

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 22nd, 2011
CHAIR RONNIE SMITH
VICE CHAIR CHERYL MILLET

The Council of the Parish of St. John the Baptist, State of Louisiana, met in Regular Session in the Joel McTopy Chambers, LaPlace, Louisiana on Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011, at 6:30 PM.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Haston Lewis, Councilman District I, Charles Julien, Councilman District III, Raydel Morris, Councilman-at-Large, Div. A, Jaclyn Hotard, Councilwoman District IV, Ronnie Smith, Councilman District VI, Steve Lee, Councilman-at-Large, Div. B, Danny Millet, Councilman District II, Darnel C. Usry, Councilwoman District V, Cheryl Millet, Councilwoman District VII

ABSENT: None

Councilman Millet led the Prayer and Councilman Julien led the Pledge.

Legal Counsels William O'Reagan and Kerry Brown were present.

Cheryl Millet/Ruth Montgomery – Presentation – St. Timothy's Community Garden

Ruth Montgomery, representative for St. Timothy's Community Garden, commented St. Timothy's Community Garden is looking to expand for the spring growing season. The garden is open to all people in LaPlace and the River Parishes. It is located at the corner of Madewood and Belle Alliance at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church and School. The garden has several purposes. It helps to build community among the residents of the area. It helps to provide health benefits for families by growing traditional produce and nutritionally rich foods and it also provides exercise and outdoor activity. It helps to provide youth education for gardening. The garden was recently honored to receive "People's Garden" recognition from Keep America Beautiful, Inc. They are one of 670 gardens recognized by the US Dept of Agriculture as collaborating with the communities in sustainable gardening. If interested in taking part in the garden please call Ruth at 985-652-2983 (evenings) or email at ruthfm@bellsouth.net.

Natalie Robottom – Presentation – Riverside Academy Boy's Basketball Team – Louisiana State Basketball Champions, Division 2A

Natalie Robottom, Parish President, presented the Riverside Academy Boy's Basketball Team – Louisiana State Basketball Champions, Division 2A. The team coach, Coach Byrd, and the players were on hand to accept this presentation. Coach Byrd commented that they had a great season and not only are his players great athletes but they are all great students and young men. He thanked the Council and the Parish President for this honor.

Natalie Robottom – Presentation – Tish Parquet, Construction and Group Coordinator, Family Resources of New Orleans

Tish Parquet, Family Resources of New Orleans, commented about the Family Resources of New Orleans program. They help people to become home owners, people who are less fortunate and may not be able to get a home on their own. They have been working in St. Charles Parish for the last three years and would love to come to St. John Parish. They work in rural areas and the land has to be owned out right or purchased. They help with floor plans, budgeting, and paperwork. There are criteria's that need to be followed. An applicant can only make so much money per family member, have to have a pretty good credit score at least 670 and can't have claimed bankruptcy in the last three years. You also cannot presently own a home to qualify. All of her information will be displayed on the government channel (channel 15) per request of the council. She will meet again with the administration and the Health and Human Services Department to try and set up some classes in this area for St. John residents.

Natalie Robottom – Presentation – Marathon Minor Home Repair Program – Dean Torres, United Way Executive Director, Elois Joseph, Director Health & Human Services, Cheryl Parquet, Director Council on Aging, Leroy Mitchell, Public Relations Specialist, St. John Sheriff's Department

Natalie Robottom commented what you are looking at is a team working together to make some minor home repairs with a grant from Marathon. They have been working very hard in establishing a process and a fair mechanism to get this money out into the community and we want to thank them and of course Dean for working with us and I will allow them to speak more about the program.

Dean Torres, United Way Executive Director, stated, *"I am very pleased to be here tonight. This is really a team effort. The United Way often times there are donors in the community who reach out to the United Way to learn what might be needed in the community and what might be available and often times industry and businesses through their corporate offices they have some money that is earmarked for various things but we were fortunate enough to come into this particular situation sometime back and it has taken us a while. The United Way works through agencies and tries to team up the community to work as one and I think this is a very good example of what it means to come together because it will help more people and as Mrs. Robottom stated we want to be very fair and to touch as many people as we possibly could. We will be looking directly for retired and handicapped individuals in the Mt. Airy, Garyville and Reserve area because that is where the dollars were intended for. As we got with the groups together to work with this we found out that there may be some other dollars through the parish department of health and human services. We are very glad that that might be available because it can help more people. One of the things that comes from this as we are able to do this and be successful with it, it may produce other dollars and contributions and then we can help more of the handicap and elderly. There isn't very much money here okay. We are looking at trying to do things where we can not only impact a particular household but one of the things I know I have had experienced is that you sometimes have a water leak on the*

house side of the meter and you have water puddles throughout the area and that is one of the things that we are hoping to assist those families that can't afford to make those repairs right off and for a little amount of dollars and the Sheriff's Department is involved in this also. So we have put together a good team and we have a good system we think and hopefully we will be able to start making a difference in these types of households in St. John Parish."

Elois Joseph, Director of Health & Human Services, stated, "Our department is matching Marathon with a \$10,000.00 grant too. We are going to help with the labor and the \$10,000.00 from Marathon will be for the material. We are glad to be a part of this program."

Consent Agenda

Items: Approval of Minutes March 9th, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – FCA Run for the Son – Saturday, April 9th, 2011

MOTION: Councilwoman Usry moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to approve the amended consent agenda items consisting of Approval of Minutes March 9th, 2011, Regular Meeting; Permit Approval – FCA Run for the Son – Saturday, April 9th, 2011. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING ON ORDINANCES:

There were no ordinances at this time.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:

11-12 An ordinance amending Section 105-25 of St. John the Baptist Parish Code of Ordinances as follows: Swimming pool fence requirements. (C. Millet)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilman Lee stated, "We met this evening at 6:00 PM to conduct the finance items relative to this council. We had a total of seven items. I would ask at this time that one of my fellow council members would make a motion to ratify the actions taken by the finance committee."

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to accept the recommendation of the finance committee. The committee approved to take the bids for Homewood drainage basin under advisement, to take the bids for the Airnasium – St. John West Bank Recreation Complex under advisement, to award the bid for Reverse Osmosis (RO) Membrane filters to CSM at a cost of \$439.00 per filter, to grant administration authorization to execute a contract with Shread-Kuyrkendall for the design of the Foxwood Levee, to grant administration authorization to renew the contract for the Code Enforcement Officer, Gregory D. Taylor at a rate of \$1,750.00 per month, to grant administration authorization for a Certificate of Substantial Completion – water tank rehabilitation – Ruddock Station #3, to authorize no cost change order #2 – Reserve Boat Launch, and to grant administration to renew the contract with First Call Network, Inc. at a cost of \$6,500.00 a year. The motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:

Haston Lewis – Sewerage upgrade in the Wallace/Edgard area

Councilman Lewis stated, "The reason why I asked for an upgrade on the sewerage problem in Wallace and Edgard is because we are getting a lot of back up over there and over flowing in the street. Some of these problems have been going on for the last four to five years, even before I got into office and nothing really has been done. I think I talked to the director and he said they went into the Wallace area and they found out in the new subdivision that we have out there that they have a lot of open pipes out there and that causes some of those problems. I think he is probably right because talking to some of the operators at the water plant that the water is very clear and it only comes in there when they have a big rain. Somebody said it might be because they put that new subdivision in that area that caused it to have a problem but unless it rains we don't have a problem. So I don't think it is those houses. On 13th Street in the Wallace area we have another problem in the middle of the street. It has been going on for five years and I talked to a couple of people over there that works at the utilities and they tell me that something is wrong with the pump. I told them I don't have a problem with that fix it, but for four years they haven't fixed it. They get a lot of overtime from going over there and hitting the switch when the pumps in there are not large enough. I think if we have a bad pump that isn't large enough I think we need to put the right pump in there instead of causing sewerage to back up all in the streets and in people's houses. On Castle we have a problem with that, we need to start addressing that too but a lot of these places here have pump trouble and I would like to see them be repaired and updated. That is all I want to talk about on the sewerage."

Cheryl Millet – Update on Street signs

Councilwoman Millet stated, "I just wanted to get the street signs that we're asking to be put on the new hurricane traffic lights. I know we have been working on this since October. Are we any closer?"

Clifford Bailey, Director of Roads & Bridges, stated, "We will be forwarding the design to DOTD by the end of next week."

Councilwoman Millet asked, "So we are going to have signs when?"

Clifford Bailey stated, "Soon."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Soon is not good."

Clifford Bailey stated, "In about 30 to 45 days."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Okay put it back on the agenda in about 30 to 45 days."

Councilman Julien stated, "While we are on signs, I asked Mr. Tregre to check on some signs for the Belle Point area because we had some speeding going on. I was wondering if you could give me a brief update on what is going on there."

Mike Tregre stated, "Myself and one of the employees for Clifford Bailey we are doing a ride tomorrow in your district and another area we had a four way stop sign request in Sugar Ridge. So I will have that update for you by the end of this week."

Raydel Morris – Civic Center

Councilman Morris stated, "I originally put this on the agenda because I had several constituents in my district wondering when it would be available for rent. So I would like at this time to just possibly give a brief history of what is going on with the Civic Center because I get a lot of complaints with people saying that the residents can't use it. Just for my point of information I met with administration this morning and they told me when we built the Civic Center we didn't come up with a permanent finance funding mechanism for it. So before we rent it out long term to the movie theatre that the parish has to subsidize it from Economic Development. So when we started renting it out to the movie theatre, it started paying for itself and this is why we have some of the long term rentals on it. Mrs. Sutherland is going to briefly give us an update and tell us how much we are collecting for rent, it is paying the bills and when the contract is up with the movie theatre."

Angelic Sutherland, Assistant to the Parish President, stated, "First of all I will address the contract with Delta Blues, the production company. They are the company that is in there that is filming the series Memphis Beat. They are currently in the center through June of 2011 and they have an option to extend their lease for an additional year if the series is renewed. The lease agreement is for \$30,000.00 per month. The previous contract they had with the same production company started March 15th, 2010, they have basically been in there ever since. The contract from March 15th until August 15th they were paying \$25,000.00 per month and then from August through January 15th, 2011 they were paying \$15,000.00 for storage of their equipment and until they found out if the series was picked up again or renewed. So when we renewed the contract, we entered into a new contract with actually increased their fees from \$25,000.00 a month to \$30,000.00 a month. According to the numbers that I have here, for the year of 2010 of the \$213,000.00 approximately that we received for the community center rentals, \$207,000.00 of that was from the production company. The utilities were approximately \$117,000.00. We had building maintenance fees which are regardless of if someone is in there are not there is upkeep of the building. So we actually had access revenue of \$49,842.00 for the year 2010 from the movie production company being in the civic center. In 2009, to my knowledge there was no production company in the center. We actually lost \$110,000.00 approximately."

Councilman Morris stated, "Thank you Ms. Sutherland. Just a brief explanation that it is because of funding is why our civic center is rented out to a movie theatre for a long period of time. If we don't the council from other funding means would have to foot the bill. So it is beneficial to the parish that as long as we can rent it out then we don't have to pay it."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I will just make a couple of comments. When it comes to the civic center I guess it is just a sensitive subject what the building was originally intended to be built for is not what it is being used for today. So we are at a situation where we

are kind of stuck with what we have and we need to make the best of it. I don't know what the answer is. It seems like we just kind of dodged the bullet because we have this company here now but it is not a long term solution for that civic center. It is going to come to a point where it is really going to be a drain on the parish. So I think that the council and the administration really need to come together collectively and decide what is the real long term plan for the civic center because if this company here says in June or July okay we are finished, our show is not renewed, then we are going to be stuck scrambling trying to find somebody to be in this civic center to cover just the cost to turn the lights on and keep it cool. That is just irresponsible. It seems like all of the administrations I have served under, I have even said lets look at selling it or whatever we need to do because if it is going to be serious financial burden on the parish and the residents can't use it then it is just putting good money after bad and it isn't making any sense. So I would really like to see this administration maybe come up with a plan a long term plan for this building. I know the River Parish Tourist Commission is in there. I am not sure what they actually bring to it. I know last year or year before I had requested to get a spread sheet from them of all the events that they had booked in the civic center and it was like Bobby Jindal speaking, David Vitter speaking and these types of things. Okay they are coming here and they are going to have a place to speak anyway. I don't believe they even paid a fee. That is not working in my opinion. The public cannot use it and we are just kind of shooting in the wind and hoping we get a movie deal and eventually it is going to be a serious drain on the residents which is even more unfortunate for them because they paid for a building that they cannot use, that is probably going to be even a more serious burden on them in the near future. So we really have to look at this thing very closely and not let it get any further away from us then it already has. That is just my opinion. I asked the last administration to put the building up for sale. It wasn't the most popular idea but if the residents can't use it and we can't afford it that is the only thing that makes good sense to me unless we can figure out a way for the residents to be able to use the building. At this point, the way the contracts are written nobody can even rent the building. If you want to have a wedding in the civic center you have a clause in your contract that says 30 days prior to your wedding if a nice movie comes along the parish can kick you out. Well I have never been married but I will never get married under those terms that in 30 days you can kick me out of the building because I have been to enough weddings and events and all of these types of things that you can't do that to people even if you want to have a graduation or a ball. I mean in 30 days if they can be kicked out who can scrap up and go somewhere else. So the residents can't afford it. It isn't practical. The only people who can use it or afford it are these movie people and are we really marketing movie people or are we just getting lucky because they are landing here. I am not willing to roll the dice on luck with a building that cost us 7 or 8 million dollars and cost us \$117,000.00 a year to maintain. I know it isn't this administration's problem and this thing just got away from us. I can tell you from what it was originally supposed to be to what we have now but it is something that all nine of us are stuck with and this administration right now is stuck with and we just need to deal with what is in front of us."

Natalie Robottom stated, "I think the last conversation we had about

the center we were directed to find out some of the options and what we found out is that legally we cannot sell the building. So that option is removed. However we can lease it for a number of things. There are a combination of efforts and you are correct and as a council and administration we would love to get together and decide the direction if the only way to operate and fund it is through movie productions then as a council and a group we need to decide if that is what we are going to pursue. I think there has been a little unbalance yes they fell in but we almost want to leave it vacant for our proms and parades and balls so I don't think there has been a concerted effort to try and fill it because we want it for our residents. So once we decide on a vision for the center. We know what helps to operate. We know the cost to operate it. We know who can afford that. We just have to make a decision and direct ourselves to go towards that. We did look at as I said had our legal counsel review. I think because it was paid for by bonds and there was a specific purpose we can't sell it and there were some tax exempt bonds and we can't pass those on to a private owner we are not able to sell it but we have to make the most of it. We agree it is not what it was intended to be however at this point it is not a drain on the budget and if that is the decision moving forward that we want to pursue those types of activities then we need a meeting with the tourist commission if they are going to be the ones to market it to very specifically market it to that. What I can tell you is the studios who have used it; the production companies are very pleased with it as a site because it is unlike a lot of the warehouses. It is a very nice site and we just need to make sure that what we are getting for it is a reasonable price for what they are getting and so far we have not had any opposition to the prices we have been asking and as Angelic said we actually went up this year on the contract and that is being paid and they are willing to pay even when they are not using it for storage. So we welcome that conversation in terms of what we want it to be now to make sure that we are protected in terms of its operations and we will work towards getting that."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I wanted to have some additional comments. Actually when I had spoken with legal counsel before about selling it and this was maybe a year or so ago there were some talks about those bonds that you mentioned and also that it is not impossible for us to sell it. We would have to go back to the voters and have their approval to sell it. So maybe we need to get back with legal counsel and explore all the options. Not saying that okay we want to sell it but lets look at what is the long term goal for it, can we make it profitable, can we make it a center that the public can actually use, can we fill all of those needs and just look at all of the options but it wasn't that no you can't sell it. It was okay you have these steps that you have to take if that is an end result which of course that would be an end result but it is an option."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We will definitely get back with Judge Daley on that. I think he may have a written response to that and we will be happy to get that to you and discuss that as an option as well as all of the others moving forward."

Councilman Lewis asked, "We can't turn that building into something else beside the civic center like a multi-purpose building or something where we can have other things in there besides just concerts or rent it out like that. I think we need to look at that. I don't know what

idea they had when they first built it but they must have had some kind of idea what they were going to do with it or what they were going to have in it. It looks like from what I am hearing they had no idea."

Councilman Smith stated, "Actually Mr. Lewis the idea was at that time that recreation was going to take that building over. Those two rooms in there were supposed to be combined basketball courts for recreation to put offices in and to run the recreation department out of and that was supposed to be your original gym in the parish and they were going to use the gym floor and rent that out as space for people to use for weddings or whatever else. Another thing from that Mr. Morris you mentioned that there is nothing in place to pay for the maintenance and upkeep, that is not true, the hotel and motel tax for the parish is actually what was put in place to pay for running the building and if I am not mistaken, correct me if I am wrong Mr. Lee, we also came back and we passed an ordinance or something where we were supposed to change the air conditioning where the ac would be changed so that when nobody is using the building that only the offices in the building could be kept cool. What happened was they put one unit in before that cooled the entire building and we passed something saying that we wanted to change the air conditioning in there where when that building is not being used that the offices can be controlled. Number one that would cut down on the amount of money, the \$117,000.00 that we are paying for utilities so I am not even sure if that was ever done Mrs. Robottom could you please look into that for me? Thank you."

Councilman Lewis asked, "Who was supposed to run this civic center after it was built?"

Councilman Smith stated, "What was supposed to happen at the beginning recreation was going to move in. It was never designed or built originally for the movie theatre. What happened was once it was built, we realized that we weren't going to have enough money to fund this building and keep it open because of the utility bill and everything else. So in our infinite wisdom we decided to add more money to the cost of the project to make it sound proof so that we could use it as filming for movies and stuff like that. That is some of the history on the center. Now one of the recommendations that I have is before we get to the end of the contract with this production company instead of kicking them totally out, find out if it is possible if they could give up, there are two rooms in there, find out if they could just use one room if they could move their set and make it smaller or whatever else that way they would have the other building to rent out to the public. It is just something that we may be able to look into that way both entities can be served that way."

Natalie Robottom stated, "That was something that we actually looked at last year. Unfortunately for this production they built building in the entire facility at about \$100,000.00 to build the set. So the set actually for this movie covers the entire facility but that is not to say that that will always be the case."

Councilwoman Hotard stated, "I just kind of wanted to touch on a few things that you said and maybe for some of the newer council members and I don't know if maybe Mrs. Remondet probably has more information on this but I know you aren't prepared to discuss all of this but this was inherited from the previous council. I don't know how long ago this

was and the original intent, as Ronnie said, was for the recreation department and at some point I don't know how the guy Wayne Reed came in and he sold us on this idea of this sound stage and all of this change and then there was a whole lot of stuff that happened after that. So for some of the new council members I would just kind of encourage you to get with Julia and she can give you just a little bit of history of how we got from the original intent of this building to where we are now. There was a little bit of history with that and some bumps in the road that got us to where we are now, not that it isn't fixable at this point but it definitely went through a process. It was a can of worms to say the least."

Raydel Morris – Utilities – 140 N. W. 14th Street

The above item was removed from the agenda.

Haston Lewis/Raydel Morris – Grass cutting contracts

Councilman Morris stated, "I had a chance to sit down and discuss these contracts with administration to look at them in depth because before it was all hearsay and this one said that and I wanted to have that. I did that in depth. They gave me a lot of details on it. I would at this time I am not going to make a motion but I would like to ask for all of the contractors that fall under this category to make an appointment to meet with administration and if something cannot be worked out at that time then I will come back and make a motion accordingly."

Councilman Julien asked, "Are you talking about individuals that want to bid on the contract or are you talking about individuals that already have a contract?"

Councilman Morris stated, "We have about five contractors now that have contracts with the parish for cutting parks, water towers and these are the contracts. I think they expire in June. I was looking to take some action on it but after meeting with administration that was the decision."

Councilman Smith stated, "Mr. Morris I don't want to over step my boundaries but I think a few months back we gave administration the authority or whatever to come up with a plan or an idea on exactly what they wanted to do with the contracts and they were going to come back to us with their findings or what they wanted to do. Mrs. Robottom again I don't know what you and Mr. Morris spoke about but would you prefer to just come back to us with that as we stated earlier or would you want to meet with those people that are cutting the grass now. I just don't want to stir up the pot that you are sitting there trying to fix."

Natalie Robottom stated, "We agree with you Mr. Smith. At Mr. Morris' request we have no problem meeting with out current grass cutters. However what we are looking for from our directors is an evaluation of all the places that are being cut, those that may need to be cut and we are looking for a system for awarding these contract. Clearly I think what Mr. Morris is suggesting is that we meet with the existing contractors if they may be willing to have some discussion relative to the price but as we asked for previously, we wanted to look at a comprehensive approach to grass cutting. We have contracts. We have

some people cutting grass on purchase orders. We have some violation grass cutters and we really don't feel comfortable with our existing system but we absolutely have no problem meeting with the existing contractors. We did initially when we came into office. However we wanted the opportunity to develop a plan to bring back what we thought would be fair and transparent."

Councilman Julien stated, "As administration is looking into the grass cutting pertaining to that, we definitely need to look at how they will deal with blighted property and the grass cutting there because that is a major issue that just hasn't seemed to be worked out."

Natalie Robottom stated, "As we said we wanted to look at that process as well which is a little bit different from the grass cutting contracts and how they solicit vendors to cut those properties and then since the time these contracts have been entered into we have had some changes. We have altered some of the properties. We are building a gym on one that may have been cut. We have some construction over on the West Bank. We just need to look at everything we have, look at everybody who is participating both in the grass cutting as well as janitorial and come back with a comprehensive plan for the council."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Why I wanted that on the agenda for the simple reason that we have a bunch of small contractors. What happens when you have small contracts like that they are opened to the public and everybody can see what you are working for and under bid you because they have a right that is public record. So it is hard for you to ask for a raise or anything because somebody can always under bid you a couple of dollars. I wanted to see the small contractors come in here. The way things are now I think they might could help us themselves with lowering their price and maybe work out a different contract with the parish without putting their contract at risk because the way it is going these contractors could be at risk. This is the only local contractors that we have that are doing work for this parish. You see what will happen is they will take all these contracts and put them together and then a big guy will come in there and take them all and there goes all our small contractors. So your small contractors will never become big contractors if we continue to operate in this parish like that because they will never have a chance."

Councilman Morris stated, "Just to elaborate this was one of the reasons why, what Mr. Lewis stated, why we wanted to give the contractors under contract an opportunity to sit down and meet with administration because there are several different variables and items that we have to look at. That was one of the things that we discussed today about not lumping it to make it possible to make our local people wherever we could possibly give work to local residents we do but they have to be competitive and they have to be within the guidelines. We just can't give the whole ship away. So once they get with the administration they will come back and then we will have to make a decision as to if we want to renew them or to authorize them to go out for quotes or we want to go out for bids and stuff based on that conversation."

OLD BUSINESS:

Haston Lewis – (Carry Over 2-22-11) Override Planning and Zoning for a

denial for trailer placement for Lori Robertson, 447 Capt. G. Bourgeois in LaPlace

Councilman Lewis stated, "I would like to make a motion to override Planning and Zoning on 447 Capt. G. Bourgeois in LaPlace. I went to see where the trailer was going and I understand that Planning & Zoning denied that trailer because they had more houses than trailers. If you went out there and saw where that trailer was being placed especially with the railroad track in front of the thing and trees and the building we were just discussing about all of that is in the same area. I don't think anyone in the community was against it, it is just that the board was following policy because there were more homes than trailers and to me that might be a good rule but for somebody that doesn't have anywhere to stay and they have a lot and they can't use their own lot to put their own trailer on that is pretty bad."

Councilman Morris stated, "I have some concerns with the actions of the council and some of the things since I have been here. Since I have been here we have overridden several and we never really give a reason why. I am afraid that if we don't come up with a better solution to this that sooner or later we are going to get sued. Basically because every time we put a manufactured home in an area we are lowering the value of anyone's house that is in that area. So what is the reason for the council overriding the planning and zoning commission? Do we have a problem with the ordinance? I had a meeting, myself and Mr. Julien and some of the residents with the District Attorney on this same issue and some of the things that came up is before we override or before we put it on the agenda we need to know if it was unanimously turned down by the planning commission. One of the things that I discovered was if it is unanimously turned down by the planning commission, the council doesn't have the right to override it. So my question is do anybody know that, secondly there are a lot of criteria that these manufactured homes have to meet and that we have to make sure before we override it that they agree to meet all of the criteria's and stuff and some of them haven't and who is enforcing it? So I think we need to, in the future, revisit the ordinance and kind of take the council out of it because we are not being affected by the override. The residents in the area are being affected. I had a call just recently in the last week one from Mt. Airy a resident talking about how can we improve the neighborhood? I had one from Garyville and Reserve in a meeting. So I don't have a problem with anyone having a manufactured home. I started in a manufactured home. I think we need to also be able to incorporate the residents in the area that are being affected by this, some of the homes are being put in the area not for a resident to live in but for someone who wants to rent it. A lot of times when they are placed in the area they don't keep them, they leave and it brings down the area and I just have trouble with it because I find that we are overriding and placing it in areas that we need to be trying to improve. So basically we are adding to deteriorate areas in the area that needs the most improvement. So I think we need to revisit it that is why I said earlier when the lady talked about the home building project we need to push as much as we can to an option to manufactured homes to homes. We need to come with a solution because some of them are looking at it is a better situation to have a manufactured home than rent because it is a permanent fixture but what are we doing to the area."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Let me tell you all something, I always

believed in people live where their money lets them live. A lot of people like to have homes in different areas but what happens when you don't have a home? I saw what happened after this Katrina deal nobody wants trailers but I saw a lot of people in trailers. I saw a sign I never thought would come across the river, no trailers in Edgard and God knows Edgard is at least 40% trailers believe me. We are all in certain areas that we don't have to worry about trailers. We don't have to worry about nothing but you have some poor people out there that don't have a place to lay their head and the only thing they have is their trailer. Well you might say let them go to a trailer park sometimes they can't afford a trailer park but if their brother or sister has so many number of acres you can let them park there. I have two kids that lived on my property that stayed until they were able to build houses. A lot of us started in trailers. As we get down the line it looks like we forget that we went through some of those things and we had these people begging with no place to stay. I always worried about one thing who lives next to me, not the type of house they live in."

Councilman Julien stated, "As Mr. Morris said we did speak with the District Attorney and there are guidelines that they have and some time in political situations people on most boards don't vote for trailers to be put up but I vote for the people. So the people in a specific area determine how I vote. Mr. Lewis is a council member in District I if this is what he is asking for; he knows what his constituents want. In certain areas we have people who call and they may say they don't want it. I have certain areas that I know my constituents don't want trailers so I couldn't bring it to the people. Every situation is different. He is the council member in District I. I think the people elected him for that purpose and that is where I am at."

Councilman Lee stated, "The only comment I will make because it was brought up with a new District Attorney and some new council members just met and read this ordinance for the first time. I was one of the council members that helped write the ordinance. The intention of the ordinance was to do just what you are talking about Mr. Morris and that is to improve the quality of the homes in the areas and the council at the time and directors, administration and everybody involved felt like this was the direction to go. Well then you meet the real people and I am supporting the comments that Haston made you see who it really affects. The ordinance was written with that in mind to protect the integrity of the property values surrounding the entire areas and there is a portion of that ordinance that you spoke of tonight obviously it is the first time I have ever heard any councilman mention it that is that the board was given the authority to not be overridden. I can tell you that this council has overridden it many, many times and the justification has always been because this council is the elected body and they are the person chosen to represent that particular area and I can tell you that I have seen many trailers placed and I have seen some that haven't been placed because I have gone out there with Mr. Lewis and other council members that are just trying to do what is right by the people that they are representing. So I don't want this to go said that any council's intention is to prevent someone from having a place to live. I voted many times in support of the council members. As a matter of fact more times than not I support it because I know that person was elected to serve those people and we are the people that write the ordinances, sometimes we write them wrong. This probably is

one that needs to be revisited not if we have the authority to override but perhaps how we classify if a mobile home merits being put in that place because right now I try to use good common sense based on what the council members in that area tell me is necessary. I have recognized for a long time that there has been an ordinance there that says we really might not have the authority to override but I can tell you that for years we have done it and that in my opinion the intentions of the council has been to provide people with a place to live, certainly not to hurt the people that live in the surrounding areas. You will run across difference of opinions as to whether or not this trailer is acceptable, that trailer is acceptable or there are x amount of houses here or x amount of houses there. What the administration does is what they are supposed to do. They are honoring an ordinance that is in place. I have had some dialogue with this administration. Perhaps we do need to revisit it but this has been a touchy subject for a long, long time and the reason is just like Haston said and nobody can say it any better than Haston did sometimes it is tough to tell somebody you have no place to live when that is the best that they can do. So I have yielded to the people who represent the people both in houses and trailers because they were elected by the majority of the people in that area to make real important decisions and this is always a real important decision because it involves someone's home. Someone is either going to have a place to live or their not. So it has been a tough deal for a long time but since you brought it up Mr. Morris. You are right. That is what the law says and it has for a long time. We haven't changed it. It is the way we have dealt with it. So it probably does need to be revisited. Perhaps those of you that are interested or have some ideas of how to improve it, I welcome your ideas because I have labored with it for a long time. It is a tough call."

Councilman Morris stated, "That was my only purpose to bring it out to make it aware of because it was new to me when I sat down with the DA and I was looking at him and Charles was there and we were both kind of stunned by it. I think we need to revisit it because as of now when we do we may be in violation. We set examples and we want everybody else to follow the rules then we need to follow the rules ourselves. We need to revisit it. It is very touchy. Like I said just tonight two residents came here and they want an override and we kind of looking at each other and are wondering what are our options and it is very hard because like every one has said it is someone's home. They need a roof over their head."

Councilman Lewis stated, "Let me tell you something most subdivisions have that type of protection with trailers because when you buy your lot they tell you that you can only build a certain size house. We all know that but people that live in the rural area where do you send them? I mean it is fine if you have that protection but here you have rules passed that I can live anywhere I want that my money lets me live. It is alright for you to set rules that you don't want me there because of my house but you want to make sure you get the right price for your house if you want to sell it you don't have to worry about it being next to a trailer but in most of your subdivisions that protection is already there."

Councilman Smith stated, "My final comment on this issue and I am going to let it go after is two things. One Mr. Henderson can we please meet

asap, look at this ordinance and find a way to fix this ordinance because a lot of times when we are overriding something it is turned down because of the 400 foot radius that is in the ordinance."

Mike Henderson, Planning & Zoning, stated, "You can override planning and zoning. The ordinance says if it is unanimous you need 2/3 vote to put it on the agenda."

Councilman Smith stated, "I am not concerned with fixing that part of the ordinance. I want the part fixed because 90% of the reason they are denied through the planning commission is because of the compatibility rule. If I am not mistaken Mrs. Parquet just asked us to help people get into houses but the thing about it is and she made the statement we work hard but we can never get into houses because we don't have the down payment or whatever else that is needed. So now I am going to tell a person that works hard no you can't put a trailer somewhere. You have worked hard but you haven't worked hard enough to get a house so I am going to make you rent for the rest of your life. I am not trying to put a trailer in a subdivision with all big homes. We are only placing trailers where other trailers are. Okay so we are not trying to hurt anybody. The way I look at it is that we are trying to help people establish a residency and we are trying to help people get on their feet. I grew up in a trailer so I know how it is. Unless somebody comes and makes me stop assisting these people and getting into their trailers, do what you have to do because at this point I am going to go ahead on and help Mr. Lewis put that person in that trailer and put that trailer where they need it at so that they have a place to live."

MOTION: Councilman Lewis moved and Councilman Morris seconded the motion to override planning and zoning's denial and grant a trailer placement to Lori Robertson, 447 Capt. G. Bourgeois in LaPlace. The motion passed with 6 yeas and 3 nays (Usry, Danny Millet & Cheryl Millet).

NEW BUSINESS:

Charles Julien – Override Planning and Zoning for a denial for trailer placement for Tiffany Davis, 167 E. 14th Street in Reserve

Councilman Julien stated, "I would like to put the public on notice of my intent to override planning and zoning's denial of a trailer for Tiffany Davis at 167 E. 14th Street in Reserve. They were denied because they didn't have a lease. So they did acquire the lease and I intend to override."

Marie Brown-Mercadel/Mike Tregre – Resolution – R11-13 – A Resolution for the adoption of the Parish-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan

Mike Tregre stated, "Administration requests approval of Resolution R11-13 for adoption of the Parish-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan, which is funded by FEMA, was initially prepared in 2006 and adopted by the parish by Resolution 06-04. The updated Hazard Mitigation plan must also be adopted by Resolution."

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Julien seconded the motion to approve Resolution – R11-13 – A Resolution for the adoption of the Parish-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan. **WHEREAS**, St. John the

Baptist Parish's original hazard mitigation plan was adopted in 2006 and that this plan is an update to the original hazard mitigation plan, and; **WHEREAS**, the updated hazard mitigation plan will remain Supplement 1 to the Parish's Emergency Operations Plan, and; **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish has received grant funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, through the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, for the update of its 2006 hazard mitigation plan, and; **WHEREAS**, our community has participated in the process to update a DMA compliant Hazard Mitigation Plan based on the FEMA guidance available in the How-to-Guides, and; **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish and local representatives and governments have participated in the mitigation planning process, and; **WHEREAS**, appropriate opportunity for input by public and community officials has been provided through press releases, open meetings and availability of draft documents, and; **WHEREAS**, the updated Plan has been recommended for adoption by the Steering Committee, and; **WHEREAS**, adoption of the updated Plan is required prior to further consideration for FEMA funding under the following programs: Pre-Disaster Mitigation, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Flood Mitigation Assistance Program. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the St. John the Baptist Parish Council does hereby adopts the St. John the Baptist Parish Hazard Mitigation Plan Update as supplement one (1) to the St. John the Baptist Parish's all Hazard Emergency Operations Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Councilman Smith stated, *"I have to add an item to the agenda here under new business. It is sponsored by Cheryl Millet. It is Resolution R11-14. A resolution urging the Louisiana Legislature to adopt any and all steps to insure that St. John the Baptist Parish remain wholly within a single house district in regards to re-apportionment proceedings before the Louisiana Legislature."*

Councilwoman Millet stated, *"This is a resolution I would like to have sent up to the legislature to let them know that under the initial proposed drawings we are going to be chopped up and severed and put into different places. This would put the legislature on notice that we would like, since we do have the population, to have our own district and put them on notice that we would like to stand united in doing this and I would appreciate my council members support on this."*

Councilman Smith asked, *"Would it be possible to table this item until the next meeting?"*

Councilwoman Millet stated, *"No because the session is only good for three weeks and they are in it now and it has to be completed and that is my concern."*

Councilman Smith asked, *"I would like to see or do you have in front of you the demographic numbers for each of those districts the way they were split?"*

Councilwoman Millet stated, *"I do not have the numbers in front of me. No sir."*

Councilman Smith stated, *"That is the reason I have a problem with this issue. I am in agreement that I would like us to stay whole but I need to look at the entire picture because after reviewing one of those maps it is a possibility that one of those districts that they used our*

parish to combine is going to be a minority district. My concern is losing that minority district."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "St. John as a whole would still be considered a minority district because of our population."

Councilman Smith stated, "Okay so you are saying this resolution is going to keep the entire parish together because right now we are not."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "That is correct we are not together but we have the population and the numbers now to make our own district instead of being chopped up."

Councilman Smith asked, "So what you are requesting is to make sure that the entire parish of St. John the Baptist stays together as one district?"

Councilwoman Millet stated, "Correct."

Councilman Morris stated, "I think we need to support this. If we get chopped up it dilutes our power and basically if we are split into a third than this parish will not be recognized because we won't have enough base in a district to make a difference and we would be like a step child. So that is why we need to support this. We will be a minority because we are 52%. So that is why we need to try to do anything we can to stay as a whole. If we had our own representation then we have somebody in the state that is representing us and fighting for us we would possibly get a little bit more than we have been. Whenever you dilute it, you get nothing."

Councilman Julien stated, "I would like to have the resolution broken down so that I can have a better understanding of it because what I don't want to do is jump and make a decision. One that I am not informed about and do the wrong thing. I understand and I have to agree off of the top of my head right now with Mr. Morris and what Mrs. Millet is saying but I just want to make sure so I would want more information."

MOTION: Councilwoman Millet moved and Councilman Lewis seconded the motion to approve Resolution R11-14. A Resolution urging the Louisiana Legislature to adopt any and all steps to insure that St. John the Baptist Parish remain wholly within a single House District in regards to re-apportionment proceedings before the Louisiana Legislature.

WHEREAS, the United States Constitution mandates that the Louisiana Legislative Districts be reapportioned and redrawn based upon the decennial census; and **WHEREAS**, the 2010 Census reflects a substantial population shift in St. John the Baptist Parish and the surrounding areas; and **WHEREAS**, currently, St. John the Baptist Parish is currently substantially wholly within District 57 of the Louisiana House of Representatives; and **WHEREAS**, St. John the Baptist Parish is at risk of being divided among two or more legislative districts for the Louisiana House of Representatives; and **WHEREAS**, the St. John the Baptist Parish Council embraces the concept that legislative districts should be concise, compact, and composed of citizens having similar interests; and **WHEREAS**, the division of St. John the Baptist Parish into different districts for the Louisiana House of Representatives would be contrary to the best interests of its citizens, and the principals of communal

interests; and **WHEREAS**, the division of St. John the Baptist Parish into more than two Representative Districts would place it at a severe disadvantage relative to critical issues which are routinely addressed by the Louisiana Legislature. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the St. John the Baptist Parish Government, acting by and through its Parish President and Parish Council, all efforts be made by the Louisiana Legislature the upcoming reapportionment process to insure that St. John the Baptist Parish remain substantially wholly with one single legislative district, and any all efforts to divide the parish into more than one house legislative district be resisted. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the St. John the Baptist Parish Government supports all efforts to draw legislative district boundaries to insure that districts be compact, concise, with natural boundaries, and composed of citizens having similar interests and legislative/governmental concerns. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Parish President of St. John the Baptist Parish forward a certified copy of this resolution to members of all legislative committee members who shall address reapportionment issues, other members of the Louisiana Legislature, the Speaker of the House, the Chairman of the House and Governmental Affairs Committee and the Governor of the State of Louisiana. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDANCE/COUNCIL BRIEFS

Councilman Lewis stated, *"I would like to ask the administration everybody likes the way they cut the grass on the sidewalk over there but the people in the Lucy/Wallace area aren't to happy right now. They would like to see the grass get cut up there too. So I told them I was going to tell you about it and I want to make sure they hear me."*

Councilman Millet stated, *"St. Hubert's is having a fair this weekend and I would like everybody in the parish to attend and help them out if they can."*

Councilman Julien stated, *"We had a lot of rain a couple of weeks ago and I have called on people. The people are having issues whether it be drainage, flooding or as far as them not being able to flush their toilets when we get a lot of water. When we call on certain people we have to have our calls answered. I have called on our capital projects administrator maybe a month in a half to two months ago and couldn't get calls back. I just think that when the people have problems. They want them dealt with. They may not be big to us but they are big to them. The stuff that is going on in Central Avenue and in Homewood, the people of District III as they are sitting here they want me to come and work for them. If I submit something or I ask for whatever the document may be or for whatever the information is if I don't get that in a timely manner we create a situation where those peoples problems don't get dealt with and they don't get the answers that they put me here to answer. So I would ask that administration speak with our capital projects administrator and give me something in writing stating that if I am not going through the proper channels, if there is something that I am missing but the work that has to get done by that individual for my people is not getting done. We are not satisfied. I am disappointed that we have to deal with it like this."*

Councilman Smith stated, *"Mr. Julien I received several calls from your constituents also on Central Avenue. So I am asking administration,*

could you please at the next meeting, we have three weeks, at the next meeting come back with an update on the drainage situation for Central Avenue because that is where I got the calls from."

Councilman Julien stated, "We are in a situation to where everybody's problem is important to them regardless of how light we may take it or how small it may seem to us. Whatever that problem is if that is an individual looking for a job, if that individual is looking to clean up debris the bottom line is they want the work done and they want answers. All I want to be able to do is to give them the answers and be able to do the best that I can for them and I can't do that if the individuals who are put in positions won't do the right thing."

Councilwoman Usry stated, "I want to thank administration for the work shop that we had. I found it very informative and hoping that we will have one in the near future I would like to schedule one so that Mr. Henderson can address us about the trailer ordinance. So keep that in mind."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "First off I wanted to have administration check out the cement problems. I am getting a lot of residents complaining about the cement repairs that they have asked for that haven't been done. I want you to follow up on that and let me know what is going on to the cement repairs to the curbing. This weekend is the Pups in the Park at Hwy. 51 Park. It is a fun day in the park for any dog owners or dog lovers. So come out and join the rotary club as they put out their fund raiser. It is going to be from 10:00 until 2:00."

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Natalie Robottom stated, "On the sidewalks Mr. Lewis we are going to continue to work on those. We started the project right before the Mardi Gras parade and some of the crews were pulled off to do their first grass cutting but it is our intention to do the sidewalks there. The drainage on Central Mr. Julien if you could get us some specifics about your request we will be sure to get you a response however tonight I think we opened bids for the drainage improvement project that will address Homewood, Central and that area. Obviously we are just accepting bids so there needs to be construction so in the interim if there is something that we need to take care of please be sure to get with us and we will get you the information that you need. Mrs. Millet also what we have done unfortunately you weren't able to make the workshop and I know we are trying to reschedule but we have developed a priority list for road projects and we are also doing the same for cement. So we met with Mr. Cliff to pull all of those work order request together so that we can develop a system to send them out when they are making the repairs so that they are not just spot making them but we do have a list from his office based on the requests that have been called in and we are pulling that together to make some assignments. Just a reminder the 16th annual tri-parish elected officials and legislators conference is this Thursday from 6:30 until 9:00. It is obviously sponsored by our Department of Health & Human Services, Elois's office, they have done a really good job of putting that together and they traditionally do. It is at Lace the reception place. Jambalaya lunches are going to be on sale here this Thursday from our office for \$6.00 from 11:00 until 1:00 and that is to raise money for Relay for Life. You can call to place your order at 652-9569.

We will be out on the front lawn serving those. St. John firefighters kicked off the sale of their calendars. We have some I think Mr. Tregre has them. It is a fund raiser for Relay for Life. They were the featured servers at New Orleans Hamburger & Seafood. It was very well attended. They raised almost \$600.00 and of course the sell of the calendars will add to that and as I said we have some here tonight so please see Mr. Tregre. They are \$15.00 each. We also are promoting luminaries for Relay for Life at \$10.00 of course that is for someone affected by cancer if you are interested in recognizing them with luminaries please call our office. Clean sweep 2011 is Saturday, April 16th, we are sending out letters inviting all of our groups, churches and schools to participate. We would like to make it a huge push this year. The program begins at the civic center at 8:30 AM. All of the supplies will be given out then you return at 11:30 PM for food and drinks and entertainment. Again we are trying to get a larger number. We want participation from all of the community. There is a meeting here in the council chambers on March 31st, at 6:00. If you are interested in participating you can call Dana Milioto at our office here 652-9569 or Greg "Za" Maurin at gmaurin@stjohnda.com. We have flyers on our website at www.sjbparish.com. Although it is one day what we have heard is that our residents are concerned about the cleanliness of St. John Parish so we want to focus on it but we are hoping to build on this group to continue to do it throughout the year. April 9th is household hazardous materials collection day. It is a great day to clean out sheds and garages. Hazardous materials can be dropped off at the New Wine Ministries in LaPlace, 1921 W. Airline Hwy between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM. For a complete listing of the acceptable materials visit www.hhmcd.com and there is also a hotline you can call at 504-465-7444 and leave a message. A reminder to everyone the Health & Human Services Department has moved to the Cambridge location while their building is being renovated. Their numbers are still the same but that is their new location. It is kind of short notice but the Economic Development is hosting a half-day smart business forum for entrepreneurs and small business owners to educate them on accessing capital and taking advantage of available resources. It is at the UNO campus tomorrow beginning at 8:00 AM and you can register on site."

Councilwoman Millet stated, "In response to your keep St. John beautiful, I just got this at my office today. It is a phone number to call 1-800-442-2511 to report litter or drivers who litter. There is actually a number that you can call and a letter will be sent to that violator letting them know that they were found littering. The information that they require is the license number of the vehicle, the location of the incident, what type of litter and what type of vehicle. The program has been going on for quite some time. It went dormant and the Wildlife & Fisheries department has picked it up and since they have they have had over 7,900 calls. Unfortunately they have not had one from St. John the Baptist Parish. So our residents need to be made aware that we are not going to tolerate littering in this parish. Our district attorney will prosecute."

There was no executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Property/Casualty Insurance Agent – 1) Claims, any/all property, casualty, and Workman comp claims 2) Claims, procedures and disposition

3) Coverage's, any/all material changes

Cable Franchise Agreement

Any and all pending legal matters

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:08 PM, Councilman Julien moved and Councilwoman Hotard seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Ronnie Smith
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche
Council Secretary