

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 p.m., June 24, 2024

Location: Louisiana State Capital
Senate Committee Room “F”

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor’s Appointee
Mr. Daniel Helms (representing Parish President Clint Cointment)
Ascension Parish
Parish President Jason Manola, West Baton Rouge Parish
Mr. Wally Avara (representing Parish President Randy Delatte), Livingston Parish
Secretary Joe Donahue, DOTD
Mr. Dwayne Boudreaux (representing Parish President Chris Daigle), Iberville Parish
Mr. Fred Raiford (representing Parish President Broome) EBR Parish

Member Absent: None

❖ Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Minutes from the March 25, 2024, were approved, on motion made by Raiford and seconded by President Manola.

Next on the Agenda, was an update on the progress being made by DOTD on certain DOTD projects which will directly impact the MRB South GBR, and the La. Hwy. 1 to La. Hwy 30 Connector project.

- A. Introduction of Representative(s) of the DOTD:
 - 1. Mr. Paul Vaught
 - 2. Mr. Cory Landry
 - 3. Mr. Joe Brown
- B. Comments from Representative(s) of the DOTD, above named.
- C. Update on the Other Bridge Connector Projects updates from attending representatives of DOTD.
- D. Comparison of Timelines and Tasks to actual performance by DOTD on said projects.

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

Comments made:

1. La. Hwy. 1/LA Hwy. 415 presentation by Mr. Landry:
 - La. Hwy. 415 to be built in two phases.
 - First phase will cost more than \$250 Million.
 - Second Phase will cost an estimated \$100 Million.
 - President Manola thanked the DOTD representatives for regular updates.
2. Highway 30 project update by Mr. Brown:
 - Currently in the Environmental Phase.
 - Mr. Raiford inquired about the section of La. Hwy. 30 Brightside to Gourrier and its timeline. Joe Brown indicated plans for clearing and grubbing should be approved in 6 months.
 - When will all of La. Highway 30 environmental work be complete? Mr. Brown indicated they do not know what kind of environmental document they will need/require. Mr. Raiford indicated he wanted to know if any fee would be needed from the Parish of EBR for the La. Highway 30 project.
 - Mr. Helms inquired about a timeline for a traffic study for La. Highway 30 and Mr. Brown said 8 months from NTP to completion of the study.

Mr. Vaught then gave a brief update on the MRB project and stated that field investigations on south bridge environmental assessments will be complete over the next 4 months and public meetings will be scheduled by the end of the year and said these investigations will help determine the best/final alternative and this should be decided upon in the First Quarter of 2025.

Mr. Helms inquired about the start of the NEPA clock and Mr. Vaught said FHWA indicated that the NEPA clock has not started but anticipated that it would start over the next few months.

Mr. Helms then inquired about the Public Relations RFP and Mr. Campbell indicated that no responses/bids were received on the RFP. This will be addressed as an agenda item for the next quarterly meeting of the District.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments. He reminded all in attendance that the **Capital Area Road and Bridge District (CARB-D)** does not make any decision about the actual location of the site where the Bridge would make its crossing. He reminded all that the CARB-D was created as a Taxing District, and the entities involved in the site selection process were the DOTD, and their Contract Consultant, Atlas Technical.

Campbell asked if there was any opposition to any of the proposed crossings other than **Location E-11-(IV)**. There were none. Therefore, Public Comments were received only on **Location E-11-(IV)**, as follows:

Not Speaking in Opposition to Location E-11-(IV) were:

Kirk Bailey; Helen Causey; Robert Causey; Julie LeBlanc; Catherine Mills; and Charlotte Thibodeaux

Speaking in **Opposition to Location E-11-(IV)** were:

Millie Bailey; Cliff Comeau; Laura Comeau; Mary Elmassian; Lydia Haydel; and Philip LeBlanc

Opposition views covered such areas as the impact on drainage and the Cypress Forest and its 300–400-year-old trees being removed or damaged, the social and cultural issues, the natural carbon sequestration and storm buffers created by the Cypress Forest, the natural habitat for honeybees of the Cypress Forest, and wetland quality. Complaints were expressed about the impact on the residents of Plaquemine Point, and the wildlife. Several wanted this location removed prior to the NEPA process completion. All residents expressed concerns about certain questions not being answered, and they wanted the filed documents modified to include info provided by several people expressing opposition to this site location. All landowners wanted to receive notice of any and all meetings of the public. Again, it was noted that such Cypress trees are allegedly protected by state laws.

Scott Kirkpatrick, representing **CRISIS, (Capital Region Industry for Sustainable Infrastructure Solutions)** stated that his organization has been engaged in infrastructure improvements since 2016 and that the La. Hwy 415 and the La. Hwy 30 were to receive major improvements in the region's corridor which would greatly enhance vehicle mobility in the area.

Secretary Donohue (DOTD) then clarified the difference and the distinction between a “Public Meeting” and a “Public Hearing”. Before any final decisions would be made about the site selection, several “Public Meetings” would be held. Also, a “Public Hearing” would be held where testimony will be received from Landowners and other Stakeholders affected by the site selection for the Bridge location and crossing.

ADJOURNMENT: Chairman Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was offered by Mr. Raiford.

Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 3:03 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

President Chris Daigle, Iberville Parish

Attest:

J.H. Campbell, Jr. Chairman of CARB-D