MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF

WHITE LAKE PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Chairman Steve Linscombe 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:

Steve Linscombe
Eddie Young
Brandan Duhon
Charles Toups
Sean Gayle
R. Martin Guidry
Armond Schwing
Miriam Davey

The following members were absent:

Karl Connor
Buddy Leach

Introduction of New Board Members

Mr. Brandan Duhon introduced himself and stated he was born and raised in Kaplan and currently lives north of Kaplan on a rice farm. Mr. Duhon said he graduated from ULL in Industrial Technology and is currently employed as a Service Representative with Smith Chemtech. Mr. Duhon stated he is married and has a 3 year old son. Mr. Duhon said he is an avid duck and goose hunter and looks forward to being associated with this Board.

Mr. Charles Toups introduced himself and stated he is from Erath and is a lifelong resident. Mr. Toups said he has a degree in Ag Education from ULL and works in all aspects of the oil and gas industry. Mr. Toups stated he is the Director and Environmental Compliance Coordinator for Coastal Chemical Company. Mr. Toups said he has 2 boys, Charles Rene and Lane, who are ages 11 and 7 years old.

Approval of Minutes of May 7, 2008 Meeting

Chairman Linscombe called for a motion for approval of the minutes of the May 7, 2008 meeting. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Sean Gayle and seconded by Mr. Duhon. The motion passed with no opposition.

Department Financial Report

The board members were presented with a financial report as of September 30, 2008. Mr. Sweeney informed the new board members that when BP donated the property in 2002, they granted everyone who had a hunting lease or agricultural lease on the property a 10-year lease and the State accepted those leases. Mr. Sweeney stated that most of the leases will be expiring in 2011 and 2012, so all of the leases we have are leases that have been on the property since 2002. Mr. Sweeney reported that most of these farmers have been on the property for many years, and some are third generation farmers. Mr. Sweeney explained we have 5 agricultural leases and 4 different individuals have those leases and he believes there are a total of about 20 hunting leases on the property; some of those leases are to some of our farmers. Mr. Sweeney reported that we have one lessee, Mr. Kirby Trahan, who has not paid his June rental, but Mr. Sweeney stated that he will probably pay his June rental when the second rental is due in November and will be paying it all at one time. Mr. Sweeney stated the other 4 leases we have are all paid up-to-date. Mr. Sweeney said he will be sending out rental notices within the next couple of weeks for the November agricultural rent. It was requested by Chairman Linscombe that Mr. Sweeney find out where the rental for the hunting leases was put into the White Lake Budget. Mr. Sweeney stated he would research this information and get with Ms. Kees to see exactly where the money was placed. Mr. Puckett informed the Board that whenever the hunting and agricultural leases expire, any new leases that take their places will all have to go out on public bid. Mr. Gayle inquired what exactly the Major Repair category is for and Mr. Sweeney explained that there is money in the budget for rebuilding wharfs or in the event a major levee repair is needed. Mr. Sweeney also stated it is for major repairs if needed. Chairman Linscombe inquired where in the budget is the $250,000 that the Board requested be earmarked. Chairman Linscombe requested that Mr. Sweeney find out where in the budget Ms. Kees placed this money.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee

There was no report from the Finance Committee.

Education and Outreach Committee

There was no report from the Education and Outreach Committee.

Natural Resources Committee

There was no report from the Natural Resources Committee.

Agriculture Committee

Mr. Sweeney addressed the Board and informed them there are farmers harvesting rice and there was a storm surge a couple of months ago. Mr. Sweeney stated that hopefully we will receive enough rain to flush out the salt and we will see more rice being planted next year.

Chairman Linscombe polled the board members to see which committees they would like to serve on. The results are as follows:

Finance

Charles Toups – Chairman
Armond Schwing
Eddie Young

Natural Resources

Brandan Duhon – Chairman
Armond Schwing
R. Martin Guidry
Sean Gayle
Miriam Davey

Education and Outreach

Sean Gayle – Chairman
R. Martin Guidry
Miriam Davey

Agriculture

Eddie Young – Chairman
Steve Linscombe
Brandan Duhon
Charles Toups

Mr. Puckett addressed the Board and informed them that at the next meeting held in the beginning of the next calendar there will be an election of four officers, which include Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. He informed the Board that there is a two term limit on the Chairman office, but there are no term limits on the other offices, and all of those offices will be up for election at that point. Mr. Puckett explained there is an election procedure which is part of the By-laws. Mr. Puckett requested to Ms. Guidry that she email the By-laws to all new board members.

Request for Use of White Lake Facility for Marsh Maneuvers Program

Chairman Linscombe explained to the new board members that the Marsh Maneuvers Program is a program that has been using the facility on the weekend of the break in the hunting season in December. Chairman Linscombe stated that this is a program where a number of young people are brought in and taken out in the mud boats into the blinds as if they are going on a non-lethal duck hunt and has been a very good use of the facility. Chairman Linscombe said it has been requested that the Board approve the use of the facility for this program again this year. Chairman Linscombe asked Mr. Sweeney if this has caused any problems for the facility and Mr. Sweeney reported that it has not and is a good program. Mr. Guidry moved that the Board approve the request and the motion was seconded by Mr. Eddie Young. The motion passed with no opposition.

Scheduling of Ethics Training

Ms. Guidry presented the Board with a copy of Executive Order BJ 08-01 and a copy of La. R.S. 42:1170 which requires all cabinet members and other officials appointed by the Governor to attend annual training and education on the Code of Governmental Ethics beginning in 2008. Ms. Guidry informed the Board that this mandatory training must be completed by December 31, 2008 or they will be requested to tender their resignation from the Board. Chairman Linscombe asked Ms. Guidry to send an email to all board members and request dates they are available to attend this training during the week of November 10-14, 2008.

Update on White Lake Hurricane Damage and Hunting Season

Mr. Sweeney addressed the Board and reported that during Hurricane Ike, the property did get a storm surge in the marsh that is hunted. He stated it was about a two foot storm surge which overtopped some of the levees on the Florence Canal and some of the levees west of the Florence Canal. Mr. Sweeney stated that the refuge area did not flood this year, although they did get about 6 – 8 inches of saltwater, which has been pumped out. Mr. Sweeney said that they have done some patchwork on some of the breaches in the levee. Mr. Sweeney reported there were a couple of minor leaks. Mr. Sweeney stated that he did not believe the hunting would be impacted any by the storm. Mr. Sweeney reported they did have to cancel the first week of teal season, which was a total of four lottery hunts that were canceled; he said they had nine hunts scheduled but were only able to have five hunts. Mr. Sweeney stated they received 370 applications for the teal lottery hunt with a total of five hunts and 60 participants. Mr. Sweeney reported for the youth hunt they received 161 applications and will have a total of 2 hunts with 16 participants. Mr. Sweeney said they just finished advertising for the marsh lottery hunt. He said they are in the process of drawing the winners now. Mr. Sweeney reported that they have a total of 8 marsh lottery hunts scheduled, which will accommodate 12 people for a total of 96 participants. Mr. Sweeney stated that there were a total of 591 applications received for the marsh lottery hunt. Mr. Sweeney reported for the rice field lottery hunt there is a total of 23 hunts scheduled to accommodate 207 participants. Mr. Sweeney reported the total number of applications received for the rice field lottery hunt

was 1,109. Mr. Sweeney stated there will be a total of 14 two-day group hunts granted for the 2008-2009 season. Mr. Sweeney reported these hunts are sold for $25,000 each and will generate $350,000 in gross revenue. Mr. Sweeney stated there were 65 applications submitted for the group hunts.

Mr. Young moved to add an agenda item to consider an increase in fees for waterfowl hunts. Mr. Armond Schwing seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Gayle moved to recommend to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to increase the group hunt rates from $25,000 to $30,000. Mr. Young seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Gayle moved to recommend to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to increase the rates of the lottery hunts as follows:

Increase the Teal lottery hunt rates from $200 to $250, with a maximum of 2 persons per blind.

Increase the Marsh lottery hunt rates from $300 to $350, with a maximum of 2 persons per blind.

Increase the Rice Field lottery hunt rates from $150 to $225, with a maximum of 3 persons per blind.

Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Mr. Sweeney presented the Board with a schedule of proposed dates for the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area 2009 Non-Consumptive Schedule. Mr. Sweeney stated these dates were along the same guidelines as those proposed last year; however, there were no takings on any of these non-consumptive dates last year. Mr. Sweeney reported that he is going to contact some birding groups in Lake Charles and Lafayette, and call Dr. Gay Gomez to possibly fill some of these spots with birding groups. There was much discussion amongst the board members regarding advertising of the use of White Lake for non-consumptive purposes.

Consideration of Proposed Rules and Regulations

Mr. Sweeney provided the Board with a copy of the proposed Rules and Regulations for the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area and asked if anyone had any questions, comments, or suggestions. There were no questions, comments, or suggestions. Mr. Young moved to accept the proposed Rules and Regulations for the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area and to recommend these Rules and Regulations to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. Mr. Guidry seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Discussion on Plans to Fund and Construct Visitor and Education Facilities

Mr. Gayle addressed the Board and stated he ran into problems while trying to solicit funding to various corporate entities regarding how they go about donations. Mr. Gayle stated he spoke to Mr. Kell McInnis with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation regarding how money and in-kind donations can be given and earmarked to the Foundation. Mr. Gayle stated there are other questions regarding what happens next as to whether you go out on bids for building a boat dock, etc. and how do we go about the construction of this project. Chairman Linscombe requested that Mr. Gayle prepare a list of questions and submit to Ms. Guidry, who will send the list to all board members for any comments or input they may have with a timeframe for their comments. Once Ms. Guidry receives all comments, she will submit this information back to Mr. Gayle who can then submit the questions to the Department.

Discussion of Highway 91 Wooden Bridge

Mr. Gayle addressed the Board and stated that there is a wooden bridge that goes across to the west side of the property, right next to the Florence Club and has been there for at least 60 years, and he thinks was developed by a couple of farmers and possibly the Police Jury. Mr. Gayle said the issue is with our tenants, Kersey and Kirby Trahan, having real problems crossing the bridge with a loaded rice fill truck. Mr. Gayle stated the bridge literally gives way. Mr. Gayle said that nobody wants to take responsibility for the bridge and that a new bridge is needed. It was noted by Chairman Linscombe that this is not a public bridge. Mr. Gayle stated that the bridge should be condemned now. Mr. Gayle moved to request that someone from the Department research the bridge that goes across the Florence Canal at the end of Highway 91 in terms of condemning or replacing it, as well as liability issues in the event that it collapses, because it affects the financial aspect of White Lake. Ms. Davey amended Mr. Gayle's motion to include that if the bridge is replaced, that it not be replaced by culvert. Mr. Young seconded the motion and the motion passed with no opposition.

Discuss Request for Site Visit by Governor Bobby Jindal, Senator Nick Gautreaux, Representative Jonathan Perry, Secretary Robert Barham, Secretary Scott Angelle, and the Secretaries from the Department of Economic Development

Mr. Gayle asked the Board, as a body, to request from the Department to ask for a site visit by the governor, the senator and representatives from the area, the secretaries from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Economic Development. Mr. Gayle would like for this group to come to the property together, if possible, to see the facility and what the opportunities are so they could understand the property and possibly see if there is any possibility if there are any grants available or availability for funding to assist in the development of the visitor's center. Mr. Young suggested adding the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Development to this group. Mr. Gayle moved to request that the Department put together this site visit by the governor, the senator and representatives from the area, the secretaries of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Department of Natural

Resources, Department of Economic Development and Department of Transportation and Development. The motion was seconded by Mr. Guidry and passed with no opposition.

Other Business

Ms. Davey requested to hear an update on the Whooping Crane Re-Introduction research project that is taking place partly on this property and partly on some other properties. Ms. Davey stated there was a representative present who was prepared to discuss this item with the Board. Chairman Linscombe recommended continuing with the meeting and having this presentation given to the Board.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The next regular Advisory Board meeting will be scheduled at a later date.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Linscombe asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Young moved to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Ms. Davey.

Robert J. Barham

RJB:lg

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