



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Hurricane Planning and the Health of Galveston Bay after Harvey Addressed at Deer Park CAC Meeting

A year after Hurricane Harvey, Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) members wanted to hear how the storm affected municipal and industrial hurricane planning for 2018 as well as its impacts on Galveston Bay. Robert Hemminger, City of Deer Park Emergency Management Coordinator, said investments in drainage over the long term paid off when the 55 inches of rain over four days resulted in less flooding than during Tropical Storm Allison. The city has engaged a consultant to determine how best to address drainage problems that did occur.

When DPCAC plants described changes made to their hurricane plans this year, many said plans will now focus on flooding, not just wind. Plants also are updating how they communicate with employees in multi-day events and how best to equip ride out crews that may stay at the plant during a storm for more than a few days.

Scott Jones of Galveston Bay Foundation (GBF) showed satellite images of Galveston Bay before and after Harvey to reveal how floodwaters carried sediment and debris to the bays. GBF sampled water at 65 locations after Harvey and analyzed it for fecal bacteria, salinity, and turbidity/debris. Bacteria levels were high right after Harvey but returned to normal within weeks, as did the clearness of the water in most cases. But floodwaters made the bay water less salty, which impacts the growth and development of oysters and dolphins because it allows some pathogens to survive that harm the marine creatures. Toxicity was an issue at the San Jacinto Superfund Site where dioxin levels in sediment after the storm were significantly higher than standards.

Asked about the status of hurricane surge suppression proposals, Jones said the Army Corps of Engineers' Coastal Texas Protection and Restoration Feasibility Study has looked at 5 options and expects to issue recommendations in the coming weeks and schedule meetings where the public may review plans and voice opinions.

DPCAC will meet on Monday, September 24 for the Annual Report on Emissions from DPCAC plants. If you would like an invitation to attend one of the 6 p.m. meetings, contact a member or email the DPCAC facilitator at info@deerparkcac.org.

Visit www.deerparkcac.org to read about recent meeting topics, find links to useful resources on emergency communications and the environment, see lists of DPCAC community and plant members, and read our mission and purposes.