

CITY OF OPELOUSAS  
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

The Council of the City of Opelousas, Parish of St. Landry, State of Louisiana, convened in a regular session on this 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 at 5:00 p.m.

With Mayor Donald R. Cravins, Sr. presiding, the meeting was called to order.

The Mayor requested the City Clerk to call the roll and the following Council members were PRESENT: Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, and Jacqueline Martin. ABSENT: Julius Alsandor.

A moment of silent meditation was observed and Mayor Cravins asked that everyone remember the family of Amanda Jeffers who was killed in an automobile accident that morning. Alderman Joseph Charles led the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum., seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on 08/21/2012 and two Special Meetings held on 08/13/2012 and 08/28/2012.

On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adopt the agenda, with the following changes: *deleting under the PUBLIC HEARINGS Section, Item No. 14, "A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AN ACT OF SALE BETWEEN THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS AND CHERRY MEADOWS LP..." and moving it to the PRESENTATIONS Section as Item No. 6-A for discussion purposes only; adding under the RESOLUTIONS Section, Item No. 16-A, "A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ST. LANDRY PARISH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN"*.

#### PRESENTATIONS

*Presentation for recognition of the Employee of the Month.* The Employee of the Month chosen for August 2012 is Mrs. Florence Freeman. Mrs. Freeman has been employed with the City of Opelousas for seven years. She is married and has two children and seven grandchildren.

*Discussion of an Ordinance to execute an act of sale between the City of Opelousas and Cherry Meadows LP.* Mayor Cravins allowed the public to come up and speak regarding this issue:

*Ms. Yvonne Normand* stated that this city is about making a difference. She stated that we were proclaimed the Zydeco capital but that we need to be the capital of recreation for our young people and that recreational spot needs to be the highlight. To have it highlighted means that it's there for recreation and it builds economic development. Part of that economic development could be additional businesses on the west end of the Opelousas to increase the tax revenues in that part of the City and to flourish that part of the City. The proposal to put this housing does not necessarily blend in with that. The rental fees for the housing would go to a firm that is not housed in Opelousas so the tax base would not be here. Ms. Normand asked the community if they thought the Council should continue to support the sports complex. The response from the audience was yes. She then asked the community if low-income housing needs to be in the sports complex. The response from the audience was no. She stated that other communities to the south are beating us and she asked the Board to listen to the community.

*Mr. Ken Vidrine* spoke regarding economic development. Shortly after Mayor Cravins was elected, Mr. Vidrine stated that he had the Youth Triple SA Director to come to Opelousas for a meeting. At that time he said that if the City would build five fields then he could host tournaments in Opelousas because we had one of the best locations of any that he had. If it is done right, then there can be economic development.

*Mr. Joseph Citizen* has been a member of the Committee for 11 ½ years. He stated that he is in total agreement with Ms. Normand and Mr. Vidrine. He asked that the City not let the federal grant money be lost.

*Dr. Rosemary St. Clergy* stated that the Historic District Commission also met today and unanimously supports the park and is unanimously opposed to the housing project that is under consideration. Dr. St. Clergy would like the letter from the Commission to be a part of the minutes. The letter reads as follows:

September 11, 2012  
Mayor Donald Cravins  
Opelousas City Council  
The Opelousas Historic District Commission would like it known that we support the proposed Cherry St. Park as proposed by the Master Planning Committee. We also support and ask that the City Council utilize the \$495,000 federal grant as soon as possible to begin the first stage of the park so that the grant monies will be utilized before they expire in 2013.  
We do not support the proposal to sell any part of the property to develop low income or subsidized housing.  
Thank you.  
Lois Boagni Ed Dubuisson Lucius Doucet, DDS Earl Guedry  
Alvin Jefferson Rosemary St. Clergy, MD, MBA Cassandra Johnson Thomas

Dr. St. Clergy stated that the City already has so much low income and subsidized housing in Opelousas. She stated that she is not opposed to having additional housing but she asks that they not put it near a park where our children are going to be playing. Mayor Cravins stated that to say the housing is low-income or subsidized is untrue. He stated that if the Council decides they do not want the housing then they can put up \$200,000 from the fund balance to start the park next week. He stated that they should have allowed the developers an opportunity to come in and state their case.

*Mr. Joe Robinson* stated that he supports what was said concerning the park and this was an advertised public hearing but no one has spoken in favor of the project. He stated that when the issue was presented to the Master Plan Committee, the City had already taken it under advisement and it was explained to them that it was urgent. He asked the Council to table the issue and not re-introduce it and look for funding to build the park.

*Mr. John Lamke* stated that when he and Ms. Laura Balthazar met with the Master Plan Committee and they were talking about urgency, it was about an application for tax credits as part of the financing for this project. He pointed out that on the west end in its current condition today, we will not get a company to come in and invest on that end of town. This company is willing to come in and invest six million dollars on ten acres to provide adequate, safe housing for some of

CITY OF OPELOUSAS  
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

our working families. They are not talking about subsidized housing. He thinks they need to have another meeting with the company in order to make an intelligent decision. Alderman Reginald Tatum wanted to know why the company was not in attendance. He stated that he asked what the rush was about at the last meeting. He feels that if the company is going to invest that much money they should at least show up to the meeting.

*Mr. Clarence Watson* pointed out that we need progress. Everything we have in the City is outdated. The City is slow when it comes to recreation. He stated that nothing is wrong with either of the parks—both parks are safe.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs it was resolved to give \$160,000 from the fund balance to start the Master Plan Park Project. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs, it was resolved to not consider the sale the Cherry Street Property. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

*Discuss request for pre-approval for CONDITIONAL USE of property located in an RI (Residential) Zone at 608 S. Market Street to open a Church (Timothy Bertrand/Leo Franklin III).* A public hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 09/10/2012. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request for pre-approval for CONDITIONAL USE of property located in an RI (Residential) Zone at 608 S. Market Street to open a Church (Timothy Bertrand/Leo Franklin III).

*Discuss request for approval for VARIANCE for set-backs of property located in a MEDICAL ZONE on Lots C-1 & C-2 on Heather Drive (LHC Real Estate I, LLC).* A public hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 09/10/2012. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request for VARIANCE for set-backs of property located in a MEDICAL ZONE on Lots C-1 & C-2 on Heather Drive (LHC Real Estate I, LLC).

*Discuss request for approval for CONDITIONAL USE of property located in an NMU (Neighborhood Mixed Use) Zone at 631 S. Union Street to open a Healthcare Office (Marlon Haynes/Gwendolyn Callier).* A public hearing regarding this matter was held by the Planning Commission on 09/10/2012. The Commission approved the request. On a motion by Aldermen Blair Briggs and Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the request for approval for CONDITIONAL USE of property located in an NMU (Neighborhood Mixed Use) Zone at 631 S. Union Street to open a Healthcare Office (Marlon Haynes/Gwendolyn Callier).

*Discuss back pay for Mr. Leonard Hammond as ordered by the Municipal Civil Service Board on 05/16/2012.* On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles, it was resolved to pay Mr. Leonard Hammond back pay in the amount of \$44,296.40 from the fund balance. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

*Discuss re-apportionment issues.* Mr. Cedric Floyd, President of Data Center, a redistricting company, presented a plan to redistrict the districts in Opelousas based on the current Census results.

*Presentation by City Attorney.* Attorney Frank Trosclair stated that he had no business to discuss.

*Engineer's Monthly Status Report.* Mr. William Jarrell stated that the ground storage tank plans have been submitted. The Park Avenue Bridge is under construction. There are issues with the channel lining on Hiram Street Bridge.

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

*Pursuant to advertisement in the Daily World, a Public Hearing was opened at 5:58 p.m. regarding the following properties:*

- a. Roy Mayo, 700 Block Planters Street (Abandoned Mobile Homes) – Several mobile homes. Recommendation is for demolition.
- b. Lee Esther Mayo, 700 Block Planters Street (Abandoned Mobile Home) – Recommendation is for condemnation for demolition.
- c. Glenn R. Walker & Alice Walker, c/o Willie Breaux (Burned Wood Frame Structure) – Working with property owner prior to today who has since sold the property to Mr. Willie Breaux. Mr. Breaux purchased the property and is in the process of getting a loan to renovate the home. Mayor Cravins suggested a 30-day extension. Recommendation is for a 30-day extension.
- d. Sybil Williams, 818 Halphen Street (Wood Frame Structure) – Recommendation is for demolition.
- e. John Edward Brooks, 423 E. Grolee Street (Burned Wood Frame Structure) – Ms. Doucet stated that Mr. Brooks has been here before for extensions. Mr. Brooks stated that he has a contractor who is building a house in Lafayette and will start once he is finished. Recommendation is for a 30-day extension.
- f. Adair Asset Management LLC/US Bank, Stephen C. Ayers W/R, 1509 Goodloe Street (Burned Wood Frame Structure) – Recommendation is for demolition.
- g. EXODUS III, LLC, 233 N. Main Street (Abandoned Brick Veneer Structure) – Recommendation is for demolition.
- h. Mary Ann Thierry Anderson, 521 & 529 Lot 7 Sapphire Street (Abandoned Mobile Homes) – Recommendation is for demolition.

CITY OF OPELOUSAS  
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:06 p.m.

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and Alderman Joseph Charles, it was resolved to adopt the recommendations. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

**RESOLUTIONS**

*A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS' APPLICATION FOR THE FY 2012-2013 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT*

On a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum and seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 17 OF 2012

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE CITY OF OPELOUSAS' APPLICATION FOR THE FY 2012-2013 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM GRANT

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP) is to assist units of local governments with funding for needed infrastructure and long-term capital improvements in rural areas. Other federal funds available through USDA, CDBG, and EPA (Revolving Loan Funds) programs are to also assist rural communities in these efforts. LGAP's purpose is to fill the gaps where there are no federal funds available to assist a unit of local government with an identified high priority need. Priority will be given to those projects which identify and resolve basic human health and safety needs; and

WHEREAS, all municipalities and parishes in Louisiana are eligible to participate in the LGAP program with the exception of the following HUD entitlement cities: Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Kenner, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Monroe, New Orleans and Shreveport; and

WHEREAS, maximum grant ceiling amounts are based on population ranges and cities with a population range of 5000 – 35,000 are eligible to apply for up to \$50,000;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Alderman of the City of Opelousas, State of Louisiana that support is given to the application for the FY 2012-2013 Local Government Assistance Program (LGAP) Grant from the Office of Community Development, as submitted to said office.

The above resolution having been submitted to a vote was adopted as follows on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012.

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

**ATTEST:**

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR

*A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ST. LANDRY PARISH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN*

On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs and seconded by Alderman Joseph Charles, the following Resolution was offered for adoption:

RESOLUTION NO. 18 OF 2012

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE  
ST. LANDRY PARISH EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

WHEREAS, the St. Landry Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness has prepared an Emergency Operations Plan which covers the entire Parish of St. Landry and all municipalities within the parish; and

WHEREAS, this plan is a living document and may be updated annually with major revisions every four years; and  
WHEREAS, having an approved plan is a requirement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in order to receive federal grants.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Aldermen of the City of Opelousas hereby accepts and adopts the St. Landry Parish Emergency Operations Plan as the official emergency operations plan for the City of Opelousas.

The above resolution having been submitted to a vote was adopted as follows on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of September 2012.

**YEAS:** Joseph Charles, Louis Butler, Jr., Blair Briggs, Reginald Tatum, Jacqueline Martin.

**NAYS:** None.

**ABSENT:** Julius Alsandor.

**ATTEST:**

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR

**CONSENTS**

On a motion by Alderman Blair Briggs, seconded by Alderman Reginald Tatum and unanimously carried, it was resolved to grant authority to advertise for Sewer Pump Parts.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. Cyrus Auzenne stated that the money from Solid Waste is on the way in about four months to fix a few streets in Opelousas.

Dr. Rosemary St. Clergy stated that grass is being left on the side of the road after it is cut. She stated that the City has an ordinance but it is not being enforced. She also stated that Ms. Estelle Perrault asked that someone check on the tree by the library. She pointed out that there are also two broken sidewalks that need to be repaired before someone gets hurt.

Mr. Germon Morgan stated that there are issues with cleaning of the streets. He pointed out that they are understaffed and don't have the proper equipment. He stated that they don't have time to be personal gardeners but they do try to service the public. Due to a recent string of incidents, they have developed a bad reputation at the street department and they have

CITY OF OPELOUSAS  
OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

had to step back and examine themselves individually. He stated that there are people that work hard at the City. He also stated that he would never compare himself to a fireman or a policeman but he has the same health and financial issues as they do but he does not have the benefits. He stated that there are many issues that the Council needs to take into consideration to help their job descriptions and salaries. Alderman Reginald Tatum suggested that they form a committee to find ways to help the department. Mayor Cravins suggested that Mr. Kim Fontenot, Alderwoman Jacqueline Martin, Alderman Reginald Tatum, and Ms. Laura Balthazar sit down and come up with some ideas to be presented to the Council for consideration.

There being nothing further to come before the Council, on a motion by Alderman Reginald Tatum, seconded by Alderman Blair Briggs and unanimously carried, it was resolved that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

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MAYOR