

Capital Area Road and Bridge District Meeting Minutes

Time/Date: 2:00 p.m., December 11, 2023

Location: Louisiana State Capital
Senate Committee Room "E"

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)
Mr. Hank Grace (representing 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.

Minutes:

Minutes from the September 25, 2023 Meeting were approved, on motion made by Raiford and seconded by Grace.

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 and Ms. Maria Reed (representing Atlas) provided an update and report on the continuing field work on the bridge 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. She highlighted the benefits of a new river crossing and the screening methodology used to date. She identified those tasks involved in Phase or Part II which were completed and those in progress. Visual presentations of the hydrologic and hydraulic modeling were explained, as well as the bathymetric survey. The NEPA tasks were listed and discussed with the Commissioners.

Ms. Moree reminded all attendees that the “Environmental Evaluation” completion date was pushed back to the Late Fall or early Winter of 2024. Mr. Raiford inquired about public meetings and was told that late Spring of 2024 was when they should occur to comply with the NEPA process requirements.

Mr. Campbell inquired about the purpose of the bathymetric study and was told that the study was meant to assist in the understanding of potential bridge design and navigation channels.

Sec. Kalivoda inquired on the expected date for the completion of the intermediate toll study and was told Early Spring of 2024.

Mr. Helms inquired about the potential of tolling and was told that the contemplated MRB was very distinguishable from the Calcasieu I-10 Bridge in that the planned MRB is a new facility, and it is not on an interstate system. Mr. Helms suggested that the consultants contact the trucking industry representatives to secure their support with better understanding and communications in advance. Mr. Helms then inquired about Plaquemine Point impacts and was told there could be a NEPA derived alternative that comes forth. All impacts are being considered for each alternative. It is expected that much of the roadway across any environmentally sensitive areas will be elevated.

After inquiring, Mr. Grace was told that the NEPA process would start within 4-6 weeks. Mrs. Moree indicated the work on each alternative was being done concurrently.

Dr. Kalivoda stated that the Plaquemines ferry would close once the new bridge opens.

Campbell then moved to New Business.

Campbell sought approval and ratification of the payment of the invoice payable to Roedel Parsons (the designated Law Firm for the CARB-D) for their work in preparing and providing a detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) and the publishing of said RFP to secure the bids and quotes to provide services as a Public Relations or Communications Firm for CARB-D. President Berthelot made the motion to approve and ratify the payment of approximately \$2,500 and Mr. Grace seconded said motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Campbell thanked President Ourso (Iberville Parish) and President Berthelot (West Baton Rouge Parish) for their faithful leadership and service on the Bridge District, and to their respective parishes as Parish Presidents. Campbell then thanked Secretary Kalivoda for his leadership and service to the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and to the Bridge District.

Mr. Campbell then recognized President-Elect Jason Manola of West Baton Rouge Parish and President-Elect Chris Daigle of Iberville Parish, both of whom were in attendance at this meeting. Each will be serving as Commissioners of the Bridge District, effective with their being sworn in as the President of their parish.

Then, Campbell recognized Mr. Jimmy Gilbert and Mr. Brandon Browning who were representing President-Elect Randy Delatte, of Livingston Parish, who were also in attendance at this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Chairman Campbell called for public comments. 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:

Dr. Errol Douglas Bordelon expressed his opposition to the crossing of his property in Plaquemine Pont.

Mr. Charles Carpenter expressed his opposition to the crossing as a resident of Plaquemine Point, and concerns over the impact on wild life and to residents.

Mr. Robert Causey expressed his opposition to the crossing as a resident of Plaquemine Point, and due to the cypress tree forest.

Mr. Cliff Comeaux also urged the protection of the Family Cypress forest and opposed this crossing. He indicated that he personally hunts in the area of the crossing, and enjoys the recreational uses of the area which he indicates has over 100 animal species, and over 100 plant varieties. He also inquired about the scheduling of the planned stakeholder meetings.

Mrs. Laura Comeaux urged the protection of the family Cypress forest and this crossing. She stated that Plaquemine point was a historic neighborhood founded in the late 1700's. She quoted an article by Jason Theriot. She shared a copy of a letter from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to the DOTD, referencing potential harm to the ecology and irreparable damages. She repeated he family ownership of 150 acres of cypress forest land and trees, which are precious in her view.

Travis Dickerson opposed the site, but did not speak.

Anne LeBlanc Dorgant opposed the site, but did not speak.

Estelle Hill opposed the site, but did not speak.

Gene Mills opposed the site, and any site which could affect Plaquemine Point. As a 25 year resident, he questioned the funding for the Bridge and the District. His misunderstanding about the amount of funds spent by the Bridge District since its inception was corrected for the record by Chairman Campbell.

The following members of the public presented cards in opposition to Location E-11-(IV), but chose not to speak, namely: **Mr. Jason Avant; Mr. Kirk Baily; Ms. Millie Bailey; Mr. Gregory Beckstrom; Dr. Benton Dupont; and Ms. Carolyn Dupont.**

Dr. Kalivoda and Mr. Campbell both highlighted the future need for the rehabilitation of the Horace Wilkinson Bridge within the next 10-12 years.

President Berthelot then thanked Mr. Campbell for his service, and he encouraged and suggested that Mr. Campbell be retained as the Chairman of the Bridge District by Governor-Elect Landry.

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 3:30 p.m.

Secretary of CARB-D

Attest:

, Chairman of CARB-D