attendants at the meeting stated that they travel daily down to Grand Isle or the Fourchon area and encounter numerous Harbor Police officers on the road and never have seen a Harbor Police officer driving in the manner of which Mr. Martin complained. Mr. Martin then

questioned why Port police vehicles are not marked in compliance with state law. Director Falgout responded that there is a state law that addresses decals on public vehicles, but there are a number of exceptions to this law that allow for certain vehicles not to have decals. The law says "any vehicles used in crime prevention, detection, or similar investigative work, of which, if being identified, would not be used effectively for these purposes, are exempt." Director Falgout said that this is the reason that he, Assistant Director Davie Breaux, and Chief Frank Terrebonne do not have decaled cars. They observe no wake violations, littering, contractors and employees working, where if those vehicles were marked they could not observe these instances as effectively.

President Melancon recognized Timmy Alario who asked for an update on marking the Havoline Canal. Director Falgout responded that the Commission is trying to encourage greater use of the channel, but we need to hear from the users to have documentation to submit to the Coast Guard to justify the need for this channel to be marked.

President Melancon then recognized Mr. Doug Cheramie who said that he has been attending all of the Commission meetings for the past several years, and he believes the Commission is doing an outstanding job.

President Melancon called upon Mr. Roach Cheramie who reported that the rocks that the Commission placed against the Golden Meadow Seawall are caving in and he would like for the Commission to cap off that area when they pass by with the dragline to place mud along the embankment.

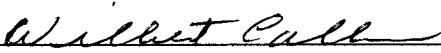
President Melancon recognized Duroc Cheramie who said he heard a rumor that the Havoline Canal would be dredged and he wondered if it was true. Director Falgout reported that that was in fact a rumor and that the usage of Havoline Canal must be increased and documented to develop the necessary cost-benefit ratio to justify the Federal Government's dredging that channel. He also said that the average time from a Feasibility Study to actual construction is 12-15 years, but that this could occur with enough community support and input from users.

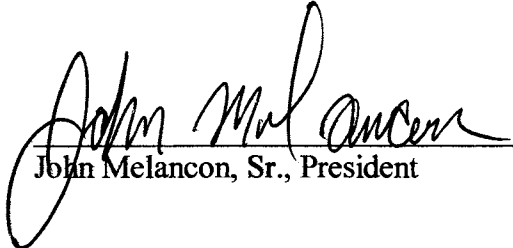
President Melancon called upon Richard Garner who conveyed his concern regarding VHF Channel 13 being heavily congested. He said that there currently is great misuse, and he is concerned that an accident will eventually occur. He said that in his experience, this does not occur at other ports such as Galveston and Biloxi. Chief Terrebonne reported that FCC regulates the use of this channel, and Commissioner Martin reported that USCG has a means of finding who is misusing the radio channel and can issue the ticket for the FCC. Mr. Garner also reported that there are boats tying-up stern-to-bulkhead and impeding the channel. Director Falgout reported that docks where channel access is 400' wide can occupy 75' out to the channel from their bulkhead, but anything more is not acceptable and should be reported to the Harbor Police when observed. Where channel access is 500' wide, docks can allow vessels to occupy 100' out from the bulkhead. In reference to the VHF congestion, Mr. Timmy Alario suggested that vessels change to a different channel the further inland in Port they travel. Mr. Eric Verdin suggested that perhaps captains needed to make their communications more concise because he feels that there is excess information provided when captains radio vessels' positions.

Commissioner Vizier said that perhaps having some type of traffic control might alleviate some of these problems.

President Melancon then allowed each Commissioner to address the audience and thanked everyone for attending. There being no more business to discuss, the Public Hearing was adjourned.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Wilbert Collins, Sr., Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John Melancon, Sr., President