

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GALVESTON
SPECIAL MEETING - JANUARY 3, 2019**

1/3/2019 - Minutes

1. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM AND CALL MEETING TO ORDER
With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor James Yarbrough, Mayor Pro Tem Craig Brown, Council Member Amy Bly, Council Member David Collins, Council Member John Listowski, and Council Member Jackie Cole.

Absent: Council Member Jason Hardcastle.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 3.A. Discuss And Conduct A Public Hearing On The U.S. Corps Of Engineers Texas Coastal Study And Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) That Identifies A Coastal Barrier System Option For Protecting The Upper Texas Coastline From Devastation Caused By Hurricane Storm Surge

Dr. Merrell provided a summary and comments on the Texas Coastal Study and Tentatively Selected Plan. Texas General Land Office Representative Kaleb Bennett provided comments from Commissioner George P. Bush's office.

The Public hearing was opened.

Speakers:

Erik Van Knijk provided information on the coastal spine in the Netherlands.

Bill Kiene is surprised by the lack of objective analysis of what will protect Galveston's future from flooding. He is in favor of alternatives to the Ike Dike concept because the Ike Dike will not protect properties on the bay from flooding.

John Machol asked the Council to consider the ring barrier for Galveston.

Aaron Ellisor is concerned about property values and taxes being affected.

Jed Webb, representative for Congressman Randy Weber, wanted to be at the meeting but is being sworn in today. Congressman Weber wishes to thank the City Council and the citizens and has some concerns about the Tentatively Selected Plan.

Marcy Tyber expressed concerns about the environmental and economical impacts of the plan. She would like to see natural ways to improve the dune system.

Yeus Figlis, a member of Dr. Merrell's team, urged everyone to look at all the options for storm suppression.

Elizabeth Beeton suggested that the City should ask the Corps to model various ring barrier options and other bay protection configurations. Also, the City should request a separate cost-benefit analysis for the ring barrier and each component of the larger project.

Phil Newton, President of GAIN, read a Resolution approved by GAIN asking the City to prioritize a feasibility study for a system to protect the City of Galveston from storm surge flooding from Galveston Bay.

Carol Holloway asked the Council to focus on what is best for the citizens of Galveston in order to survive another storm. She asked the Council to consider other options that will protect the island from bay flooding.

Joanie Steinhaus requested a complete financial impact study to be done on the expected losses to tourism, fisheries, and the Port during and after this construction.

Unknown speaker commented against the ring levee mostly from an environmental standpoint.

Lisa Arthur invited everyone to visit the beach at Point West. She is concerned about the beach at Point West being destroyed by the Tentatively Selected Plan, and impacts the plan will cause to the real estate market.

Rita Wilcox expressed concerns about environmental impacts caused by the coastal barrier.

Shrub Kempner asked Council to use the criteria what storm surge protection concept will save the most lives and preserve the most livelihoods. He approves of the Ike Dike concept and opposes to Corps concept of raising FM 3005 Hwy. 87 on Bolivar. He also opposes the ring levee for the island because it will destroy neighborhoods.

Bob Dolgent, President of the Sand Hill Shores Property Owners Association commented that no one in his neighborhood is in favor of the Ike Dike.

Willi Luthy commented that if we don't let the water in it won't destroy.

Teresa Morris of Turtle Island Restoration commented on the effects of the ring levee to marine life.

Kristen Vale of the American Bird Conservancy commented on concerns to the ecosystem caused by the installation of flood gates.

Scott Fitzpatrick commented that the Ike Dike will kill fishing in the area and will destroy the tax base.

J. D. Fry of Sea Isle commented that the coastal spine makes more sense than building a combination of a ring levee and a spine.

Susan Fennewald commented she is not in favor of the coastal spine and there are problems with the ring levee. She expressed concerns about benefits and costs of the coastal spine. She urged Council to ask the Corps of Engineers additional questions about their plan.

Todd Hines, representative of the Point West Board of Directors passed on feedback from homeowners about the coastal spine. If one is built, their preference is one on the beach.

Brian French of the West End commented that the beach and the bay is the lifeline of the island. He commented on a lot of problems with the plan. He asked the Council to consider future generations when submitting their comments and to consider other alternatives to the plan.

Jeff Seinsheimer of Tiki Island and Chair of the Galveston Surfrider Foundation commented that he wants nothing to do with the current plan.

Karla Klay commented that the plan will destroy beach tourism.

Dorothy Hogg expressed concerns about the proposed levee.

Michael Niebuhr pointed out issues not only with the Corps plan but also with Dr. Merrell's alternative plan. He said it will affect water quality, salinity, and fisheries.

Jonathon Tromm commented that the City needs bayside protection from flooding during major storm events.

Matt Kirsch commented that the plan will take away the waves which was his reason for moving to the island after Hurricane Ike. He said it would change the way Galveston is defined.

The Public Hearing was closed.

In response to questions from Dr. Brown, Kaleb Bennett of the GLO advised he has not received official notification of an extension of the comment period. He advised whatever happens with this plan, beach nourishment is something the GLO advocates for. Dr. Brown commented that more information and modeling is needed from the Corps in order to make a decision. CM Collins thanked everyone for coming out to the Public Hearing. He commented that more modeling and cost/benefit analysis is needed. CM Listowski thanked everyone for coming out. He echoed Dr. Brown's comments about needing more information in order to make a decision. Dr. Cole asked Kaleb Bennet about the process moving forward. Mr. Bennet advised there is a long process in front of us. He advised the GLO is a partner with the Corps on the study phase which means they are paying for half of the study and that is it. He advised that a construction partner would be needed in order for the project to move forward. As of now, no construction partner has been identified. Dr. Cole reported on Commissioner Bush's guiding principles which include not harming the bay, protecting the open beaches, extending the comment period, and asking for additional comment times as the plan moves along, and feels the City will likely adopt the same guiding principles. Mayor Yarbrough urged everyone to stay engaged and ensured the City will stay engaged. He advised the City will meet the January 9th deadline. He thanked Dr. Merrell's expertise in helping the City and sent thanks to Commissioner Bush for his assistance.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Janelle Williams, City Secretary

Date Approved: