

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

The Sparta Groundwater Conservation District Commission met on July 21, 2011 at 3:00 PM in the Convention Center, 901 Ridge Ave., West Monroe, LA 71292.

Present: Todd Culpepper, Billy Don Perritt, Rick Hohlt, Ted McKinney, Jackie Perritt, Alice Stewart, Mack Calhoun, Charles Braddock, Terry Emory, John Van Bennett, George Rolfe [Commission Members]; Dr. Gary Kennedy [ex-officio member]; Lindsay Gouedy [educator]. **Commission Members Absent:** Steve Lemmons, Olevia McDonald, Dan Morgan, Chris Smith, Rep. Samuel Little, Willie Doherty, Ben Lowery. Jonesboro representative has not been appointed. (*Attachment 2*)

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

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairman Todd Culpepper. Van Bennett led the invocation and Billy Perritt the pledge of allegiance.

Elected officials were introduced: Senator Kostelka; Tiffany Clason and ? from Senator Vitter's office; Arcadia Mayor Eugene Smith. Rep. Kay Katz praised Sparta conservation workers and urged persistence though progress sometimes seems slow.

Hohlt moved to approve the published agenda with order of presentations rearranged as recommended by Culpepper; McKinney seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 1*)

Culpepper invited Public Comments. There were none.

Minutes of last meeting

Culpepper called for approval of the January 20, 2011 meeting minutes, which had been distributed to members prior to the meeting. Hohlt moved to accept the minutes as distributed; Van Bennett seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 3*)

Treasurer Report

Billy Perritt distributed and discussed a Jan. 1-July 21, 2011 Profit & Loss sheet with Balance sheet as of July 21, 2011. One very recent contribution shown on a distributed 'Contribution Sheet' was not included. Contributions almost correct a previous deficit in terms of funds needed to continue current activities. Calhoun moved to accept the report, Jackie Perritt seconded; all approved. (*Attachment 4*)

Sparta Foundation and Marketing Report – Hohlt

-- Application to USDA for Rural Development funds (Water and Environmental Programs). Hohlt and Gouedy have secured letters of support from the governor and most area legislators, and they, with the help of Union County Water Conservation Board (UCWCB) Sherrel Johnson, are seeking similar letters of support from Arkansas legislators. Senator Mark Pryor's letter (*Attachment 5*) is an example. La.'s U.S. legislators sent letters directly to USDA, emphasizing that 100% is for education. --Education Program. The Commission's most important program is educating public and kids. The Commission pays Gouedy's salary, and some program funding will hopefully come from successful grants. The Sparta being a common water supply, wherever this funding is spent will help all. At this time, additional local funding is required for local programs. An example of a local program is Waterfest in Lincoln Park wherein every parish 5th grader rotates from water expert to expert. -- 'Contribution Sheet' (distributed – *Attachment 6*). \$33,400 is critical to funding the Sparta Commission's commitment. At this time, another \$10,000 to \$15,000 is needed this year to assure funds for Gouedy's next year's salary. Culpepper's letter explaining the Commission's program and funding needs was sent to the Commission's nominating bodies. Hohlt urged Commission members to seek contributions from nominating bodies. He said a plan B will be needed if funds are insufficient.

Long Term Planning (LTP) Report – Stewart

- Collecting Information and Communicating. – LTP invites submission of relevant information, which will be distributed in bundles from time to time, and LTP invites interested citizens to sign up for the Sparta Commission's email notifications.
- *LA Water Use, 2010*. The book is not out yet but Ben McGee will let LTP know, and LTP will send e-mail notification.
- Handouts pertinent to Commission's mission. 1) Excerpts from most recent DEQ triennial water quality report, for example information about deterioration of water quality in Winn & constant high iron concentration in western Sparta aquifer; 2) GAO report on rising cost of water, showing that with optimal management, a rise in costs can be minimized.
- McHie, whose firm was awarded the DOTD contract for *Reservoir Prioritization Study*, reported to Stewart, upon her inquiry, that the study received priority 5 status in this year's HB 2. Reservoirs under consideration in the Sparta region prompted calling for this update.
- DNR's *SONRIS water resource information* is being made more accessible to aid local monitoring of water resources.
- Meeting notices received. a) Miss. River Commission—Lake Providence, Aug. 17, b) Ouachita River Valley Association (ORVA)—Aug. 23rd and 24th with Bi-State Sparta Round Table on 24th.
- Homer Report. Fifty per cent of its water has been unaccounted for. LRWA identified problems. Town is responding, e.g.

seeking grant for electronic water use metering.

- Caldwell Parish Reservoir report. Braddock recommended Sparta Commission consider the reservoir projects considered or underway, including Caldwell's and Ouachita's. Todd announced that that would be an agenda topic for the next meeting.
- Arcadia Gas Storage conversion to surface water use--follow-up. Bill DeWare reported that AGS is awaiting a LDEQ letter of no objection to its construction design for using wastewater from the House of Raeford poultry plant; target completion in Oct.

Groundwater Resources Commission Report (GWRC) – Sparta Commission's Representative, Ted McKinney. No GWRC meetings are scheduled. DNR's Gary Snellgrove reported that the State Water Management plan is scheduled for completion on Oct. 31. If schedule is unchanged, there should be four public hearing throughout the state before this date.

Presentations

- 1) **Sparta-Union County, Arkansas Update** – UCWCB Sherrel Johnson. a) Gouedy is working with UCWCB, years-long partner with La., to bring about Union County Water Fest program. The 2-day program, expenses paid for locally, will provide water resource education for every Union County 6th grader. b) Graphic Packaging-W Monroe project is 'high on Union County's radar screen', anticipating rising water levels in Ark. and La. monitoring wells. c) Johnson urges attendance at ORVA's Bi-state Sparta Round table on Aug. 24. Officials from two states who address water resources will speak. Round table facilitators are Gary Hanson from Louisiana and Robert Reynolds from Arkansas.
- 2) **Louisiana Legislative Update & Graphics Packaging-West Monroe Project** – Emory reported that as early as 1994, John Adams and John Stamberg were working on the project design, but only in 2004 was enthusiasm matched with support. She said that among many supporters, Senator Kostelka was crucial. Senator Kostelka said the project is the only such in the U.S.; it is projected to save 5-7 million gallons of water per day (Mgd) initially and eventually as much as 10-12 Mgd; it was by far the least costly of proposed Sparta-sparing projects; there was long and at times difficult work in securing funding; the benefits are several thousands of jobs and saving the Sparta, each necessary for the success of the other; the target date for project completion is Nov. 29. The senator praised Louisiana's economic success 'even with recession', commenting on growth-supportive legislation and a Manpower, Inc. report that places La. at or near the top of several workforce-related categories.
- 3) **City of West Monroe - Graphic Packaging Project (WM-GPP)**– Emory mentioned the role of Ford, Bacon, Davis and introduced project engineers, James Johnson and John Morris. The engineers presented a screen show of a CAD computer model of the project and, in detail, explained the engineering. Questions and answers followed. Emory then introduced John Stamberg, who distributed handouts and delivered a PowerPoint show. He said the Sparta Commission's 2001-2 Meyer, Meyer, LeCroix, Hixson engineering report estimated that a favored Sparta-sparing project – Graphic Packaging's conversion to Ouachita River water use-- would cost ~\$75 million. The WM-GPP, however, could be accomplished for around \$18 million. The show described many aspects of the WM-GPP and the Sparta. The print-out will be available in the Sparta office.

Mack Calhoun officiated at this point, because Culpepper was called away from the meeting on urgent business.

Conservation Educator Report (Attachment 7)

- Grant-writing. EPA grant, waiting for confirmation. USDA, waiting to hear. Should be another EPA grant to apply for.
- Donation letters have been sent to every parish that has not donating this year. Commissioners should back up those letters. Parish visits are planned to nominating bodies that have not donated in a number of years
- Waterfest programs. A progress report was given on arrangements for four programs this fall and one in the spring. for optimal fit in respective curricula Ark. Water Fests targets 6th graders and La. Water Fests target 5th graders.
- At Ouachita Parish's request, Goudy, during in the school year, will teach water conservation in each 6th grade classroom.
- 5 K Run is to be arranged, perhaps in spring.

Billy Perritt suggested that to reduce early departures of members and other attendees because of evening obligations, Sparta Commission meetings begin at 2:00 p.m., with the pre-meeting gathering to begin at 1:00 p.m. Members present agreed. Calhoun then announced that the next meeting of the Sparta Commission will be in Winn Parish, tentatively at the Courthouse on 119 W. Main in Winnfield on Oct. 20, following the new schedule.

There being no further business, Morgan moved to adjourn; Hohlt seconded; all approved. Calhoun expressed appreciation for all who contributed to this meeting's program and then adjourned the meeting.

William 'Todd' Culpepper, Chairman

Alice Stewart, Secretary

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