From: Brett, Elliott
To: MVN Environmental;
Subject: RE: So I hear...
Date: Thursday, May 14, 2009 10:35:32 AM

Mr. Owens,
I appreciate the response, and I'm sure that you are receiving quite a few messages. I know that you have heard public concerns for the facility. I also know that Mr. White and Mr. Drury have been very active in discussions with the Corps. Bruce spoke very well of you last night, and tried to ensure that all of the participants understand that you have been very cooperative with "us", the Coconut Beach family. As I mentioned before, I am an engineering consultant myself. It is this basis upon which I have a disagreement. The Federal decision process is not based solely upon analysis of scientific and engineering data. As with any engineering design, the client actually makes the decisions. In your case, "the Federal government" is your perceived client. One tragedy that has occurred in this country over the past 200 years is for the Federal government to no longer realize that they are a service provider to the citizens of this country. We are intended to affect their legislation and regulation, not to be affected by those.

But I don't want to get into a long philosophical debate over government. My point is that, in our engineering designs, we have to consider that our clients want bolted connections, so they don't have to shut in their platforms, even though we know a welded connection is easier to design, more secure, and less maintenance. So we take their strong preference, and we develop a solution that is strong enough and also has the more challenging features that they requested.

Bringing this back to the artificial conflict between Coconut Beach and the new pumping station, I really believe that the two are not mutually exclusive. When we rebuilt Coconut Beach, the Corps of Engineers commandeered the old location to use for the current pumping station. Very little of that land was ever used at all in the construction of the station, but the Corps felt the need to have it available as a sort of "security blanket." So we shifted over, and we are grateful that a big portion of the land that was originally commandeered has been returned for our use. Now, though, we're looking for a bit of a "security blanket" ourselves. The current proposal states that up to 100% of Coconut Beach will be taken for the new pumping station. I believe that isn't necessary. I believe that it's a matter of convenience for the contractor. Please remember that the contractor performing the work is

your "hired help", and we are your "paying client." As the client, please allow us to impose a "preference" requirement upon the contractor. They not only need to develop a solution that will prevent the city from flooding during a major hurricane, they also need to construct and install that solution within a smaller footprint.

Of course we want flood protection. But we are looking for a proposal that doesn't allow the possibility of losing Coconut Beach completely. We are urging you to put a cap on the amount of Coconut Beach that can be affected. Specifically, I believe that cap should be at no more than 20%. If the proposal said, "10% to 20%", I imagine that all of us would be a little disappointed, but we would have remained relatively silent. The proposal doesn't put a cap on it. The only cap is by the physical impossibility to take more than all.

Returning to the point that I work for an engineering consulting firm, you can hire us to design a solution. Our primary focus, the oil and gas industry, is slow right now, and you could serve multiple purposes (better flood protection, smaller footprint, and economic stimulus) by contracting my firm. Our office manager used to play volleyball at Coconut Beach, and he is good friends with Bruce, so I'm sure that contractor-client cooperation would be unprecedented for Corps of Engineers projects.

Please consider each of these requests, and I'm especially interested in the option to help design the solution. We have both the resources and the relationship with Coconut Beach to leverage unique synergy.

Respectfully,

Elliott G. Brett
EDG Consulting Engineers
-----Original Message-----
From: Owen, Gib A MVN [mailto:Gib.A.Owen@usace.army.mil] On Behalf Of MVN Environmental
Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2009 6:57 AM
To: Brett, Elliott
Subject: RE: So I hear...

Mr. Elliott
Just to clarify. The number of comments received is used to determine the
level of public concern for a proposed action. In the case of Coconut Beach,

we are aware of the public concerns if the site is impacted. We also are
aware of the number of users, etc at the facility. Mr. White has been a great champion of the complex.
The Federal decision process is based upon an analysis of scientific and engineering data. Impacts to the human environment are considered as part of
the scientific data that is analyzed. Comments that contain factual information providing sound reasoning as to why the proposed action is good
or bad are very helpful during this phase of the analysis.
As discussed in the proposed action section of IER 5, the Corps plans are too
minimize impacts to business and residents to the greatest extent practicable
during the design phase.

However, I want to clearly state that no decision has been made at this point
in time on what the final Federal project will be. We encourage public input
into this process and will take into account all comments received.

Gib Owen
US Army Corps of Engineers
Chief, Ecological Planning and Restoration Section/
HSDRRS Environmental Team Leader
New Orleans District
504 862-1337

-----Original Message-----
From: Brett, Elliott [mailto:egbrett@edg.net]
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 1:32 PM
To: MVN Environmental
Subject: So I hear...

Mr. Owen,

I hear that the decision to impact Coconut Beach by taking a portion or all
of this recreational facility for pumping station staging area is based partly upon the lack of email in support of the playground, whereas II Tony's
has received over 2300 emails supporting it.

That is a foolish basis.

I can guarantee that II Tony's has fewer clients per week than Coconut Beach.
It's really easy for people to send an email, but true votes come with a presence. I helped rebuild Coconut Beach after Katrina with my own sweat and
muscle, I play in two leagues per week, and I participate in the tournaments
on Monday night and weekends. I support the pro-shop by purchasing clothes,
and I support the bar and grill. In my 10 years as a Lakeview resident, I've
been to II Tony's one time. It was nice enough. I don't wish any harm upon
them. I didn't start going to Coconut Beach until 8 years ago, and I didn't
actually know about II Tony's, or any of the other Bucktown area restaurants
until I became a regular at Coconut Beach.

Why does any of this matter? Who am I? Well, I'm one of the young
professionals, in an engineering firm for the offshore oil and gas industry,
that has helped to rebuild the city. My wife is an engineer in the aerospace
industry in New Orleans.

After Katrina, I bought a house in Lakeview, because of my love of Lakeview
and Coconut Beach, to be closer to the people and activities that make this
city worthwhile to me. I was and am excited about living in New Orleans
because of my community at Coconut Beach. If Coconut Beach goes away, I will
start listening to my wife and leave this city. She already says there isn't

enough to do here besides drink and eat.

I hope you come out to see the community that will be destroyed by the action
that is currently proposed.

I remember the meeting at St. Paul's Episcopal Church where the Corps of Engineers vowed not to get rid of Coconut Beach. Were you the tall guy who
said all that?

Elliott G. Brett

EDG Consulting Engineers

3900 N Causeway Blvd, Suite 700

Metairie, LA 70002-1763

(504) 934-2149 Office

(504) 296-8818 Mobile

(504) 455-0868 Fax