

Sewerage and Water Board Task Force
September 12, 2018 9:30am
Homeland Security 8th Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Roll Call:

Ramsey Green, Chair: Present

Councilmember Banks, Vice Chair: Present

S&WB, Ghassan Korban: Present

Board of Liquidation, Poco Sloss: Present

La Engineering Society, David Gereighty: Present

Business Council of New Orleans, Elisa Speranza: Nathan Lott serving as proxy

New Orleans & Co, Cheryl Teamer: Present

Move for approval of minutes by Cheryl Teamer, seconded by CM Banks, unanimous approval.

Ramsey Green, Chair provides time for Ghassan Korban to introduce himself

Ghassan Korban: Speaks on his intentions on the task force and at the S&WB as its new Executive Director.

Ramsey Green, Chair: Task force now has a website.

Asks that Sarah McLaughlin does a sign in sheet for the folks in the audience.

Videos and documents related to the Task Force can be posted to the website.

Councilmember Banks: Asks that it please be noted that this meeting was to have been in the Council Chambers, but was moved because of the closing of city hall during Tropical Storm Gordon.

Ramiro Diaz Urban water plan presentation

- Urban water plan is HUD funded, This was a resilience plan that came out of the state government
- Over the next 50 years approximately \$8 billion in damages is anticipated due to chronic flooding.
- One way to combat subsidence is to embrace surface water.
- Urban water plan scope is really about groundwater, not sea and river.
- If we slow the water and get it where it falls, hold it in the ground, we change the curve and the peak intensity of the runoff is managed.
- Marsh soil is where we really need to focus on for subsidence.
- Tougher project on the border between Orleans a Jefferson - creating a park that can hold water.
- If the entire plan was implemented it would significantly reduce flooding.

- Cost would be about \$6.2 billion, over time economic boost approximately \$20 billion.

Ramsey Green, Chair opens for questions.

Ghassan Korban: Is it fair to say that if everything that currently exists was running perfectly and you implemented this plan, you would essentially double the protection?

Ramiro Diaz: Rhetorically, yes. This is a renovation, it's not an entirely new plan.

Cheryl Teamer: I'm noticing the S&WB isn't listed as a partner. What is your relationship with them?

Ramiro Diaz: They were high level stakeholders and we worked with several of the engineers. The relationship was tense at first, but over time we built trust.

It is clarified that the model used in the 10 year storm accounted for the SELA project.

Ramsey Green, Chair: Can you speak to parks and what the bigger parks could be?

Ramiro Diaz: City Park is higher than the land around it. There's a tremendous amount of capacity for what City Park could hold. Audubon Park drains into the pumping system. There's a lot of opportunity at both parks. Tulane University has a huge amount of greenspace as well. Tulane is being aggressive about managing their own water right now. It would be ideal if the parks could hold on to their own water instead of draining into the city streets.

Ghassan Korban: A good bare minimum would be managing their own water.

Ramiro Diaz: The more we can keep the water from getting into the drainage system the better.

Ghassan Korban: Could neutral grounds contribute to this and hold some water?

Ramiro Diaz: Neutral ground does not have great capacity, but could at least hold the water that falls.

Councilmember Banks: Why were some canals covered and some left open?

Ramiro Diaz: Unsure. But open canals are more workable for us.

Nathan Watt: I think a lot of the canal covering coincided with the car as the main mode of transportation.

It is raised that there are numerous stakeholders at play. S&WB doesn't have oversight over a lot of these organizations. How do we get to the map with everything implemented while working with everyone?

Ramiro Diaz: We've had great sit downs with Jefferson parish folks. There's no regional body over everyone.

Cheryl Teamer: You studied several cities, can you give us some best practices on management?

Ramiro Diaz: Every city we look at, the notion that infrastructure is an investment and not just a cost - every project needs to have multiple benefits.

Ghassan Korban: It may seem unthinkable today, but I believe the only agency that can implement this is the S&WB.

Ramsey Green, Chair gives the floor to Tyler Antrup for a presentation.

Tyler Antrup: Water Utility Management Structure Options and Case Studies Presentation
This presentation is only informational and provides no analysis.
There is a range of 9 options and 7 Management structures.

Poco Sloss: Any idea what percentage relies on an elected body?

Tyler Antrup: It's common, but I don't have an exact number.

It is clarified that San Antonio's system does not include drainage.

Nathan Watt: The San Antonio Riverwalk is an excellent example of integrating water into a city.

***Ask that however storm water is handled is annotated within Tyler's presentation**

Poco Sloss: Is the Lafayette model high performing?

Tyler Antrup: There was an attempt to privatize and the public pushed back, so I believe the public is generally pleased with it.

Poco Sloss: At some point this group will have to sit down and discuss all of these possibilities.

Tyler Antrup: If there are models we know are definitely not going to work we can stop looking at those and focus on what we will do, that will allow us to zone in on certain ones. The next meeting objective is to continue to refine the options.

Nathan Watt: With each possibility - are there precedence and reasons to believe that this actually will work. I'm interested in seeing how each of these affect bond ratings or access to capital.

Ramsey Green, Chair: We don't need to say "This is what it should be." at the end of this task force we can say "Here are options to explore."

This group provides recommendations and the rest is up to the legislature.

Poco Sloss: Soliciting input from the S&WB on what are the problems we have now would be useful.

Ghassan Korban: As we move forward we should weed out what options don't apply to the uniqueness of the S&WB.

Poco Sloss: The City Council sets the rates and provides the revenue

Public Comment:

Lloyd Lazard, 3320 Delachaise St.:

The sewer was the problem at one time and yet drainage was the problem at one time. When we get to the creation of the S&WB it was to create sewer. Because we have a clay foundation here we need to deal with water retention. Parking lots should be porous. Water is being pushed away from us rather than being retained. We need to look at sanitation. Another aspect is water. Nobody owns the Mississippi River. The River belongs to all of us. That is a problem at S&WB, that they believe the river belongs to them.

Rep. Stephanie Hilferty:

What we are looking for is best procedures for the management of S&WB.

Meeting will be next week Tuesday, September 18 at the S&WB Board Room 625 St. Joseph St.

Poco Sloss motions for adjournment, Councilmember Banks seconds, unanimous passing.

Meeting adjourned.