

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 p.m., September 25, 2023

Location: Iberville Parish Court House, Plaquemine, La.
Iberville Parish Council Meeting Room

Members Present: Chairman, Mr. J. H. Campbell, Jr., Governor's Appointee
Mr. Daniel Helms (representing President Clint Cointment) Ascension Parish
Parish President Riley Berthelot, West Baton Rouge Parish
Dr. Erik Kalivoda, (Secretary, DOTD)
Parish President Mitchell Ourso, Iberville Parish
Mr. Fred Raiford (representing President Broome) EBR Parish

Member Absent: Parish President Layton Ricks, Livingston Parish

❖ Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. He thanked all of the local elected officials for hosting this meeting of CARB-D in their very nice facilities.

Minutes:

Minutes from the June 26, 2023 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Berthelot and seconded by Raiford.

Next on the Agenda, was the update on the progress being made by DOTD and Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC., since the last meeting on the Bridge project, and its identified tasks and timelines:

- A. Introduction of Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- B. Comments from Representative(s) of Atlas Technical Consultants, LLC.
- C. Other Bridge Project updates from attending representatives of DOTD.
- D. Comparison of Timelines and Tasks to actual performance by Atlas.
- E. Report on amount of funds expended/disbursed by DOTD to Atlas.

Reports available at www.mrbsouth.com

Ms. Kara Moree (representing Atlas) and Mr. Paul Vaught (representing the Department of Transportation and Development- DOTD) provided an update and report on the project. They provided a formal presentation to the attendees and members of the public present. Ms. Moree reviewed the project team, project objectives, and project workflow. Ms. Moree announced that the “Environmental Evaluation” completion date was pushed back to the Late Fall or early Winter of 2024. She stated that slight modifications to the corridors for the three possible locations, currently under consideration, have been made. She indicated that Public Meetings would probably be held in April of 2024 to comply with the NEPA process requirements.

After the presentation, President Berthelot inquired about the delay in the environmental evaluation timeline and Mrs. Moree responded that the delay was due to the complexity of getting the contract finalized. However, she stated that the preferred alternative should be decided around the early summer of 2024.

President Ourso inquired about the field work and Mrs. Moree indicated that the Consultant teams are securing and receiving approved landowner letters already. Geotech’s boring approvals will be more involved. Landowners will be contacted by representatives from Atlas and DOTD on the matter.

Mr. Helms had questions about any studies performed on Louisiana Hwy. LA- 1. Mr. Vaught indicated that the traffic study will be reviewing impacts to Louisiana Hwy. LA- 1.

Dr. Kalivoda inquired about the status of the toll study and was informed that March of 2024 was the anticipated due date.

Mr. Campbell then moved to some administrative matters on the agenda. He asked for a motion ratifying the payment made to Roedel Parsons (the designated Law Firm for the CARB-D) for their work in preparing and providing a detailed memorandum on the need for a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure the services of a Public Relations or Communications Firm for CARB-D. Mr. Berthelot made the motion to ratify the payment of approximately \$2,000 and Dr. Kalivoda seconded said motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the actual preparation of an RFP. Mr. Helms asked if CARB-D should wait on the preparation of an RFP until the new administration is in place. A discussion occurred where it was fully explained that the preparation of the RFP should take place as soon as possible, and that Proposals should be secured likewise. The District, even with new Commissioners in place after January of 2024 could then review the Proposals and make whatever decision they desire about proceeding or not with the Proposals received.

After the discussion, Mr. Ourso made a motion to have the RFP prepared by legal counsel using the document entitled “Regional Transportation Communication Project Scope dated August 25, 2023” as a guide. Said motion was seconded by Berthelot, and passed without any opposition.

Next, Mr. Campbell sought the approval to actually issue or promulgate the prepared RFP and secure the actual proposals with the understanding that the Proposals received will be fully reviewed by the Commissioners of CARB-D after the new year (2024). Mr. Raiford made the motion and Kalivoda seconded, and said motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments. The following individuals were recognized and permitted to speak.

Mrs. Helen Causey (St. Gabriel) indicating her concern for family property containing a Cypress forest on her land. She expressed opposition to Location E-11 (IV)

Mrs. Laura Comeaux urged the protection of the family Cypress forest and opposed E-11 (IV)

Mr. Cliff Comeaux also urged the protection of the Family Cypress forest and opposed E-11(IV). However, he stated that he supported the other two potential sites farther south which have no impact on the environment.

Dr. Benton Dupont opposed the selection of Plaquemine Point and Cypress Point indicated by E-11(IV)

Ms. Lydia Haydel commented on her opposition to site identified as E-11(IV), and referenced the La. Revised Statutes.

Ms. Julia Hebert commented on her opposition to E-11(IV) and her support of the site identified as F-13-IV

Mr. Phillip Leblanc opposed site E-11-(IV). He wanted Oak Grove Forest and its trees preserved, including Cypress and Plaquemine Point.

Mr. Steve Smith expressed his concerns on how vehicles will access the new bridge on the west side of the Mississippi River and what type of traffic problems will be created in the city of Plaquemine.

Mr. Harvey Starnes with the La. Purchase Cypress Legacy expressed opposition to E-11-(IV)

Ms. Hill opposed E-11 (IV).

Chairman Campbell then asked Ms. Moree and Mr. Vaught to further explain the concern from the public about how can a final site be selected if the environmental assessment is not fully completed until after said selection. Ms. Moree and Mr. Vaught clarified the decision timeline to reflect the fact that the environmental assessment will be fully completed by the consultant

team before the final selection of a site is made. In other words, all environmental factors will be reviewed and included in the ultimate selection of the chosen site and path for the new bridge.

Ms. Moree further explained the process of making the final decision on the preferred alternative as it relates to the completion of the environmental evaluation. Once a preferred alignment is chosen then another round of public hearings are conducted and additional engagement with the federal government authorities to receive and achieve proper and timely approvals.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the expected traffic through Plaquemine and Mrs. Moree indicated traffic impacts through Plaquemine have been studied and no significant impact was expected.

Mr. Raiford then commented on the progress being made on the La. Highway 30 expansion in EBR Parish, and Dr. Kalivoda commented on the need to upgrade La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 30, hopefully to expressway specifications.

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

Without objection, the meeting was deemed adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

Riley Berthelot, President of West Baton Rouge Parish

Attest:

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