

SLIDELL AREA & NORTH SHORE

Flood Protection Meeting - June 30, 2011 6:30pm

Hosted by: Rep. Greg Cromer at the Dubisson Gallery, 300 Robert St. "Olde-Town"
<http://dubissongallery.com/Our-Location.php> phone: 985-649-0555

Ladies and Gentlemen:

State Representative Greg Cromer's office has finalized a public meeting featuring Tim Harper with OCPR (office of coastal protection & restoration), interested homeowners and GEC (Gulf Engineering Consultants / Stephen Ward).

Rep. Greg Cromer, Senator A. G. Crowe and other officials will be at the meeting. We also expect credentialed professionals living in our neighborhood active in flood control, environmental and forecasting to be in attendance.

PURPOSE of meeting:

- To disseminate what has been going on in the way of research & engineering in the pursuit of flood protection.
- To learn of our exposure to hurricane threat - is it better or worse since August 2005.
- To open a dialogue of what the public's expectations are and what can be done.
- To share ideas that may contribute to the effort.
- To hear from & meet the movers & shakers involved in this most grave of issues.
- To let our state know what our thoughts are.

GOAL of neighborhood civic groups:

Work towards documenting our current exposure and identify solutions so that any relevant projects can be presented by our elected officials for funding.

Synopsis of the last meeting of June 30, 2011:

This meeting, called by Rep. Greg Cromer, featured the status on the report by Stephen Ward of Gulf Engineering & Consultants. It was very well attended, not only by various support people from GEC but also by our past & current elected officials and their key personnel.

- Presentation:

The presentation centered around GEC's contract with the state concerning coastal protection & restoration. The resulting report will contain some refinement based on public comment but, by necessity of the contract, will center on the Geographic & Statistical overview of the North Shore as related to coastal restoration & our exposure to flood. Basically the report will identify our risks so that we will have some evidence to substantiate our request for protection projects.

- Public comment:

Public comment varied substantially from the presentation. The meeting confirmed that what the public expects is definitive flood protection. In the absence of an effective alternative, construction of a storm surge management system that would keep hurricane driven water out of Lake Pontchartrain to begin with is what the public expects. This was a unified response from a diverse audience of leaders and subject matter experts in the community with decades of experience.

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6-30-2011 Meeting follow up –

OBSERVATIONS of the Eden Isles Flood protection committee: www.eiho.org/fpc

- Our focus on the flood protection issue is to help identify and bring together the talent necessary to deploy a workable solution.
- To keep the issue before the public and our elected officials until projects are identified, funded and implemented.

The desired result is for us to have increased protection from exile due to devastating floods. In the environmental aspects of flood control, we think humans count and should receive priority recognition in the planning for their survival.

Although there is often massive loss of non-human life, nature has an incredible ability to recover from most anything that happens; hurricanes, forest fires, opening of the spillway, etc. People on the other hand are affected differently than the rest of nature because our current level of societal development mandates that everything we do be regulated by others.

While projects need to harmonize construction with the environment, Hurricane Katrina has somewhat changed the view on environmental concerns and officials are now recognizing this. Our state of the art of engineering today is capable of accomplishing the balance with nature. Just as flood control projects protect the lives & habitat of humans, likewise it helps to protect the lives of innocent creatures.

If we do not work together to preserve our existence, another Katrina like event may trigger a mass exodus never to return - an unnecessary human environmental disaster along with the collapse of economic support for area governments and business. The result would not only be a loss of our homes & businesses but an exodus of money, talent & trades that would impact the whole region.

In living on or near the water we recognize its benefits all the way down to the spiritual level. Through out time man and nature as a whole have gathered around water as a way of life. We do have the expertise and the maturity to manage our coexistence with nature.

The unresponsiveness of the Corps of Engineers makes it deadly obvious they have “written off” Slidell and the north shore as unworthy of protection. Not only have there been no flood control projects completed that would benefit our area since Hurricane Katrina but that projects completed elsewhere will increase our exposure.

We need to remember that the Corps of Engineers is a politically driven massive engineering firm under the direction of congress. They will do nothing without being politically motivated with funded projects.

It is fortunate that we still have the attention of our state legislators and that they have commissioned studies that will become “evidence” of our worthiness to exist. Even the Corps knows that eventually they will have to deal with the issue at some point unless we just allow ourselves to fall into a state of apathy.

It is felt the next logical step would be for the State of Louisiana to commission a study specifically identifying flood control structures for the management of storm driven surges entering Lake Pontchartrain that occur during the approach of hurricanes. This would help give us the credentialed evidence required to market a plan of action to our US Congress. Lack of action in the face of evidence is simply too much liability to ignore.

We need to aggressively work together in preserving our homes & businesses in time to prevent the next disaster. Just as we are now judging the inaction of our predecessors, so will we be judged by future generations.

Lee Longstreet
Eden Isles Homeowners Association,
- special projects committee