

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF
WHITE LAKE PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Thursday, May 28, 2009

Chairman Armond Schwing opened the White Lake Property Advisory Board meeting held at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in Gueydan, LA and asked Ms. Lana Guidry to call the roll. The following members were present:

Armond Schwing
Charles Toups
Steve Linscombe
Sean Gayle
Karl Connor
R. Martin Guidry
Larry Thomas
Guy Boudreaux
Miriam Davey
Eddie Lyons

The following members were absent:

Brandan Duhon
Lloyd Suire
Sherman Wilson

Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2009 Meeting

Chairman Schwing called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the April 8, 2009 meeting. Mr. Sean Gayle requested amending the minutes as follows: change the word "doesn't" to "does" on page 3, paragraph 2, line 12 and change the spelling of "Vermillion" to "Vermilion" on page 5, paragraph 5, line 4. Mr. Marty Guidry moved to accept the minutes with Mr. Gayle's amendments and Mr. Toups seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Department Financial Report

Ms. Wynnette Kees presented the board members with a financial report as of May 21, 2009. Ms. Kees reported that the \$250,000 requested by the Board to be held for the education facility and birding trail is listed under major repairs and has not been spent and will be there next year to be spent on those projects. Ms. Kees was asked why the Interagency Transfers (insurance) had increased significantly from the prior years and she

reported she would check into this matter and report her findings back to the Board at its next meeting.

Mr. Sweeney informed the Board that he has sent out rental notices on the agricultural leases. He stated he has not received any of the monies for the first payment for the first half of the year in March because the lessees are waiting to get their government subsidy payments and their crop insurance payments for preventative planting. Mr. Sweeney reported it does not look like they will be planting rice because of the saltwater intrusion on the property, but he does expect the agricultural rentals will be paid. Mr. Sweeney stated there is a new tenant who leased the property to the east of the Florence Canal. Mr. Sweeney said the man is one of the owners of Louisiana Crane and believes he will be an excellent tenant. Mr. Sweeney reported the new lessee bid \$50,500 on that lease and the lease is for five years and the lessee will have three (3) five year options to renew. Mr. Sweeney believes there will be some improvements made to that property. Mr. Sweeney said we had been receiving \$22,000 from the prior lessee, so this is a significant increase to the budget.

Introduction of New Board Member

Mr. Larry Thomas introduced himself to the Board and said he represents BP and that he has heard a lot about White Lake and is pleased to be able to attend. Mr. Thomas said he has been with BP for almost ten years. Mr. Thomas stated he is originally from South Carolina and attended the University of South Carolina. He spent 11 years of active duty in the Navy and 14 years in the Reserve and just recently retired from the Navy Reserve. Mr. Thomas spent five years with the City of Jacksonville in Florida as a Communications Director and that he joined BP in 2000 and had been working offshore Gulf of Mexico in shipping in a position as Executive Assistant to one of the Vice Presidents. He said he recently joined BP's GPA Division as the General Manager for the Gulf Coast and Gulf of Mexico, which includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas.

Discussion of the Responsibilities of the White Lake Property Advisory Board Individual Officers

Chairman Schwing reported to the Board that the responsibilities of the individuals holding those offices are outlined in the Bylaws and is not real difficult to understand. Chairman Schwing stated he does not feel he needs to go over those in particular, but wanted everyone to know where they were so the individuals holding those respective offices could refer to that document to know what they are supposed to do and everyone else would know too. Chairman Schwing stated the only thing he wanted to point out is the duties of the Treasurer, due to the nature of the way the funds and the budget are set up for this entity that everything goes through the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and he believes is pretty difficult to maintain an accounting of all of the funds because they are not intimately involved with those decisions or with the expenditures that take place on a day to day basis, so he wanted to point out that those duties say "with the assistance of department staff". Chairman Schwing said that in the past, the Board has

pretty much relied on department staff to give that report and with the Board asking good questions like they did today, he thinks they pretty much have that oversight covered.

Discussion of the Responsibilities of Committees Within the White Lake Property Advisory Board

Chairman Schwing reported the Bylaws set up four separate committees that are to be standing committees and three meetings ago the Board made assignments to those committees. Those committees are: Natural Resources Committee, Agricultural Committee, Education and Outreach Committee, and the Finance Committee. Chairman Schwing stated he would like to see these committees meet individually at whatever times are convenient for the members and then report back to the Board if they have any suggestions or actions taken with respect to that subject. He reminded the Board that all committees must comply with the Open Meetings Law, which means the agenda must be advertised and the meeting must be open to the public. Dr. Linscombe reported the Education and Outreach Committee has done quite a bit and that is where the Board evolved to getting the Master Plan that was prepared by Dr. Bruce Sharky. Dr. Linscombe informed the members that the Agriculture Committee was very active a few years ago after Hurricane Rita. He stated they met with the farmers because of the inability to plant rice due to saltwater intrusion and economic conditions, and came back and recommended to the Department to reduce the rent on the leases for that one year. Dr. Linscombe reported that the Natural Resources Committee did an excellent job a few years ago in obtaining additional funding, approximately \$60,000, from a mineral lease.

Reassignment of Committees

Chairman Schwing appointed Mr. Gayle as Chairman of the Finance Committee since he now serves as Treasurer for the Board. Chairman Schwing asked all members to think about which committee they would like to serve and let him know. He stated it is within the authority of the Chairman to appoint members to those committees. Chairman Schwing stated that if you are already on a committee you will remain on that committee. Chairman Schwing appointed Dr. Steve Linscombe to serve as Chairman for the Agriculture Committee, Ms. Miriam Davey to serve as Chairlady for the Education and Outreach Committee. Mr. Brandan Duhon will remain Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee. Dr. Eddie Lyons proposed a topic for another committee. He stated he would like a research committee be formed, in terms of the research that may possibly be done on the property in conjunction with wildlife, fisheries, agriculture, and whatever else the Board may deem pertinent information they would like to find out. Dr. Lyons stated this is such a large property and makes for a good study area. Ms. Davey stated she likes this idea, especially with the ongoing whooping crane research. Mr. Gayle stated he thinks this could fall under the Education and Outreach Committee and Mr. Toups said he agrees with Mr. Gayle with this topic falling under education and outreach at this time. Dr. Linscombe stated he thinks the idea of a research committee is a good one and said they had a meeting recently with some of the Commission members of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, as well as Dr. Martin, who is the Chancellor of LSU, and some others about expanding the capacity to conduct research on

this area. Dr. Linscombe stated the big issue you have is funding when bringing people in unless they provide their own funding, but that Wayne has bent over backwards to accommodate people and he thinks this is a very appropriate area to form another committee. Mr. Guy Boudreaux moved to establish a Research Committee and Ms. Davey seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition. Chairman Schwing requested that Dr. Lyons email him what expectations he has for this committee. As outlined in the By-laws, Chairman Schwing will serve as ex-officio member of each committee.

Discussion of Scheduling Meetings

Chairman Schwing reported the consensus that the Board should meet approximately three times a year and he feels this allows enough time to take care of necessary business and gives time in between for the individual committees to meet. He stated it has been suggested that one meeting be held annually at White Lake, one meeting be held annually at the LSU Ag Center Rice Research Station in Rayne, LA and one meeting be held annually at the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in Baton Rouge, LA. Chairman Schwing stated that the meeting to be held in Baton Rouge should take place during June while the Legislature is in session in the event someone in attendance should have to leave to get to the Capital. Mr. Toups recommended having the meeting at White Lake take place in the fall. Mr. Sweeney stated that as long as the meeting takes place prior to October 20 it will not interfere with the hunting season at White Lake. Dr. Linscombe recommended to the Chairman that he schedule all three meetings in advance so that the members can block those dates on their schedules.

Update on Letter to Ethics Board Requesting Formal Ethics Opinion

Ms. Guidry reported that on April 29, 2009 Mr. Puckett submitted a letter to the Board of Ethics requesting a formal opinion on behalf of Mr. Boudreaux and Mr. Suire, as requested at the April 8, 2009 meeting. She stated that as of this date, the Board of Ethics has not yet responded to the request. Ms. Guidry said that once Mr. Puckett receives notification from the Board of Ethics, they will notify Mr. Boudreaux and Mr. Suire.

Update on Proposed Birding Trail

Mr. Sweeney reported to the Board that work was started a few weeks ago on the birding trail. Mr. Sweeney stated they began bush hogging some trails and they also have a dozer and are in the process of finding a disc so they can disc up the trails and then crown them. Mr. Sweeney said once that is completed, they are going to try to begin work on a parking lot. Mr. Sweeney reported they would like to build approximately a half acre parking lot. Mr. Sweeney stated that once the parking lot is completed, they are probably going to build a covered area with some picnic tables. Mr. Sweeney said he hopes to have this project completed before the waterfowl season begins so it may open up in the spring. Dr. Linscombe told Mr. Sweeney he may be able to help him out in obtaining a disc. Ms. Davey informed the members that once the birding trail is up and going, it is conceivable that they can join the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, which in turn will get

White Lake listed and that it goes out nationwide. Ms. Davey stated this is research oriented as well. Mr. Gayle stated that many people have contacted the Town of Gueydan inquiring when the birding trail will be up and running and they have stated they heard about this from different birding groups. Mr. Toups said that at some point they need to have some discussions about advertising this in some of the local papers, or at least sending out a press release, because he has had some questions regarding the birding trail also.

Mr. Bob Love reported to the Board of the possibility of bringing whooping cranes back to White Lake and that the Department is committed to doing this. Mr. Love said that we may be able to obtain two display whooping cranes. Mr. Love stated the area required to build a display facility for the two whooping cranes will need to be approximately 150 yards by 150 yards and the cost is approximately \$500,000. Mr. Love said the purpose of these two birds is promotion and public acceptance of the concept of re-introducing whooping cranes back to southwest Louisiana marsh and rice country. Mr. Love stated the birds must have their own lagoon with an amphitheater, which is suggested to be set low enough to allow people to view them at eye level. It has been suggested that the popularity of such a facility may bring many and constant visitors to the property. Mr. Love stated these will not be the first whooping cranes in Louisiana, as there are some available for public viewing in the New Orleans Audubon Zoo. Mr. Toups stated that with the size of the property and the space needed for this project, as long as it is put in an appropriate place, he doesn't see how it could be a negative thing. Mr. Gayle stated that he and Wayne had discussed this issue and one of the places is south of the proposed parking lot and he thinks it is far enough away from the birding trail to not interfere. Mr. Love stated that the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation is available for financial banking for this project. Mr. Connor stated this project introduces the property to folks who may not come to the property for the purpose to hunt. Mr. Connor said some of the White Lake tax credits were used to match some of the research funds for the whooping crane project. Dr. Linscombe moved to have the Board approve the Department to pursue this project and Mr. Guidry seconded the motion. Chairman Schwing opened the motion up for discussion. Ms. Davey stated that if you want to open this up to birders and have birders to respect the place and consider it a good birding spot, then keep the bricks and mortar footprints as small as possible; in other words, you do not want excess signage, big bus turnarounds, and no fancy air conditioned interpretative center because birders are like hunters except they are not shooting, they are using binoculars. Ms. Davey said she can envision doing something like this and having it be okay, but just do not go overboard. Chairman Schwing called for a vote on the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Other Business

There was discussion amongst the board members regarding activities on the property that are prohibited/permitted by board members and their immediate family members. It was requested by the members to Ms. Guidry that she send them via email the statutory definition of "immediate family".

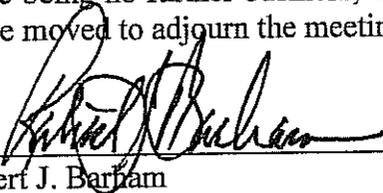
Chairman Schwing thanked Dr. Steve Linscombe for his services as Board Chairman and said he did a wonderful job and that the Board grew tremendously under his leadership. Chairman Schwing said he is glad to have Dr. Linscombe still serving on the Board so he can rely on him. Chairman Schwing stated Dr. Linscombe seems to know when he is in trouble and steps up before he is asked.

Public Comment

Mr. Randy Lanctot with the Louisiana Wildlife Federation addressed the Board and stated that one of the reasons they are sitting there is because the Louisiana Wildlife Federation pitched a fit when Governor Foster hatched up a deal for the State to acquire White Lake and it be managed by a private non-profit organization. Mr. Lanctot wanted to point out regarding the whooping crane discussion that people are covetous of those birds and by taking advantage of this offer by Mr. Archibald, he hopes this is not a piece of fish they are throwing on us and they are in fact serious about re-introducing whooping cranes here. Mr. Lanctot said we need to be cognizant of that possibility, as a zoo is not what we want, rather a re-introduction of the cranes both migratory and non-migratory is what he thinks is wanted. Mr. Lanctot said he hopes in regards to fishing that maybe sometime in the future, hopefully in the near future, they will be able to enhance unpaid public use and will do away with the permit system altogether. Mr. Lanctot said another issue he has is the overkill on restrictions of activities of the Board on this area. Mr. Lanctot said he thinks that it was Secretary Landreneau who did this and he cringed when he was doing that in front of the Commission and believes it is overkill.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Schwing asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Gayle moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Guidry.



Robert J. Barham

RJB:lg

(The preceding constitute minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting and are not a verbatim transcript of the proceedings.)