

Meeting Minutes
Region 6 San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning Group Meeting
May 13, 2021
9:00AM
CISCO WebEx Virtual Meeting

Roll Call:

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (x) /Absent () / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Russ A. Poppe	<i>Chair, Flood Districts</i>	X
Alia Vinson	<i>Vice Chair, Water Districts</i>	X
Alisa Max	<i>Secretary, Counties</i>	X
Gene Fisseler	<i>At-Large, Public</i>	X
Matthew Barrett	<i>At-Large, River Authorities</i>	X
Elisa Macia Donovan	<i>Agricultural Interests</i>	X
Jenna Armstrong	<i>Small Business</i>	X
Paul E. Lock	<i>Electric Generating Utilities</i>	X
Sarah P. Bernhardt	<i>Environmental Interests</i>	X
Stephen Costello	<i>Municipalities</i>	
Timothy E. Buscha	<i>Industries</i>	X
Todd Burrer	<i>Water utilities</i>	X

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Bill Adams	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	X Alternate
Natalie Johnson	Texas Division of Emergency Management	X
Kristin Lambrecht	Texas Department of Agriculture	X
Joel Clark	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	X
Colleen Jones	General Land Office	X
Megan Ingram	Texas Water Development Board	X Alternate
Kelly Mills	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	X
Jeff Taebel	Houston-Galveston Area Council	X Alternate
Ellie Alkhoury	Texas Department of Transportation	X
Tom Heidt	Port Houston	X Alternate
Michael Turco	Harris-Galveston Subsidence District	X
Brandon Wade	Region H	X Alternate

<u>Liaisons</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Mark Vogler	Lower Brazos	X
Todd Burrer	Trinity Region	X
Timothy Buscha	Neches Region	X
Michael Turco	Lower Brazos	X
Brandon Wade	Region H	X Alternate

Quorum:

Quorum: **Yes**

Number of voting members or alternates that were present: 11

Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 12: 7

Adam Whisenant	Laura Atlas
Alfred Garcia	Laura Norton
Andrew Moore	Liz Haselbach
Andy Palermo	Lisa Mairs
Arthur Bredehoft	Maggie Puckett
Brooke Bacuetes	Matt Lopez
Colleen Gilbert	Michael Turco
Cory Stull	Neil Gaynor
Dena Gren	Philip Taucer
Fatima Berrios	Reem Zoun
Glenna Sloan	Reid Mrsny
Hector Olmos	Robert Kosar
Jake Hollingsworth	Sally Bakko
James Bronikowski	Sam Hinojosa
Jason Becker	Sarah Bernhardt
Jill Boullion	Stephanie Zertuche
Jing Chen	Todd Burrer
Justin Bower	Trae Camble
Katherine Summerlin	Mark Vogler
Kena Ware	Unknown: 10

**Meeting attendee names were gathered from those who entered information on the GoToWebinar meeting.

All meeting materials were available for the public at:

<http://www.twdb.texas.gov/flood/planning/regions/schedule.asp>.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to Order

Mr. Poppe, Chair of the SJRFPG, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed all attendees.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Welcome and Roll Call

Ms. Max, Secretary of the SJRFPG, took roll call and a quorum was established.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Texas Water Development Board Update

Mr. Bronikowski, on behalf of the TWDB, stated that the Technical Guidelines for the Regional Flood Planning Process had been finalized and posted for the use of the Regional Flood Planning Groups. Mr. Bronikowski also stated that the TWDB is working on putting together another “Chairs” conference call and was working on a subcontractor guidelines document to help the Regional Flood Planning Groups.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Registered Public Comments on Agenda Items 5-19 (limit of 3 minutes per person)

The secretary confirmed no registered comments had been received, so the meeting moved to the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Approval of minutes from the April 8, 2021 SJRFPG Meeting

After minor comments were suggested by Mr. Barrett, Ms. Vinson moved to approve the minutes as revised. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Announcement of new Alternate Members and new Non-Voting Members

- Trae Camble was announced as Tom Heidt’s designated alternate.
- Jake Hollingsworth was announced as Brandon Wade’s designated alternate.
- Scott Harris was announced as the liaison from Region 3 – Trinity.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Update from Executive Committee, discussion, and possible action from Regional Flood Planning Group Members for the Coastal Communities and Public voting membership. The SJRFPG may go into an executive session pursuant to chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code for the consideration of personnel matters, specifically, persons being considered for appointment as new voting members of SJRFPG. **

Mr. Poppe stated that the Executive Committee met to conduct interviews for both the Public and Coastal Communities voting positions. He stated that the Executive Committee recommends selecting Christina Quintero for the Public position and Brian Maxwell for the Coastal Communities position.

Ms. Vinson then explained the rationale for the recommendations stating that both candidates were very well suited for their intended position, although it had been a difficult decision given that the other candidates were also well qualified.

Ms. Bernhardt moved to approve the selection of Christina Quintero for the Public position and Brian Maxwell for the Coastal Communities position. Paul Lock seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Update on current solicitation efforts for the Upper Watershed Category

Ms. Berrios, on behalf of the Secretary, stated that the deadline for the Upper Watershed applications was May 7, 2021 and informed the attendees that a total of six applications were received. Ms. Berrios then mentioned that the SJRFPG is currently soliciting for the Environmental voting position currently held

by Ms. Bernhardt, since Ms. Bernhardt is moving outside of Texas. She also notified the attendees that she anticipated the next Executive Committee meeting to be the first week of June to discuss and process these applications.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Liaison Reports pertaining to other region(s) progress and status:

- a. **Trinity Region** – Mr. Burrer stated there were no new updates
- b. **Neches Region** – Mr. Buscha stated he did not have any new updates but had a meeting with the Regional Flood Planning Group later that day.
- c. **Lower Brazos Region** – Mr. Turco also stated he did not have any new updates but had a meeting with the Regional Flood Planning Group later that day.
- d. **Region H Water** – Mr. Collingsworth, on behalf of Mr. Wade, stated there were not any new updates for Region H.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Technical Consultant introduction and updates pertaining to the regional flood planning process

Cory Stull, the project manager of Freese and Nichols, introduced himself along with his team: Halff Associates, Holloway Environmental, Knudson, Torres & Associates, and Stuart Consulting Group. Mr. Stull then reported that the Freese and Nichols contract had been fully executed with Harris County and the TWDB, and indicated that the firm received Notice to Proceed. He also mentioned that currently the firm is working on the Pre-Planning Meeting scheduled to be held on May 18, 2021 in the evening to gather public comments, and is reviewing the finalized Technical Guidelines.

Ms. Donovan then raised some concerns with the Technical Guidelines, pointing out that not all comments were incorporated within the document, specifically a clearer definition of nature-based solutions. Ms. Donovan stated that green embankments and removing acreage from the floodplain was not always beneficial to agricultural interests, and suggested the Regional Flood Planning Group, as well as the consultant, should focus on these issues. Mr. Poppe concurred and mentioned that item 15 will further address consultant support.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Discussion and possible action concerning public engagement strategies including organizing and setting a future date for a public meeting as required by Texas Water Code §16.062(d) and 31 Texas Administrative Code §361.12(a)(4)

Mr. Poppe informed the attendees that the Pre-Planning Public meeting will be held on May 18th, virtually. Mr. Poppe stated that the purpose of this meeting will be to receive public comments and he encouraged all attendees to distribute the meeting information. Ms. Max added that the meeting would also be interpreted in Spanish. Discussion ensued as voting members voiced their concerns and suggestions for the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Update and discussion pertaining to the logistics of in-person RFPG meetings

Mr. Poppe stated that the project sponsor had been investigating possible locations, but have not yet found a suitable location with the technical capabilities needed for the meeting. Mr. Poppe also encouraged members to share any venue recommendations they might have with the Planning Group Sponsor.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Discussion and update to the SJRFPG concerning development of media request guidance including social media outreach

No new update was given and the meeting moved onto the next agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14: Update and discussion from the Planning Group Sponsor (Harris County) regarding project grant and budget.

Ms. Max stated that the Planning Group Sponsor received the initial grant funds and had given the consultant Notice to Proceed on Tasks 1-4C and 7-10 as outlined in the scope of work. She indicated that for item 10, 50% of the task has been authorized at this time. Ms. Max stated that overall, the process was going along well and was on schedule.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15: Discussion and possible action concerning the development of technical consultant support committee(s)

Mr. Poppe opened the discussion and stated that other Regional Flood Planning Groups had already implemented different strategies to help support their consultants. He then asked for the consultant to share their thoughts. Mr. Stull then stated that a number of smaller committees would be beneficial to support them to facilitate the process and ensure informed decisions are made.

Mr. Poppe stated that the committee(s) meetings would require a 7-day agenda posting at a minimum depending on meeting topics. Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of a Technical Committee. Mr. Stull then recommended creating multiple committees to support several aspects of the project including communications and public engagement. Ms. Max concurred.

Mr. Poppe suggested forming the Technical Committee and mentioned that the members of the Technical Committee would be limited to voting and non-voting members of the SJRFPG. He also stated, per the bylaws, the committee would need to appoint their own officers.

Mr. Fisseler moved to form a Technical Committee consisting of Ms. Armstrong, Mr. Buscha, Ms. Donovan, and Ms. Max. Ms. Vinson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Mr. Poppe gave a 10-minute recess at 10:25 to 10:35

AGENDA ITEM NO. 16: Presentation from the Harris County Flood Control District – San Jacinto River Watershed Study Presentation

Andrew Moore with Halff Associates, and representing Harris County Flood Control District, presented on the San Jacinto Regional Watershed Master Drainage Plan. The presentation was a high-level overview of the study which also identified areas vulnerable to flood hazards, identified flood mitigation strategies, and solutions for long term resilience.

Following the presentation, Sarah Bernhardt mentioned that the total benefit cost analysis was low, stating that the costs far overshadowed the benefits of the proposed projects. She also mentioned that nature-based solutions were not given much weight, and that the SJRFPG should move cautiously when adopting costly solutions into the regional flood plan. Mr. Justin Bower concurred, also expressing further concern.

Ms. Donovan asked for clarification of the buyout option mentioned in Mr. Moore's presentation, and what monetary benefit buyouts would bring compared to the structural projects. Mr. Moore stated that the benefits produced from buyouts were not considered in the \$775 million benefits tied to the structural projects, and stated he did not have that monetary value; however, he could get it.

Ms. Armstrong joined the conversation stating that buyouts could disrupt local economies thus impacting the regional economy. She also stated that often communities cannot address flood issues caused by factors outside of their jurisdiction, so she expressed she was happy at the progress the SJRFPG had made.

Mr. Poppe stated that the Regional Flood Plan should consider flood mitigation strategies that are scalable and mentioned that these conversations would be very important to have moving forward.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 17: Presentation of 2021 Planning Group key dates and deadlines

a) Upcoming planning schedule milestones

b) The next San Jacinto RFPG meeting will be on June 11, 2021 at 9:00 am.

- Mr. Poppe stated that the draft Regional Flood Plan is due to the TWDB by August 2022.
- Mr. Poppe gave a reminder that the Pre-Planning Public Meeting is scheduled to be on May 18th.
- Mr. Poppe made a correction for the next planning meeting stating it is on June 10th not June 11th.
- Mr. Poppe also provided a reminder that the first meeting for the Executive Committee would take place prior to the next planning meeting on June 10th.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 18: Reminder regarding Planning Group member training on Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act

Mr. Poppe gave a reminder that all members and their alternates must complete the Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act trainings.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 19: Consider agenda items for next meeting

- Update from Technical Committee
- Update from Freese and Nichols regarding progress towards the Regional Flood Plan draft
- Update on voting member positions
- Update and discussion of May 18th Public Meeting
- Recommendation from Freese and Nichols for support committees such as a public outreach
- Update on Environmental Interests and Upper Watershed voting member solicitations

AGENDA ITEM NO. 20: Meeting Adjourn

Mr. Poppe adjourned the meeting at 11:24 AM.



Alisa Max, Secretary



Russ Poppe, Chair