

Sewerage and Water Board Task Force

July 30, 2018 10:00am

New Orleans City Council Chambers

Roll Call:

Ramsey Green, Chair: Present

Councilmember Banks, Vice Chair: Present

S&WB, Jade Brown Russell: Present

Board of Liquidation, Poco Sloss: Present

La Engineering Society, David Gereighty: Absent

Business Council of New Orleans, Elisa Speranza: Present

New Orleans & Co, Cheryl Teamer: Arielle Desse serving as proxy

Ramsey Green: Task Force Chair welcomes members to the meeting, explains the charge of the Task Force and the report to be delivered in 6 months. Begins by delineating a few issues, including drainage as an overarching issue, as well as the 1992 CEA that delineates responsibilities between S&WB and Department of Public Works (DPW).

Councilmember Banks: Emphasizes the need to ensure body has all information ready to report back by the deadline, and the need to narrow the particular questions we are asking.

Jade Brown-Russell leads review of PowerPoint presentation (Attachment A)

Ramsey Green calls up Rep. Hilferty to discuss intent of House resolution.

Rep. Hilferty: Asks Task Force to look at the management structure of SWB. Most states have DPW doing what S&WB does. This unique structure has some issues involved in it. In the language we tried to say that we want the task force to look at the management structure of the entity. DPW and SWB has said they need to improve communication between departments. We have to have reliable water sewerage and drainage for the people of the city. The hope is whatever recommendations come from the Task Force can be looked at in the 2019 legislative cycle.

Question is raised regarding frequency of meeting, followed by some discussion. Group decides to meet every two weeks.

Question is raised regarding staffing. Currently pulling staffing from different areas, including the Mayor's Office, CAO's office and S&WB.

Question is raised regarding boundaries of research, including potential on-site tour of plant, as well as experts for historical context, including the 1992 CEA.

Councilmember Banks: Before we do anything we need to have an orientation on how all of these pieces fit together.

Jade Brown-Russell: When you read the House resolution, it focuses on the management of those systems. We need to ensure we don't miss the calling of the resolution.

Question is raised regarding body of research and background reading. Elisa Speranza points to existing reports and resources, including information on what other cities do.

Question is raised regarding setting of future meeting dates. August 6th is identified as next potential meeting date.

Elisa Speranza: Need to solicit voice of customers

Ramsey Green: Maybe host at least one meeting in the evening outside of chambers so that it's more accessible to the public?

Jade Brown-Russell: next meeting may be more focused on a general lay of the land, but we need to get to the point of what our recommendations will address. As we start unpacking it, it will be a lot. I just want to make sure we get to a point where we focus on the end product.

Ramsey Green volunteers to take on the '92 CEA and identify potential speakers to share background information.

Agenda for next meeting: Water system, drainage system, sewerage system and how they fit together. Research best practices from other places. 3rd party experts in the audience.

Task force members are asked to reach out to Monika with information related to speakers, reports or other informational resources.

Rep. Hilferty: The issue set forth is a complicated one and you have limited time. This resolution focuses specifically on management issues, per R.S. RS 33:4071 (Attachment B).

Ramsey Green: We should come up with a template for requesting information or testimony from folks.

Task force opens up for public comment.

Public comment

Lloyd Lazard, 3320 Delachaise St.

I'm here to represent communities that are not represented here. Drainage was created in 1896. SWB came into existence in 1999. Drainage, water, sewer, public works, administration – that's what the administration is dealing with. We are not looking at the chemicals in our water. Fluoride is a poison that we are using in the water. We need to analyze what is in our water. The government needs to take care of those five things.

Task force follows Mr. Lazard's comments with a motion to adjourn.