

## South Texas Waterways Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes

13:30, 15 July 2021

Meeting was held at the Ortiz Center

#### A. Call to order/opening remarks by chairman

At 1335 Chairman of STWAC, Xavier Valverde, called the meeting to order. A quorum was reached and noted that Bulk Terminals were not represented.

#### B. Administration

The April 15, 2021 meeting minutes were approved.

#### C. Coast Guard COTP Remarks

CAPT Hans C. Govertsen, U.S. Coast Guard Sector/ Air Station Corpus Christi Sector Commander, was introduced as the Captain of the Port.

#### D. Presentations

##### 1. PAWSA Mitigation Strategy brief and recommendations

- A summary of the Ad-hoc Committee meetings was provided. The Ad-Hoc Committee formed, reviewed recommendations per Captain of the Port (COTP), generated recommendations for the a full STWAC Committee vote, and will provide results to the COTP.
- The following are summaries of the Ad-Hoc Committee meeting and STWAC Committee discussions:
  - To reduce the impacts of loss of propulsion casualties by establishing an escort zone for deep draft vessels at Harbor Island and Ingleside, justifiable data is needed. Data did not support the need for an escort zone, however an event at MODA and changes to pilotage rules led to additional discussions with mixed viewpoints. The Ad-Hoc Committee voted to recommend for an escort zone to be established at Ingleside and to take no action for establishing an escort zone at Harbor Island.
  - To reduce probability of vessel allisions and collisions it is preferred to update Coast Pilot 5 instead of creating a transit reference guide for commercial users. The STWAC Committee could compile data needed to update Coast Pilot 5.
  - To enhance the ability of the waterway to safely manage traffic, one-way traffic is not supported by traffic volume of the Port at this time. If traffic significantly increases, this item should be revisited. One-way traffic windows already exist for weather events.

- To improve vessel maneuverability by establishing minimal trim requirements, the Ad-Hoc Committee developed two recommendations: Minimal trim requirements should be created, the requirements should be included in the Rules and Regulations Governing Pilots and Pilotage on the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. The following comments were made during discussion of this recommendation:
    - A minor increase in cost is incurred when vessels are trim by the stern.
    - Clarity made that “operational feasibility does not allow” means that vessel will not have to limit cargo to achieve a trim by the stern condition.
    - Clarity made that approval to transit on even keel was taken out of the proposed language.
  - Formal vote on recommendation will be made at this meeting and a formal letter submitted to the COTP with STWAC recommendations.
2. NOAA & Coast Pilot 5
- NOAA Products and Services presented. The end goal is to update chart data through developing communication processes/guidelines to keep pace with changes.
  - Specifics are helpful for updating Coast Pilot 5 and a high NOAA priority. Dr. Quentin Stubbs offered to meet with STWAC members to receive compiled data for chart updates. A six month lead time is requested by NOAA to make future changes.
  - The ASSIST Tool was presented as an online method for data management and record keeping to update chart data.
  - USACE provided information on channel surveys and availability of data via online tool.
3. 2021 Nominations
- To support nominations for upcoming STWAC positions, it is recommended that an Ad-Hoc Nomination Committee be formed. The following positions are open in Oct 2021:
    - STWAC Chairperson
    - Steering Group Member
    - Various Term Members
4. ACCP Ingleside Tug Escort Requirement
- In March 2021, a new policy was established to control vessel speed and provide a degree of extra safety in the Ingleside area. In April 2021, discussions began with internal consultants on more thorough policy to be brought to STWAC for consideration. The initial draft policy was presented to pilots and towing companies. The policy is scalable to match vessel size to provide emergency response capability and speed control.
  - The Port can support demand for tugs with escort notation. The Bollard Pull Rating requirements are based off tug availability within the Port.
  - Escort requirement matches posture within the Inner Harbor and applies to areas with newer facilities. The requirement benefits all users of the Port. The policy balances cost and safety to avoid incidents that could lead to a waterway closure. A “one port” mentality was taken when developing the policy.

- A comment was made that the escort policy should be viewed as a short-term solution and other solutions are available to protect docks in the Ingleside area. Examples include better mooring systems, barriers, or movement of the ship channel. The policy imposes direct cost to industry totaling ~\$1.4 million annually.

#### 5. Hurricane Preparedness

- The Coast Guard provided an open invitation to talk about Hurricane preparedness from the Coast Guard's perspective.

### **E. Committee Reports**

#### 1. Vessel Movement Committee

- June 2021 saw 209 vessel arrivals compared to 153 in June 2020. The Port has seen a 40% increase of VLCC, LNG, and Suez Class vessels compared to 2020 and continues to see growth.

#### 2. Waterway Optimization/Dredging Committee

- Dredge report:
  - One dredge working in Matagorda Ship Channel.
  - Two dredges working in the Brownsville Ship Channel, expect completion by October.
  - One dredge scheduled to work the Matagorda jetties.
  - Work continues in the GIWW at the Matagorda junction.
- Chanel Improvement Project #2
  - No changes to schedule, estimated completion by Spring 2021.
- Chanel Improvement Project #3
  - Contract to bid 30 July, schedule award date is 10 September.

#### 3. WSA Advisory Committee

- Nothing to Report.

#### 4. Marine Firefighting Committee

- June 9th Shipboard Marine Firefighting Seminar saw 34 organizations with 100+ attendees.
- Post survey results:
  - 70% had 10 yrs of experience.
  - 100% said it was a good use of their time.
  - 90% said it was appropriate for their position.
  - 97% said they gained useful knowledge they would use in the future.

#### 5. Gangway Safety and Waterway Rescue Ad Hoc Committee

- Funds set aside for Dock 4 and 8 gangways.
- In addition to 44ft Port boat, a 70ft boat is on order.
- The Ad-Hoc Committee is considering publishing literature regarding expectation for gangway safety for private facilities.

- The Ad-Hoc Committee is awaiting report from the Coast Guard on the pilot fatality.

## **F. Old Business**

### **1. 2021 Brown Water/Blue Water Symposium**

- Symposium date is set for October 13, 2021 at Port Aransas, University of Texas.

## **G. New Business**

### **1. Consideration and action on new memberships**

- Robert Shaw accepted as STWAC member.

### **2. Consideration and action on new Steering Group member**

- Jason Weeks accepted as Steering Group member.

### **3. Consideration and action on PAWSA Mitigation Strategy Recommendations**

- Recommendation 1A: Establish an escort zone for deep draft vessels at Ingleside-motion passes 8-5-1, Harbor Tugs abstain.
  - Discussion: Request for hand vote.
- Recommendation 1B: Take no action to establish an escort zone for deep draft vessel at Harbor Island-motion passes 11-1-2, Harbor Tugs and Pilots abstain.
- Recommendation 2A: To improve maneuverability, all vessels should be trimmed by the stern when transiting the Corpus Christi Ship Channel-motion passes.
- Recommendation 2B: The wording of the trim requirements would be a recommendation to the Port of Corpus Christi-motion passes.
- Recommendation 3: Update Coast Pilot 5 to reduce probability of vessel allisions and collisions- motion passes.
- Recommendation 4: To reduce probability of vessel allisions and collisions should be to Coast Pilot 5- motion passes.
  - Discussion: A comment was raised on who is going to provide updates to the Coast Pilot 5. NOAA will accept updates from STWAC or the Port of Corpus Christi. STWAC can review/approve update recommendation.
- Recommendation 5: To enhance ability of the waterway to safely manage traffic, one-way traffic should not be established at this time- motion passes.

### **4. Consideration and action on disestablishment of the PAWSA Mitigation Strategy Ad-Hoc Committee**

- Motion passes to disestablish the PAWSA Mitigation Strategy Ad-Hoc Committee.
  - Discussion: A question was raised whether the Ad-Hoc Committee should continue because the escort zone vote was not unanimous. A response was provided that per the charter, only a simple majority is required for the recommendations and unless the COTP wants the explore a different issue, the Ad-Hoc Committee work is complete.

### **5. Consideration and action on establishment of the Nominations Ad-Hoc Committee**

- Motion passes, Mark McGinnis selected as Chairperson. Joshua Johnson selected as Co-Chairperson.

6. Consideration and action on POCC request to establish ACCP Ingleside Tug Escort Requirement

- Motion passes 9-3-1, Harbor Tugs abstain.

7. General Public Discussion

- None

**H. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Valverde.

DRAFT