

Minutes of the Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission meeting on January 21, 2011

The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission met on January 21, 2011 at 3:00 PM in the Minden Civic Center, 520 Broadway, Minden LA 71055.

Commission Members Present: Billy Don Perritt, Ben Lowery, Todd Culpepper, Rick Hohlt, Steve Lemmons, Chris Smith, George Rolfe, Ted W. McKinney, Olevia McDonald, Jackie Perritt, Alice Stewart. Also Present: Bill Chaumont, Gary Hanson, Dr. Gary Kennedy [ex-officio members]; Lindsay Gouedy [educator]. **Commission Members Absent:** Rep. Samuel Little, Mack Calhoun, Dan Morgan, Willie Doherty, Charles Braddock, Terry Emory, John Van Bennett. (*Attachment 2*)

Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Agenda Approval, Welcome, Public Comments

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairman Todd Culpepper. Billy Perritt led the invocation and Chris Smith the pledge of allegiance. Hohlt moved to change the published agenda to add discussion of donations and funding and to place this item, as well as election of officers, after review of minutes; McKinney seconded; all approved. Billy Perritt moved to accept the agenda with changes; Smith seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 1*)

Minden Mayor Robinson welcomed commission members and others to Minden. Leslie Quinn, of Senator Vitter's Shreveport office, expressed the senator's concern for water resource matters. Culpepper invited Public Comments. None were offered.

Minutes of last meeting

Culpepper called for approval of the October 21, 2010 meeting minutes, which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. Hohlt moved to accept the minutes as distributed; McKinney seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 3*)

Election of Officers for 2011

Hohlt moved to retain the same slate of officers – chairman Culpepper, vice-chairman Calhoun, treasurer Billy Perritt, secretary Stewart, assistant secretary McDonald; Jackie Perritt seconded; all approved.

Donations and Funding Discussion

Hohlt opened a discussion of ways to encourage donations from all Sparta Commission nominating bodies. Among points made: each government body and industry needs to understand the Commission's work and its benefits, and to know that other entities, especially those in designated 'areas of groundwater concern', are participating. With respect to the latter, Ouachita Parish, Lincoln Parish, and Ruston routinely donate. Culpepper said that Jackson Parish is in the process of donating and that Jackson, like some other entities, requires a letter of request. Jackie Perritt suggested sending letters to all stakeholders with Commissioner follow-up. Hohlt said he and Gouedy are developing a model letter for Commissioners to adapt, tailor, and deliver. McKinney recommended acknowledging in the letter the entity's contribution history. Lowery suggested hand-delivering letters and being present at meetings to answer questions. Gouedy said she plans to visit each potential donor in the coming year, making a tailored presentation if offered speaking time. Billy Perritt said each donor receives a thank-you letter.

Treasurer Report

Billy Perritt distributed and discussed a Balance sheet as of Jan. 20, 2011, a Jan. 1-20, 2011 Profit & Loss sheet, and a Jan.-Dec. 2011 Profit & Loss sheet. (*Attachment 4*) Smith moved to approve the report, Lowery seconded; all approved.

Committee Reports

Administrative Committee. The Committee met Jan. 4 in response to Gouedy's request for contract modification (*Attachment 6*). Chairman McDonald submitted a written report of the committee's deliberations (*Attachment 5*) and recommendations: 1) Renew Gouedy's contract April 1-Dec. 31, 2011 [Dec. 31 ending will align Commission's budget and contract year; the contract will continue to be renewable]; 2) Increase pay from \$1250 to \$1500 bi-monthly (Gouedy's request); 3) In the event of a maternity leave of absence, pay will be for assigned work during the leave; committee will consider terms when need arises. After discussion, Billy Perritt moved to accept the committee's report and recommendations; Hohlt seconded; all approved.

Sparta Foundation and Marketing Committee. The committee is seeking letters of support addressed to federal legislators asking them to join in efforts of the Sparta Foundation to obtain USDA funding of Sparta conservation education efforts. Chairman Hohlt distributed copies of such letters written by Governor Jindal, DNR Secretary Scott Angelle, District 12 State Representative Hollis Downs, District 32 State Senator Neil Riser, District 34 State Senator Francis Thompson, District 35 State Senator Robert Kostelka, West Monroe Mayor Dave Norris, ORVA Executive Director William Hobgood, Ruston Mayor Dan Hollingsworth, Lincoln Parish Police Jury President Theresa Wyatt. Hohlt asked all commissioners to approach their nominating bodies and other representatives of the Sparta region's stakeholders to write similar letters of support. *Attachments 7 and 8* are letters by Governor Jindal and Mayor Norris. Copies of other letters are in Sparta Commission office.

Long Term Planning Committee (LTP). (*Attachment 9*) Chairman Stewart met with LTP committee members just prior to this meeting. Stewart stated that USGS Ben McGee reported, for this meeting, follow-up of a recent relatively rapid decline in water levels in a North Bienville Parish well (~1'/month over 15 months) and a Town of Arcadia well (60' decline since the last reading in 2007). The most probable explanation is an increased withdrawal rate. Mr. McGee reported that the rate of decline has returned to its more usual 1' to 2' per year, having adjusted to the increased withdrawals. Equilibration is at a lower well water level -- reduced hydrostatic pressure is experienced at the withdrawal source and elsewhere in the aquifer. Stewart distributed Mr. McGee's written report and a synopsis of Sparta conservation endeavors using surface water alternatives.

****Conservation Educator Report** (*Attachment 10*)

Gouedy reported on the first Sparta Aquifer 5 K Run, Nov. 13, 2010, at Squire Creek, and said she may coordinate two runs this year. She also plans to make two trips to each parish this year to explain the commission's activities and expenditures to nominating/funding bodies. She announced that the Commission has been approved for radio spots. She spoke at length on a 2011 Project INVEST Contribution Proposal. Objectives are to 1) edit the Sparta and DNR videos to 30 second spots, and format for theaters and TV PSAs; 2) develop activity booklets for Grades 4-6 in Lincoln Parish; and 3) educate by billboards. Funding assistance may be \$5800. Also required: \$925. Culpepper referred the education project-related matter to the Sparta Foundation. On Dec. 10, Gouedy met with representatives of Claiborne and Webster Parishes to discuss extending Claiborne's Waterfest to Webster and Bienville (Bienville representatives were unable to attend). No coordinated plan was reached; Gouedy will continue working on the project. Stewart moved to accept the report; McKinney seconded; all approved.

Report of Sparta Commission's Representative on Groundwater Resources Commission (GWRC) (McKinney)

A 72 minute GWRC meeting consisted mostly of presentations – recap of hurricane-damaged wells project; status of frac water well reporting subsequent to October, 2010 requirement (so far DNR has studied 2600 wells); Dept. of Conservation's Public Service Announcements and LSU AgCenter middle school curriculum; DEQ water testing program. Questions to Jeffrey Jones, Asst. Dir., DNR Office of Conservation Env. Div., (Mr. Jones attended last Sparta Commission meeting) were directed to Division's new Communications Director, Anna Desmond. Timetable for Statewide Water Resource Management Planning moved forward to August – survey research contractors developing the plan explained that more time is needed to make adjustments for 2010 (?) changes in law. Next GWRC meeting Feb. 2.

Presentations:

1. Gary Hanson, LSUS professor and Director of Red River Watershed Management Institute (RRWMI), gave a PowerPoint presentation on alternatives to groundwater use in natural gas production. He focused on Haynesville Shale production and stakeholder cooperation facilitated by RRWMI. Prodded by public concerns and industry's recognition of water supply challenges, public and private stakeholders have worked together towards developing the most beneficial use of the region's water resources. This has gained attention in other areas of the nation facing similar challenges. A Q&A period followed.

2. Chris Smith, representative of the Town of Arcadia on the Sparta Commission, distributed a report from Arcadia Gas Storage, LLC, (AGS) 'Statement of Efforts to Mitigate Ground Water Use: Arcadia Gas Storage, January 20, 2011' (*Attachment 11*) and an accompanying report 'Benefits of Cardinal Gas Storage's Arcadia Gas Storage Investment' (*Available on request: contacts at spartaaquifer.com*) The report includes the company's ongoing operations, future plans, associated water use, ongoing development of surface water sources, and expected benefits of investment. A Q&A period followed.

AGS and the Town of Arcadia have requested that LA DEQ state that the department has no objection to recycle/reuse of effluent from the Town's wastewater treatment facility. Mr. Smith moved that the Sparta Commission draft a letter to LA DEQ in support of this request; Lowery seconded; all approved. Culpepper appointed a committee of Smith, Billy Perritt, Gary Hanson, and Stewart to gather information from AGS and report at the next meeting.

Culpepper announced that the next meeting of the Sparta Commission will be in Lomax Hall of Louisiana Tech University, Lincoln Parish, on April 21 at 3:00 p.m., with the usual pre-meeting informal gathering beginning at 2:00.

Hohlt announced that a Union-Lincoln Initiative Phase 2 Report has been issued, and he will provide it at the next meeting.

There being no further business, Billy Perritt moved to adjourn; Smith seconded; all approved.

William 'Todd' Culpepper, Chairman

Alice Stewart, Secretary

Note: Attachments are filed with the minutes in the Sparta Commission office.