

South Texas Waterways Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

13:30, 16 January 2020

Ortiz Center

A. Call to order/opening remarks by chairman

At 13:33, Chairman of STWAC Mr. Xavier Valverde called the meeting to order, the quorum is present. Mr. Valverde thanked all for attending and POCCA for hosting the meeting.

B. Administration

At 13:36 there is a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting, the motion carries.

C. Coast Guard COTP Remarks

At 13:36 CAPT Jason Smith greeted all in attendance and discussed the Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment (PAWSA) which was held 11-12 September 2019. He mentioned Ms. Gina Sanchez representing the recreational vessel community, and her efforts to get representation from the fishing vessel community to the STWAC meeting for the first time. CAPT Smith also discussed the newly formed Brownsville Ship Channel Harbor Safety Committee.

D. Presentations

At 13:40 Ms. Jalyn Stineman from Del Mar College gave a presentation on the maritime courses that are offered. She discussed the courses that have already been held, and Del Mar College's plans to have more high demand Coast Guard approved courses in the future.

At 13:54 CDR Jerry Butwid discussed the PAWSA and choke points in the Corpus Christi Ship Channel. He discussed a letter to STWAC on making a Standard Operating Procedure for designated choke points.

At 13:56 Mr. Xavier Valverde mentioned that there will be a vote on the letter from the Captain of the Port on choke points and the purpose of the vote is to establish a committee, and not to investigate incidents.

At 13:57 LT Sara Conrad discussed USCG Investigating Officer responsibility and goals. She gave a presentation on the investigation of the August 2018 Inner Harbor allision of M/V ENTERPRISE with M/V GEORGE H THOMAS. She discussed recommendations made by the USCG to prevent this type of situation from happening again. There is continued discussion about the weather during the event, and the use of the Coast Pilot and port specific hyperlinks to serve as guidance on choke points.

At 14:15 Mr. Xavier Valverde gave a presentation of the Port of Corpus Christi 2019 trends in vessel traffic statistics. After the presentation there was discussion about the statistics and the definitions of vessels and barges.

At 14:30 CDR Jerry Butwid discussed the gangway collapse that occurred two years ago. He mentioned that the investigation is complete but is not closed, so specific details will need to remain confidential. He thanked STWAC for taking actions on gangway safety. He informed the Committee and attendees that the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Patrol will not be boarding vessels in which gangways are unsafe, and the COTP is working on a letter for concerns and recommendations. There is discussion about agents still having to use gangways even if USCG and CBP will not and OSHA's role in gangway safety.

At 14:39 Mr. Xavier Valverde requested to move to item E5; there was no objection.

At 14:39 Mr. Russel Pickering discussed the Gangway Safety ad hoc committee. He mentioned if CG and CBP will not board the vessel then that should be the threshold. There was discussion about gangway safety guidance and where to find the information.

At 14:48 Mr. David Mills from Great Lakes Dock and Dredge gave a presentation of the ongoing Corpus Christi Ship Channel dredging operation. He mentioned phase one of the project is currently 95% complete and he gave an overview of the dredges, equipment and project specifics. There is discussion on the need for nighttime closures and Mr. Mills confirmed that the channel closure will need to continue. There is more discussion on the Cut A portion of the project.

E. Committee Reports

At 15:12 Mr. Russell Cordo of the Vessel Movement Committee mentioned that the Port of Corpus Christi ended 2019 with record tonnages.

At 15:13 Mr. Russell Pickering filled in for the Dredging Committee and passed that the Lydia Ann Channel dredging will be done in a couple of months.

At 15:15 Mr. Xavier Valverde fills in for the Marine Firefighting Committee and passed that first awareness level training will be done for Annaville Fire Station.

At 15:16 CAPT Jason Smith speaks about the Coast Guard Sector/ Air Station Corpus Christi Planning Division and their work to put on a Unified Command Symposium on March 5th. CAPT Smith also mentioned that USCG Headquarters representatives will come to discuss marine firefighting regulations and resources once a meeting location is found.

F. Old Business

At 15:17 Mr. Xavier Valverde mentioned maintenance of STWAC website and thanked Mr. Russell Pickering for his help

At 15:18 Mr. Russell Cordo discusses larger vessel movements at night.

At 15:19 Mr. Xavier Valverde mentioned the harbor safety committee in Brownsville. He then mentioned PCT calls and that attendance has been hit or miss and a committee member or alternate should be attending. LCDR Margaret Brown adds that a smaller group is better for calls.

G. New Business

At 15:21 LCDR Margaret Brown discussed new STWAC members and asked for them to introduce themselves.

At 15:24 there is a motion to accept new members, motion carried.

At 15:25 CAPT Jason Smith introduces LT Tiffany Barry of the Coast Guard Sector/ Air Station Incident Management Division.

At 15:26 Mr. Xavier Valverde presented the letter from the Captain of the Port on a recommendation to establish an ad hoc committee from 2018 collision incident.

At 15:28 there is a motion to table the vote as the Aransas Corpus Christi Pilots are not present.

At 15:30 there is a second motion to table the vote and a request to determine how long to table the vote for.

At 15:30 CAPT Jason Smith mentioned waiting for the PAWSA to come out for more information on the subject and to aid in the vote.

At 15:31 there was motion to table the vote until the next meeting, motion carried.

At 15:33 there was a motion to have a STWAC meeting with just the voting members prior to the next full STWAC meeting, motion carried.

At 15:34: CDR Jerry Butwid mentioned that the Coast Guard can enforce and restrict people from going across unsafe gangways.

At 15:36 BOSN David Browne mentioned the Waterways Analysis Management System (WAMS) study and the survey that will go out to waterways users. There will be a notice in the Local Notice to Mariners, a Marine Safety Information Bulletin, and a press release. Mr. Xavier Valverde adds that this survey is the way to get things changed and encouraged everyone to participate in the WAMS.

At 15:38 Mr. Xavier Valverde discussed the requests to update charts are not happening on a timely basis. He showed a timeline for new piers being built and when information should be sent to NOAA.

At 15:41 Mr. Tim Osborn from NOAA mentioned the date from terminals is only being used to update charts and no liability falls upon the terminal.

At 15:42 Mr. Tony MacDonald mentioned bunkering and the need to put it in a special STWAC meeting. It is also mentioned that there is a delay to the port when bunkering is not allowed alongside terminals.

G. Adjourn

At 15:44 there is a motion to adjourn, motion carried.