

MEETING OF THE HOUSTON/GALVESTON NAVIGATION
SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
January 28, 1999

The fifty-second meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, January 29, 1999, in the Conference Room at the Houston Pilots' Office, Houston, Texas. A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (1), and a verbatim recording is available upon request.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Kelly Teichman, with quorum, at 9:00 AM.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Captain Wayne Gusman welcomed members and guests and introduced Captains Chris Desmond and Kevin Eldridge as Admiral Pluta's representatives.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR

Vice Chair Teichman greeted committee members and attendees. Self-introductions of the Committee members and attendees followed.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 1998 MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes. Motion carried.

NAVIGATION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Larry Miller, Subcommittee Chairman, presented the minutes from the January 14, 1999 Subcommittee meeting [enclosure (2)] and the following discussion ensued.

BAYTOWN TUNNEL REMOVAL

Mr. Dan Buchsbaum gave an update on the status. Section 2 is afloat but needs to be moved to the south side of the Channel. No channel closures are anticipated during this move. The removal of Section 3 in the next couple weeks will most likely require some traffic controls. LT Mark Gill provided an up-to-the-minute report on the anticipated process and stressed that all affected parties will meet prior to beginning of the removal process in order to work out an agreeable plan.

CHANNEL DREDGING

Mr. James Jackson updated the Committee on Port of Houston's dredging projects as well as private contract activity.

Mr. Johnny Rozsypal, Army Corps of Engineers, reported on the status of the contracts for the deepening and widening project. Dredging of the Entrance Channel and Lower Bay is currently underway. The Renda Marine dredge for the Upper Bayou contract will be on scene in roughly 45 to 60 days. Dredging of the Federal channel at Barbours Cut is the next anticipated project in about 30 days.

Prior to Colonel Buechler's presentation, Captain Gusman iterated everyone's concerns regarding the project: (1) the resultant safety of the waterway, (2) whether any major changes in the design of the project would impact or delay the timeline, and (3) the environmental impact. Colonel Nicholas Buechler, Army Corps of Engineers, provided a detailed description of the Houston Ship Channel Navigation Project with diagrams. He emphasized that there is no authorization for "barge lanes" in the project, that this is a natural condition in Galveston Bay which allows us to place the beacons 1000 feet apart and mark the twelve-foot contour for shallow draft vessels. He also stated that the Lower Bay Contract is being dredged offset from the centerline. Enclosures (3) and (4) depict the Lower Bay Reach before and after offset dredging. Due to the cost-savings over the life of the project, and by using his (the District Engineer's) discretionary authority, on a one-time basis, the channel can be restored to its pre-contract conditions, as illustrated by the white area in enclosure (4). Discussions on how to dredge the Upper and Mid-Bay reaches (centerline versus off-centerline) are ongoing. Colonel Buechler's opinion is that centerline dredging will cost more in the long run and will jeopardize the future potential for barge lanes. In other words, it increases the risk of being able to duplicate the results in the Lower Bay, throughout the rest of Galveston Bay. He explained, using enclosures (5) and (6), that regardless whether offset or centerline dredging is employed and using a 4:1 slope ratio, the bottom line will be a guaranteed depth of twelve feet between a channel width of 700 to 800 feet between the beacons. He emphasized that in some places there will be more than a 12-foot depth, but the channel won't be any wider than the 700 to 800 feet between the beacons we have today. Under any circumstances, with the ship channel increasing to 530 feet wide, the barge lanes will be diminished to 85 to 135 feet on each side. He envisioned two advantages to offset dredging for future opportunities: with the centerline moving east by 85 feet, there are at least 85 more feet of "good" water for tows on the west side, and there would be little disturbance of the west bank of the deep-draft channel. However there would be a considerable amount of dredging required on the east bank with environmental impacts, to ultimately extend the width between the beacons to 1000 feet the length of Galveston Bay. Mr. Miller suggested that the Committee table any recommendations to the Coast Guard until further information can be gleaned on costs, cost savings and the impact of pipeline plugs. It appeared that the safety concerns presented in Chairman Leitzell's proposal [enclosure (7)] were adequately addressed by the Colonel's "mathematical" explanation, i.e. separation of deepdraft and tow traffic, however, the issues of range placement and pipeline plugs were not. Additional discussion ensued and consensus was reached: the ranges will be relocated when the Corps gives the go-ahead once that particular reach has been dredged, and the controlling depth of the channel will remain at 40 feet until the pipelines are moved. Colonel Buechler concluded by saying that he wants his project engineer to continue the process of evaluating offset versus centerline dredging in the Upper and Mid-Bay portions of the project. This includes preparation of environmental impact statements and cost/cost saving information.

PORTS

Mr. Miller announced that there will be a meeting with Mr. Ted Walters of the Port in the afternoon to address funding sources, oversight/steering of PORTS and the possible placement of additional current meters in the upper Channel. An outbrief of this meeting will be reported at the next HOGANSAC meeting. Also, Captain Gusman requested that the subcommittee consider the feasibility of placement of a PORTS meter at the junction of the Ship Channel and the San Jacinto River in response to the damaging I-10 bridge allision which occurred last October during a period of high water. Mr. Todd Sanders, PORTS manager,

updated the Committee on the status of the meter at Bolivar Roads, and the cable installation at Morgan's Point.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Mr. Jack Smith introduced Mr. Gene Hafele of the National Weather Service who reported and elaborated on the changes at the NWS [enclosure (8)]. He also announced the annual Houston/Galveston Hurricane Workshop to be held at the Pasadena Convention Center on May 7, 1999.

HL&P TRANSMISSION TOWER PROTECTION

Ms. Teichman reported that HL&P has budgeted and designed protection for the towers in the vicinity of Old River, Morgan's Point and Baytown, and construction is scheduled to begin during the third quarter of this year.

ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION

Mr. Miller described the progress being made between Hydrographic Associates and Johnson Space Center on the development of a heading sensor antenna. Trials are ongoing and data is being collected on its accuracy. A full report will be provided at the next HOGANSAC meeting.

WATERWAYS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Ellyn Roof, Subcommittee Chairman, presented the minutes from the January 14, 1999 Subcommittee meeting [enclosure (9)]. She also introduced Mr. C. L. Standley, a commercial fisherman from San Leon, who will hopefully represent the commercial fishing industry at future meetings.

AIDS TO NAVIGATION

Mr. Les Sutton announced that sometime in the near future the ad hoc group made up of Coast Guard and towing industry representatives, will study all aids in the Houston Ship Channel and attempt to determine the cause of their being knocked down.

GALVESTON ANCHORAGES

Lieutenant Gill provided a history and summary of the development of the new Captain of the Port policy on anchorage management. Captain Smith expressed a desire to revisit this policy in the future and decide if the regulations should be changed to prevent abuse.

CLEAR CREEK ENTRANCE CHANNEL

Ms. Roof stated there was no report for this meeting.

PIPELINE SAFETY

Ms. Roof reported that RACAL has been contracted by several companies to investigate and locate pipelines and will coordinate with Minerals Management Service. Ms. Tricia Clark will chair an ad hoc committee for pipeline oversight.

Mr. Miller indicated that the Port of Houston licenses pipelines and through a voluntary program, is hoping to develop a pipeline map of the Upper Channel.

OLD BUSINESS

Commander Paula Carroll passed out the approved charter [enclosure (10)] and suggested that membership renewals be entertained at the next meeting and staggered expiration of term length be considered. She also announced two formal resignations - Ms. Mary Jones and Captain Mike Curtiss. The MARAD representative, Mr. Dee Varshney, was introduced as a new ex officio member.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Wyndylyn von Zharen requested that HOGANSAC write letters of support to Texas A&M-Galveston for two proposed Masters degree programs - Master of Science in Marine Resource Management and Maritime Administration Masters Degree [enclosure (11)]. These letters would assist in TAMUG's petition to the legislature to change the school's charter to include graduate degrees. Ms. Roof proposed and Mr. Buchsbaum seconded: that HOGANSAC write letters to Texas A&M-Galveston in support of their two graduate degree programs in the maritime and marine science fields. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Lieutenant (junior grade) John Stone from the cutter PAPAW announced that he will be conducting a WAMS review of the Galveston entrance channel northward to the ferry terminal and would be contacting users for input.

Lieutenant Gill of VTS presented the annual "State of the Waterway" address, a statistical review of the navigational events occurring on the Houston Ship Channel over the past year, and a look at normalized trends over the past several years [enclosure (12)].

Lieutenant (junior grade) Ty Gadsden provided handouts [enclosures (13) (14)] and a briefing on how the local Coast Guard will be interacting with the port users to combat the "Y2K bug."

Mr. George Gillow and Mr. Don English of ARINC (San Diego, CA) demonstrated their carry-aboard electronic navigation system to the Committee.

Captain Harry Lydick brought up two new issues: that the Coast Guard investigate the current navigation "rules of the road" and make the modifications necessary to accommodate the advent of electronic navigation technology; and, that an ad hoc committee comprised of representatives from the towing industry, pilots, Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers be established to make recommendations concerning the aids to navigation on the post-deepened and widened Houston Ship Channel. After much discussion, both items were tabled until the next subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Roof announced Galveston Bay Day as being June 12, 1999, and the Bay Day Gala is June 5, 1999.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the full Committee will be held at the Houston Pilots' Office at 9:00 AM on May 27, 1999. The Committee members and attendees were polled and voiced no concerns regarding the location of the next meeting. The subcommittees will meet May 13, 1999 at the Houston Yacht Club, 3620 Miramar, Seabrook, Texas, with the Navigation Subcommittee meeting at 9:00 AM, followed by the Waterways Subcommittee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM.

WAYNE D. GUSMAN
Executive Director

Certified: KELLY TEICHMAN
Committee Vice Chair

- Encl: (1) List of Members and Guests in Attendance
(2) Minutes of 1/14/99 Navigation Subcommittee Meeting
(3) Barge Lanes before Improvements - Lower Bay Reach
(4) Barge Lanes after Improvements - Lower Bay Reach
(5) Barge Lanes before Improvements - Upper, Mid-Bay Reaches
(6) Barge Lanes after Improvements - Upper, Mid-Bay Options
(7) Chairman Leitzell's Recommendation re: Channel Safety
(8) National Weather Service Operations
(9) Minutes of 1/14/99 Waterways Subcommittee Meeting
(10) Proposed Graduate Degree Programs at Texas A&M-Galveston
(11) Renewed Charter, October 1, 1998
(12) State of the Waterway Address - VTS Houston/Galveston
(13) Y2K Handouts - MSO Houston-Galveston

The following Committee members were present at the meeting:

Executive Director
CAPT Wayne D. Gusman, USCG

Executive Secretary
CDR Paula Carroll, USCG

Committee Vice Chair
Ms. Kelly Teichman

Mr. Daniel Buchsbaum	Captain Jack H. Smith
Mr. James Jackson, Jr.	Mr. Mang Vo
Captain Harry Lydick, Jr.	Ms. Wyndilyn von Zharen
Mr. Larry Miller	Ms. Dena Wilson
Mrs. Ellyn H. Roof	Mr. Dee Varshney, MARAD (Ex Officio)
COL Nicholas Buechler, USACOE (Ex Officio)	

The following Committee members were not present:

Mr. Marlon Brown	Captain John Hawkins
Mr. Stan Cook	Mr. Tim Leitzell
Captain Stephen F. Ford	Mr. Charles Stewart

Others in attendance were:

CAPT Kevin Eldridge USCG D8(o)	Mr. Colin Weeks Hydrographic Assoc, Inc
LT Mark Gill USCG VTS Houston/Galveston	CDR Todd Gentile USCG D8(oan)
LCDR Joe Re USCG VTS Houston/Galveston	Mr. Todd Sanders H/G PORTS
CAPT Chris Desmond USCG D8(m)	Mr. Thomas Phelps Houston Pilots
LTJG Sue York USCG VTS Houston/Galveston	LCDR Frank Kingett USCG, CGC Papaw
Mr. Ted Thorjussen West Gulf Maritime	Ms. Amy Husted Hollywood Marine
LTJG Matt York USCG MSO Houston-Galveston	Mr. Johnny Rozsypal Army Corps of Engineers
Mr. Gene Hafele National Weather Service	Mr. Robert van Hoven National Weather Service
Mr. Jonathan Whitworth SeaRiver Maritime Inc	LCDR Mark Swanson USCG MSO Houston-Galveston
Ms. Wendy Morrison GALTEX	Mr. Jon Halvorsen Equiva Marine

Mr. Don W. English
ARINC

BMCS Jim Schmader
USCG, CGC Hatchet

BMCS Gary Bean
USCG, CGC Clamp

LT Tristan Todd
USCG VTS Houston/Galveston

CDR Alan R. Bunn
NOAA/NOS/PORTS Liaison

Mr. Lamar Doyle
Intracoastal Towing/Trans Corp

LTJG John Stone
USCG, CGC Papaw

Ms. Kate McAfee
TGLO

Ms. Kristine Sandoval
TAMUG student

Mr. C. L. Standley
PISCES

Mr. Dean Cheramie
Kirby Inland Marine

Mr. Mike Morris
Houston Pilots

Mr. John Lorren
Houston Fuel Oil Terminal

Mr. George Gillow
ARINC

BM1 Mark Brookmole
USCG, CGC Hatchet

Mr. Tom Kornegay
Port of Houston

Mr. Harry Brown
TC/Galv Pilots Commissioner

BMCS Tom Horan
USCG, Gru Galv AtoN

Mr. John Salvesen
Odfjell Tankships

Mr. Les Sutton
Hollywood Marine

Mr. Ted Schendel
Houston Pilots

Ms. Deborah Lawson
TAMUG student

Mr. Robbie Smith
Western Towing

Mr. Marvin Reed
Coastal Towing

LT Greg DeLong
USCG, MSU Galveston