

MINUTES

Livingston Parish April 21, 2021

Pursuant to notice duly posted in the public lobby of the Livingston Parish Governmental Building, the Livingston Parish Citizens Drainage Committee met on April 21, 2021, at the hour of six o'clock (6:00) p.m. in the Parish Council Chambers, located in the Livingston Parish Governmental Building, 20355 Governmental Boulevard, Livingston, Louisiana with the following members present:

Joey Sibley
~~Brian Clemmons~~
Pat Genre
~~Kevin Hull~~
Stephen Howze
Ron McMorris
~~Eileen McCarroll~~
Ernie Balfantz
Eric Harrell- Vice-chair
Shane Marler- Chair

The Chair, Shane Marler, called the meeting to order and asked the secretary/Livingston Parish Deputy Clerk, Angie Cornett, to call the roll and a quorum was present.

The Chair read agenda item 2a "Old business", and Mr. Stephen Howze stated that they found out that the parish received fifteen million dollars, and they wondered who was writing grants, what had been done already, and if the funding came from the Watershed Initiative. The chair asked Glenn Duncan, now with Quality Engineering, and asked that he approach the podium. He explained that Governor Edwards just announced fifteen projects statewide. He stated that he did not know who applied for the money but reminded them that the State Watershed Initiative has two portions of money that's going to be given away, 1.2 billion with around 60% given out at the state level by the state commission on "state-worthy" projects. This included the 15 million for Livingston that was in the first round. He added that about 40% would come up from the regions and that included the list of projects that he had given out at a previous meeting which are not under consideration. Mr. Duncan's understanding is that each regional steering committee will be the first body to send up to the state commission projects in it's region that it believes is worthy of money. He feels that, in addition to that, various organizations, he presumed would be approaching that commission about their projects for the 60% state grant. In the first round, he stated that 5 million is actually dedicated to each region for small projects. Mr. Howze noted that his understanding was that the 15 million included no mitigation or excavation, but was strictly for debris removal, etc. with no widening of ditches. The committee questioned the specifics, flexibility and dissemination of the money that Mr. Duncan could not address. Mr. Duncan added that the project and map was posted on the Louisiana Watershed Initiative website.

The Chair moved to item 3ai, ii, "New Business: Cooperative Endeavor Agreement." The chair gave the floor to Mr. Howze who explained that the C.E.A. came out of a recent educational summit that he attended. He explained that it was to put together something to cover I-10 from the west to the east side for more flow underneath since water was blocked from going south. He noted kickbacks that had came up recently on the C.E.A. He felt that openings needed to be widened with more culverts under it as extensions and not just cleaning. The Chair asked who all would be involved. Mr. Howze said that it included Gravity Drainage Districts 1, 2, and 5, Parish

Council and the City of Walker. However, he was told that the City of Walker would not be included. The Chair asked what the reason would be for a C.E.A. Mr. Howze stated that Drainage 1, 2, and 5 wouldn't need to pay engineers to do the same thing. This allowed each entity to work cooperatively without duplication. Mrs. Genre asked about sharing equipment, and Mr. Howze added that it would all be contracted out. He recommended still going to the council to make a favorable recommendation to join the C.E.A. that Quality had already drawn up.

MOTION was made by Mr. Stephen Howze and duly seconded by Mrs. Pat Genre to make a recommendation to the Livingston Parish Council that they join the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the other entities on drainage crossings.

YEAS: ERNIE BALFANTZ, RON MCMORRIS, ERIC HARRELL, SHANE MARLER, PAT GENRE, STEPHEN HOWZE

NAYS: NONE

ABSENT: EILEEN MCCARROLL, JOEY SIBLEY, KEVIN HULL, BRIAN CLEMMONS

ABSTAIN: NONE

Thereupon the chair declared that the Motion had carried and was adopted.

A brief discussion was allowed regarding the entire parish having projects and studies to overlap due to a lack of communication. Mr. Duncan approached the podium and briefly explained how engineering firms are chosen and selected. Mr. Howze gave an example of a recent C.E.A. between the state DPW and Gravity Drainage Districts 1 and 5 and also shared that Gravity Drainage Districts 1, 2, and 5 operated annually on about \$200,000. Mr. Howze shared his frustrations in learning that this board was told that they had \$250,000 to find someone to start writing grants, yet they learned that someone was already writing them. The Chair asked if anyone from the audience wanted to add anything.

Public Input: Thomas with Alvin Fairburn's office approached the podium. He reiterated an earlier discussion about getting property owners to allow drainage districts on their property to clean or maintain ditches. Another hurdle, as Mrs. Genre mentioned was getting permission from the Core of Engineers and paying the permit and mitigation fees which could rise into the millions easily. Mr. Howze noted that they have some large projects where the engineer is paid, but they can't afford the mitigation cost that does nothing for drainage.

The Chair read agenda item 3b "Discussion and review of Master Drainage Plan for the Parish of Livingston."

The Chair read agenda item 4, "Other Business",

No mention of agenda item 5, "Committee comments or concerns" was given, and the chair adjourned the meeting.

Having no other business, a **MOTION** was offered by Ron McMorris and duly seconded by Stephen Howze to adjourn the April 21, 2021 meeting of the Livingston Parish Citizens Drainage Committee, with no further discussion and where none opposed.

/s/ Angie Cornett
Angie Cornett, Deputy Clerk

/s/ Shane Marler
Shane Marler, Chairman

