

AMERICAN RESCUE TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Task Force Meeting 5 Minutes- Thursday December 2, 2021 at the General Government Building, 200 Derbigny St., Gretna, LA —9:00 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance

Mike Quigley
Francisco Christian
Bob Evans Jr.
Brian Grenrood
John Litchfield
Jim Martin
Oscar Pipkins
Jim Young
Steve LaChute
Victor LaRocca
Brett Lawson
Ruth Lawson
Pamela Watson
Jerry Bologna

Committee Members Absent

Todd Murphy
Angela Callais

Seeing that there was a quorum of task force members, Chairman Mike Quigley called the meeting to order:

1. Approval of Minutes:

Task Force Meeting 4 minutes were forwarded to the members. Seeing no additions or corrections, motion was made by Brian Grenrood and seconded by Francisco Christian to approve the minutes. The Committee unanimously approved the minutes.

2. Presentations:

Councilman Templet and Bonano had conflicts and will be rescheduled in a subsequent meeting.

Councilman Byron Lee — Councilman Lee advised the task force that he wanted to emphasize infrastructure and economic development.

- In the Jesse Owens Playground area there is a need for new single family housing. Many blighted apartments have either been torn down or scheduled to be demolished. The infrastructure needs to be rebuilt to accommodate this new housing.
- The Avondale/Waggaman area is devoid of commerce..... a food desert. Residents have no options in regard to banking, dry cleaners and other needed commerce. The Councilman has been working with Rouse's and Labeyries to bring a supermarket to the area since Winn Dixie closed. The area needs an anchor with accessory commerce attached.
- The Marrero Acres Housing Development is an area of focus. There is a redevelopment plan to build townhouses with a mixed-use component. There will be a Section 3 component to incentivize ownership.
- The South New Orleans area can be a catalyst for housing development due to its proximity to the commerce hub, Manhattan Blvd. Presently it is an area with open ditches and potholed streets. 11th street has been upgraded replete with new sidewalks as a catalyst to spur development of the overall area. Continued investment in infrastructure will incentivize investors to develop this prime area.
- A master plan is currently underway to explore ways for Jefferson Parish to take advantage of the superstructure port in St. Charles Parish. The plan is to try to devise a way via rail to connect the port to the Churchill area of Avondale.

Councilman Marion Edwards—thanked the task force for its important work and efforts.

- The Grand Isle, Lower Lafitte and Barataria areas have been greatly affected by Hurricane Ida. It is incumbent upon the Parish to find funds to restore these areas to give residents some semblance of normality. A particular problem are the waterways. They are strewn with debris and present a hazard for navigating these waters, impeding commerce and normal traffic.
- Councilman Edwards serves three municipalities in his district and we need to consider their infrastructure as a great deal of needed repair work has been ignored for many years.
- The footprint of the GGB, especially the EOC needs to be expanded. The new normal is going to be more severe weather on a yearly basis. We need to be prepared and move some of our assets closer to central command.
- Councilman Edwards agrees with the administrations stated need for a health department. We should look for grants and not necessarily use the ARF to initiate this.

Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant — The City Gretna ARF allocation is \$6.5million. With apologies to Mayor Tim Kerner, she didn't want her presentation to take away anything from Lafitte. This is one time funding, a great opportunity and is hoping the Parish will be willing to share. Gretna is the capital city of Jefferson Parish. Gretna is already land banking.

- Gretna has the best view of the skyline of New Orleans. The further development of the batture land will be a game changer for the West Bank. It will be a great place for the ferry terminal. Water taxis are here and will be an asset to open up the West Bank. It is best positioned to serve as the ferry terminal, better than Algiers Point. This will complement the existing amphitheater.
- Gretna is fortunate to have the only BMX bike track in the greater New Orleans area. The closest one in Louisiana is in Monroe. It is a USABMX sanctioned track and has already hosted two major races

with an assist from JEDCO and the New Orleans Sports Foundation. Gretna wants to take the track up to the next level by installing a roof covering over the track. This will protect the track from the elements and keep it in major race quality. They are seeking \$1 million to purchase and install the roof.

- Gretna will be concentrating on improvements to the 4th Street Extension and 5th Street.
- Mayor Constant advised the task force to be cognizant of the Treasury Guidelines for the AFR. It is best to check 4-5 items off the box.

Town of Lafitte Mayor Tim Kerner, Jr.-- Lafitte is receiving \$600 K in ARF. He emphasized he is a team player, has fought for and helped fund Barataria, Lower Lafitte and Crown Point, not in his jurisdiction but in unincorporated Jefferson Parish. He cited as examples facilitating COVID Shots, fighting for \$47million in levees for unincorporated areas and \$1.9 million in recovery funds. The people in his town and in the surrounding areas are “on their backs.”

- With the building of the levees, it makes the now protected areas a bowl and the water cannot get out. This situation has created a significant need for interior drainage. He has a shovel ready drainage project he just needs funding. It will also help drain the unincorporated areas. He is requesting any increment of funding to allow the Town to start laying pipe and move forward with the project.
- Under construction is the Louisiana Wetlands Education Center. The Mayor wants to add as part of the Center a Park. He visualizes this park being able to host a Save the Coast Festival that will rival or exceed Seafood Festival. He promised all proceeds will go toward mitigating coastal erosion. He stated that over 40 years ago, Lafitte rarely flooded, in comparison today where flooding is a constant event. He warned if something isn't done to save the coast, the upper sections of Jefferson may realize the same fate.

3. New business — Moved from the beginning of the meeting:

- Per our discussion at our last meeting in regard to Broadband, Veneeth Iyengar, Executive Director of Louisiana Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity “Connect La”, will address the task force. Annalisa Kelly of JEDCO helped us to set this up.
- The Chairman advised that he hopes the last presentations will be held at the December 16, 2021 meeting. Afterwards, we can begin our deliberations. Furthermore, he advised that he will be sending an email to the members with his recommendation on how we should evaluate and prioritize the projects that have come before us. The task force is providing a valuable service in vetting these projects.
 - Phil Rebowe commented on the need for getting budget estimates on the projects. The Chairman advised that the task force’s format of providing advice will be in the form of recommendations on projects/programs. The scope of work and cost estimates will be done by the administration and council. Many of the proposed projects are conceptual and detailed analysis is not feasible nor have they been undertaken.
- Meeting #6 to be held on Thursday December 16, 2021. It will be held in Room 405 at the Joseph S. Yenni Building.

4. Old Business - There was none.

5. Public Comments - There were none.

6. Meeting Adjourned: Motion was made by Oscar Pipkins and seconded by John Litchfield to adjourn the meeting. Motion was approved.