

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
MONDAY, DECEMBER 23RD, 2019
CHAIRMAN THOMAS MALIK
VICE-CHAIR MARVIN PERRILLOUX

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in Regular Session in Council Chambers, St. John the Baptist Parish Government Complex, 1811 W. Airline Hwy., LaPlace, Louisiana on Monday, December 23RD, 2019 at Noon.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Larry Sorapuru, Jr., Councilman-at-Large, Div. A, Kurt Becnel, Councilman District I, Julia Remonet, Councilwoman District II, Lennix Madere, Councilman District III, Marvin Perrilloux, Councilman District IV, Michael Wright, Councilman District V, Larry Snyder, Councilman District VI, Thomas Malik, Councilman District VII, Jaclyn Hotard Gaudet, Councilwoman-at-Large, Div. B

ABSENT: None

Councilman Snyder led the Prayer. Councilman Sorapuru led the Pledge.

Legal Counsel Keith Green, Jr., and Christopher Cortez were present.

MOTION: Councilman Snyder moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to recess. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Councilman Perrilloux moved and Councilman Snyder seconded the motion to go back into the regular meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT - AGENDA ITEMS ONLY (2 minutes per citizen)

There were no public comments at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESSES:

Natalie Robottom - Presentation - 2018 Miss Andouille Queen Mandi Lee Sweeny and 2018 Teen Andouille Queen Jenna Necaize - Keys to the Parish

Natalie Robottom, Parish President, presented 2018 Miss Andouille Queen Mandie Lee Sweeny and 2018 Teen Andouille Queen Jenna Necaize - Keys to the Parish.

The presentation can be viewed in its entirety at www.sjbparish.com.

CONSENT AGENDA:

ITEMS: Approval of Minutes - December 10th, 2019, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval - Victory Beyond the Wall Ministry - March and Rally - Monday, January 20th, 2020 - 8:00 AM - 400 Ory Drive; Robert Figuero - Monthly Financial Report (November 2019)

MOTION: Councilman Perrilloux moved and Councilwoman Remonet seconded the motion to approve the consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes - December 10th, 2019, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval - Victory Beyond the Wall Ministry -

March and Rally - Monday, January 20th, 2020 - 8:00 AM - 400 Ory Drive; Robert Figuero - Monthly Financial Report (November 2019). The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION ON ORDINANCES:

19-50 (Public Hearing Held) (Tabled 12-10-19) An ordinance to create perspective precincts by the split and/or merger of precinct geography in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 18:532 and 18:532.1 (N. Robottom)

MOTION: Councilwoman Remonet moved and Councilman Becnel seconded the motion to REMOVE Ordinance 19-50 from the TABLE. The motion passed unanimously.

Natalie Robottom stated, "Yes, this is in accordance with State Requirements, again South-Central Planning developed a precinct plan merger, I think there was some confusion with regard to whether voters were moving, which actually is not the case it's actually where they'll be voting, but we do have folks here to explain that to you. The Registrar of Voters, I did speak with him earlier, the Clerk of Court and Mr. Pat Gordon, Chief Planning Officer, and I think Josh Manning is also here to discuss what is being proposed. Now keep in mind, the prospective precinct plan will not go into effect until after the 2021 Redistricting Process is complete. And all of you know the Council is engaged in that process, it has to be fair and balanced, but the Council has a large roll in Redistricting. So again, none of this goes into effect until then, however it will be the set of precincts provided to the Census Bureau for tabulation purposes and used for the State Legislature and Council during the Redistricting Process. These precincts must be adopted by December 31, which is why it's on here, as a statewide precinct freeze begins on January the 1st. Again, Mr. Russel Jack and Josh Manning with South-Central Planning are here, to explain or address any questions."

"Joshua Manning, South Central Planning."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "Thank you. Really quickly, if the precinct merger plan doesn't go into effect until 2021, which would be after we do the Redistricting. Could we possibly have to redo the precinct merger plan after we redistrict. Like could we go through the redistricting process and then adopt a precinct merger plan, once we know what all the precincts are going to look like, instead of approving this precinct merger plan right now?"

Joshua Manning stated, "The only issue with that, is right now you have some lines are drawn on non-visible features, and you have some precincts that are fewer than 300 voters. Which those are no-no's in the State, and that's what we're trying to eliminate. If you go in to redistricting, the reason you do that now is cuz when you go in to redistricting, everyone's redistricting at the same time. The Council redistricting, the School Board, and of course your State Legislative Offices. When you're using the same set of precincts it's very possible that that'll be conflicting boundaries drawn using those precinct lines, and then at the time you cannot merge across a Council district line or across a State Representative line. This is the only window to do those merges to prevent that happening at that time. Cuz if that happens at that time, then you're stuck with the same precincts again with that same boundary that might be an illegal boundary for 10 years."

Councilwoman Gaudet asked, "And so how often do you all access precincts that have less than 300 voters?"

Joshua Manning stated, "That takes place, I believe the Registrar of Voters does that after every election I believe."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet asked, "Okay, okay."

Natalie Robottom stated, "And you've guys have done that on a couple of occasions. This is something new that was brought to his attention as also being a problem, so that's why it's/they're trying to address it now, but you've done it before."

Joshua Manning stated, "This is a statewide process, we've done similar plans in Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. James, and St. Charles adopted theirs last week."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet asked, "Thank you."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So, our biggest issue in St. John Parish we're looking at as far as (I don't know if you can answer this question), but it's to look at those precincts that are less than 300 people, that's our major concern right now? How would this effect the demographics of the voting precincts?"

Joshua Manning asked, "Of the what, the voting precincts?"

Councilman Snyder stated, "The make of the voting precincts, the demo graphs."

Joshua Manning stated, "Yes sir. And this particular exercise, it's based on where people live, there's no requirement to have different demographics made of equal representation, because it's going to be the demographic that is in that neighborhood. So, what his is doing it's looking to put neighborhoods together that might've had a precinct line drawn across them previously."

Councilman Snyder asked, "So that can change then, the demographics? It can actually change then?"

Joshua Manning stated, "Uh..."

Councilman Malik interrupting stated, "Every time somebody moves or..."

Councilman Snyder interrupting stated, "Of course it can, by what you just said that can change."

Joshua Manning stated, "I guess that's a technical thing that could happen, yes."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Well it might be technical, but it will change it could change. And this was initiated by the...I know its state law, how long has that been on the, a state law? That's 20 years or so?"

Joshua Manning stated, "Our agency was contacted at the end of last year and requested to assist our parishes in putting this plan together."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Okay, by the voters..."

Joshua Manning stated, "By the State Legislature."

Councilman Snyder stated, "State Legislature?"

Joshua Manning stated, "Yes sir. Dr. Bill Blair with the State Legislature"

contacted me."

Councilman Malik stated, "So real quick. When you're looking at, was it 7-5 merging..."

Joshua Manning interrupting stated, "Yes."

Councilman Malik stated, "You would have 7-5, Precinct 7, District (excuse me) District 7 and Precinct 5, merging to 5...what was the other number, I'm sorry."

Joshua Manning stated, "It's 4-8, is that correct?"

Councilman Malik stated, "4-8, yeah 4-8."

Natalie Robottom interrupting asked, "And was that the one that's back in River Forrest? Cuz there were some unusual lines..."

Councilman Malik interrupting stated, "Yeah, there's a couple a yeah!"

Natalie Robottom interrupting stated, "And I think it split the street, that might've been yours."

Councilman Malik interrupting stated, "So, how did you come up about, what is the voting population of those two (2) precincts?"

Joshua Manning stated, "I have those numbers it's just, let me pull them out. Precinct 7-5, has a total number of register voters of 1,187 as of December 1st, and Precinct 4-8, has 138 voters as of December 8th, a December 1st, I'm sorry."

Councilman Malik stated, "So, why move from 7-5 and put them into 4-8?"

Joshua Manning stated, "If you look at the actual verbal descriptions, I believe they're all going into 7-5. If you don't mind, I can show you this map."

Councilman Malik stated, "Yeah please, yeah!"

Joshua Manning stated, "It's semantics on the way that the summary of changes was written. But in general, the smaller precinct is merged into the larger precincts..."

Councilman Malik interrupting stated, "It's going to merge with the larger. And there's some confusion, it may have been just the way it was written."

Joshua Manning stated, "Yes sir."

Councilman Malik stated, "But yeah, I but certainly it's you know people get conditioned to vote in a particular place..."

Joshua Manning stated, "Correct."

Councilman Malik stated, "And I just wanted to ensure that those instances where Districts were merging, that the smaller voting populations was going to merge with the larger."

Joshua Manning stated, "And just again for the record, if there's an election held next year, everyone votes in the same place that they're voting to today."

Councilman Malik stated, "Yeah, oh yeah!"

Joshua Manning stated, "Yes sir."

Councilman Malik stated, "Okay, yeah we're creatures of habit and we don't like to change our habits sometimes. But any way alright, appreciate it."

Councilman Snyder stated, "I'm still a little concerned with this, and I think we ought to wait until next year to get this done..."

Councilman Malik interrupting stated, "Yeah we kind of have to."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Say that again, we got to do it by December?"

Councilman Malik stated, "We have a hard deadline."

Councilman Snyder stated, "You know because all we got, all we got from anyone was merge some precincts. But this got much more wider affect than just merging precincts. I don't mind going vote some other place, if my precinct is too small, I need to go vote another place. But if we're going change the demographics of each Council District or each State Legislature, then that's what I got a problem with."

Natalie Robottom stated, "It doesn't."

Joshua Manning stated, "No sir, may I address?"

Councilman Snyder stated, "Yes sir please."

Joshua Manning stated, "No, this Ordinance does not change anyone's Council District, or any Legislative District. That takes place in 2021, after the Census releases the population figures. We don't know what their population figures are, and that process goes through a very long detailed process, in which the Council is very involved and the public, there's multiple public hearings that take place as part of that process. It's not a that's not something that's done like this."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Well you, so your job right now is just to merge those precincts the best way we can?"

Joshua Manning interrupting stated, "Yes sir. It's a preparation to make sure there are no illegal boundaries going in to the next redistricting."

Councilman Snyder asked, "What you mean by illegal boundaries?"

Joshua Manning stated, "Right now..."

Councilman Snyder interrupting asked, "Street or something like that?"

Joshua Manning stated, "No! There are non-visible boundary features, which means that there's no line. If you go out there with a map, or look at it in an aerial, you can't see where that boundary is. In some situations, you have some boundaries, if you look at it on aerial, they're going through people's homes or they're going through businesses. And that's something we're trying to avoid in the future. That's what this is addressing."

Councilman Snyder stated, "Yes sir, thank you!"

Councilwoman Remondet stated, "I'd like to make a motion to approve Ordinance 19-50."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "Josh, really quickly and kind of touching on what Mr. Snyder said. So, we will approve this right now, but it doesn't go into effect until 2021?"

Josh Manning stated, "Yes ma'am."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "But in 2021, once we approve this, all of those 138 people who live in 4-8 will now live in who live in District 4 will now live in District 7?"

Josh Manning stated, "Not necessarily."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "Okay."

Josh Manning stated, "Because during that time you'll be looking at, that'll be the process that determines the boundaries, those boundaries could potentially move again, but we're going to make sure when that happens that it's on a visible boundary line."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "I guess that's the confusing part. Because if it really doesn't make any change, the real change is going to come in 2021, when we do Redistricting, then it almost seems like; why do we need to do this now if it's not going to have any affect."

Josh Manning stated, "Because if you don't make this now then it's a potential that a State Congressional District Boundary, cuz they're not looking at the verbal written descriptions, they're looking at math, they're looking at this precinct has this number of voters, this is the racial demographic of that particular precinct, that's what they're looking at. So, when you're looking at that, there's a very real percentage possibility that it could be drawn on one of those older boundaries and you want to avoid that."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "Okay."

Josh Manning stated, "And that happened to us 10 years ago, cuz there were precincts that we intended to merge when we did the Redistricting Plan, but we could not because of where the state drew their boundary line."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet asked, "So are we approving this in an attempt to consolidate our precincts before the State Legislature draws their lines?"

Josh Manning stated, "Yes."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet asked, "And why would we want to do that?"

Josh Manning stated, "So that, so that they're not using the smaller precincts and then we get locked in to using those precincts also."

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet asked, "Okay, alright thank you."

Councilman Wright stated, "So you're saying if we approve this with the Redistricting 2021, there is a possibility where we can revert back somewhat?"

Josh Manning stated, "Potentially yes sir. You could, if there's no population change which is very unlikely, but if there's no population and the Council Districts don't need to change, potentially you could go back to the existing precincts or what we would recommend would be using lockouts, that's something that that's been more popular recently, which is you're in the same precinct voted the same location, but if you're on this address list you vote in this Councilman's District, if you're on that address list you vote on the other Councilman's District."

Councilman Wright stated, "Okay."

Councilman Snyder asked, "Is there much of a problem there, here in St. John Parish, I know you've looked at this already, am I right? As far as the boundaries that we can't find or we don't like quite sure where they are? Is that a large problem here in St. John Parish?"

Josh Manning stated, "There are several problems, not as many as we've seen in some other parishes. Which is why we address other parishes earlier in the calendar year but, there were some issues, yes sir."

MOTION: Councilwoman Remondet moved and Councilman Madere seconded the motion to approve Ordinance 19-50. The motion passed unanimously.

19-55 (Public Hearing Held) An ordinance creating the Department of Drainage of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, providing for the appointment of a Director who shall be responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing drainage strategies, overseeing all internal and external drainage systems, promote the safety and protection of the Parish critical infrastructure and its residents during all drainage threats including but not limited to tropical systems, tidal increases, wind events and excessive rain (J. Hotard Gaudet)

Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet stated, "Mr. Chairman, as the author of this Ordinance, and I did have a conversation with the District Attorney last week, there's some changes that I do need to make to this Ordinance. So, at this time I'll be asking that we TABLE it."

MOTION: Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet moved and Councilman Madere seconded the motion to TABLE Ordinance 19-55. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Becnel stated, "I ask that the minutes of the finance meeting are accepted."

MOTION: Councilman Becnel moved and Councilman Perrilloux seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the finance meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS:

There was no new business.

DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:

Lennix Madere - Update on 219 Homewood demolition, status of E. 23rd Street and grant info

Councilman Madere stated, "Yeah I spoke to Mr. Rene, and South Central did go out there and reinspect that building and they found out exactly what I said that that building need to be demolished, and that's the recommendation they gave to Mr. Rene. And they're in the process right now, of going through the process of getting that building removed. Okay, and we appreciate Mr. Rene for following up on that, okay, cuz anyone I could see that building long overdue. Thank you."

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Parish Buildings - Security

Any and all pending legal matters

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

19-57 An ordinance approving a conditional use permit for a museum tour operation on a portion of Farm Lot 31, Woodland Plantation located in the area generally bounded by Cardinal Drive, Hwy. 628, ICRR, and Ideal Ct., containing municipal address 1128 LA Hwy. 628, LaPlace, La, as shown in Exhibit 1 attached (PZR-19-1172) (N. Robottom)

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:12 PM, Councilwoman Remondet moved and Councilwoman Hotard Gaudet seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed with 1 nay (Snyder).

/s/Thomas Malik
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche
COUNCIL SECRETARY

The meeting can be viewed in its entirety at www.sjbparish.com.