

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met in regular session on June 20, 2017 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room located at 101 North State Street, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Francis Plaisance, Mayor Pro-Tem, Brady Broussard, Wayne Landry, Joe Hardy and Francis Touchet, Jr.

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Jude Mire, Fire Chief
Tony Hardy, Police Chief
Ike Funderburk, City Attorney
Richard Primeaux, Engineer
Gene Sellers, Engineer
Todd Vincent, Engineer
Clay Menard, Public Works Director
Joseph Vallee, Municipal Civil Service Board Member
Steve Moosa, Auditor
Ronald Darby, Police Juror

Mayor Piazza asked Councilman Wayne Landry to lead the assembly in prayer. Mayor Piazza asked Police Juror Ronald Darby to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Piazza announced that the next City Council meeting scheduled for July 4, 2017 will be cancelled since it falls on a national holiday.

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Plaisance and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to table item number one on the agenda since Mr. Nick Sims of the Army Corp of Engineers could not attend the meeting to discuss the Vermilion River due to bad weather caused by Tropical Storm Cindy. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to approve the audit of the fiscal year ended 12/31/2016 as it was presented at the June 20, 2017 Finance Committee meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Plaisance discussed the new property purchased near the retention pond. It is 14 acres. There is additional acreage that may come available for sale in the future too. The property has been cleared by Glenn Lege and all the debris has been moved off. The pond is functional. The well has been dug and is operating to control the pond level. We now have an address for the property. It is 105 S. John Hardy Drive. This recreation area will not be for sports. It will be a family setting. The Boy scouts are making picnic tables. Wildlife & Fisheries have killed all the fish that were in the pond and they will restock it with minnows. In the next two weeks, they will destroy all the pond weed. They are doing all of this free of charge for us. Chief Jude stated he would like to utilize two acres of the property to build a training center. It requires two acres of land and a three-story building. The cost to construct it would be about \$600,000 so we would seek out grants to pay for it. This will help our fire rating as well as the rating for the entire parish.

We will be able to train with all the departments in the parish. Councilman Plaisance stated the Mayor suggested having a walking trail around the pond. Mr. Gene Sellers stated he would like to utilize some of the property for a drying bed for the sewer plant. Councilman Plaisance stated that some businesses are interested in donating private money to help with the project. We would also like to place a memorial recognizing the deGraauw's Drive-in Theatre. David Ashley has informed him that he still has the original projector from the drive-in. Councilman Plaisance proposed a few names for the City Council to choose to name the park. The names he suggested are deGraauw Park, Lafitte Drive-In Park or Lafitte Park. We could name the road deGraauw Drive. Councilman Plaisance also stated the Cattle Festival would like to move the festival to this property. The Festival Board has decided to donate a large portion of the proceeds once the festival is moved there. The festival will be gated and an entrance fee will be charged like many other festivals in the area. Also, we could have an area on the property for people to put up pet memorials for their pets that passed away. The park is in Councilman Landry's district. Councilman Touchet asked what the end costs are. Mr. Gene Sellers stated there are no grant funds available now to fund the project. An application for that would take about two years. You can make this project as inexpensive as you want. If you go out to private donors, they will participate. We have not yet met to talk about costs but it can be started with very little money. Councilman Plaisance stated the water is already there and electricity is too. The Cattle Festival is anticipating paying for the laser leveling. Mayor Piazza ask Mr. Ronald Darby if the training tower is something the Parish Fire Association would be interested in. Mr. Darby answered yes. Mayor Piazza stated what he suggested to Chief Mire is that in order to access the back property, we could construct a bridge at the end of the boulevard. Those fire trucks cannot use the dirt road. We would gate the entrance and that road off. It would not be used for public use. It would only be used by the Fire Department. They would be the only ones with the key and access to that area. There would be very little traffic. Mayor Piazza stated the drying beds are an excellent idea. In the next couple of years, the sewer plant will be our next big expenditure. The UV system is starting to become obsolete. We can incorporate that all in one big plan. Mayor Piazza stated the park is Councilman Plaisance's idea. It is a good idea. It is great that Councilman Plaisance has brought this to the table and that it is something for kids in Abbeville. Every kid deserves to be able to catch a fish. It is not like the old days anymore where you can pull up on the side of the road and go fishing. Kids now days don't have access to things like we did when we were growing up. There is an area to fish at Palmetto Park but a lot of them don't have a ride to get there. It is going to be a liability? Absolutely. Everything the City does is a liability. His suggestion is that in the future, way down the road, it will be a place that is strictly regulated that is only open on certain times and days. We can have someone there to watch the place. You will have to have a life jacket on. Maybe we can have something that is available to kayaks and canoes only. Maybe one day we can get a grant and put fishing piers like they have all the way to Pecan Island. All those things are options and possibilities and long-term goals. The bottom line is that this can be a good family place where people can go with their kids and enjoy a good Sunday afternoon. The birds in the pond are phenomenal. Does the City have the money to do this? At this time, absolutely not. Councilman Plaisance understands this. That is why we are creating a committee. The committee will design the area and develop a financial plan. Private businesses can participate but in the long run the City will have to foot the bill. This property is beautiful and has a lot of potential. The opening hours will have to be regulated. We don't want the public in there any time they want. Mayor Piazza stated that Councilman Plaisance mentioned the Cattle Festival. Moving the Cattle Festival from downtown is a decision that the Cattle Festival Association will have to make. You are welcome to remain downtown as long as you want but if you feel it will be better for the Cattle Festival financially, then that is decision the Association will have to make. As far as how the City can participate in that, that is something we will have to discuss more in detail. The City cannot legally put out money to benefit the Festival and Councilman Plaisance would not be able to vote on any type of action for this. If something needs

to be done out there to accommodate the Cattle Festival move, then the Association will have to come to the City Council and explain how they plan on paying for it. Mayor Piazza also stated that we need to make sure the deGraauw name is prominent. The family has been around for decades. They are pioneers in the theatre/movie industry. Mr. Frank deGraauw, the Mayor's Father and others were charter members of KROF. Councilman Plaisance stated moving the Cattle Festival is due to financial necessity since we would be able to gate the entrance. Councilman Landry stated he is in support of this because it will benefit the children. Ms. Sandra Marant, a Keep Abbeville Beautiful member, stated she is concerned that the area will need to be kept clean so this will require additional funds to be spent by the City. Councilman Broussard stated that Palmetto Park would not have opened without private donors.

**Plaisance/Landry
Resolution R17-16**

A resolution naming the new park on John Hardy Drive at the retention pond Lafitte Drive-In Park, naming the entrance and road deGraauw Parkway and appointing Councilman Francis Plaisance and Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr. to the Committee for the Park.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Hardy/Landry
Resolution R17-17**

A resolution authorizing the Mayor to extend the existing maintenance contract with Don's Lawn Service to the end of the current fiscal year.

The motion carried unanimously.

-03 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to surplus the 1998 GMC fire truck and the 2002 International fire truck and to sell both to the City of Cankton for \$5,000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-04 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Francis Plaisance to submit the names of Bud Zaunbrecher and Dwayne Davidson for the selection of one individual to serve on the Abbeville Harbor and Terminal District Board. The motion carried unanimously.

-05 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Joe Hardy to approve a Class A liquor license for the Ponderosa Lounge located at 811 Nugier Street. The motion carried unanimously.

-06 introduced by Mr. Joe Hardy and seconded by Mr. Wayne Landry to grant a variance to move a 2012 mobile home to 701 Thomas Street. The variance is needed because this is a mobile home restricted zone. The motion carried unanimously.

Gene Sellers, Engineer

- *The contractor for the Coulee Kinney sewer project is still dressing up.*

Mayor Mark Piazza

- *He contacted Clay Menard this morning at 6:00 AM to implement the emergency response plan for Tropical Storm Cindy. We have to act like it will be a hurricane and prepare accordingly. We may get a lot of rain. It does not appear like it will be a wind event. We*

have 2,000 sandbags filled and ready to be distributed. People have already started picking them up. We also have extra loads of sand and extra bags. Anyone who calls in who is elderly or handicapped can have their sandbags delivered. We have a limit of 15 bags at a time per household. Stewart has been in contact with Harvey Dubois' partner. Harvey is ill right now and is not available. He had an accident and broke a hip. His partner is very knowledgeable about our electrical system. Marlon has topped off all the gas and diesel tanks and all the generators have also been topped off. The generators have been inspected and checked to make sure they are operable. Mayor Piazza spoke to Roger today and the Water Plant is at full capacity and the towers are full. We are doing everything that we normally do to prepare for this type of event. Clay Menard stated 40 households have come by to get sandbags. They must show a pictured ID so we can be sure they are residents of the City of Abbeville. We flushed culverts as requested today.

Jude Mire, Fire Chief

- *Damon Bergeron's last day is tomorrow. He is retiring after 33 years with the Fire Department.*

Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr.

- *We will have a new restaurant in downtown Abbeville. It is Midway at the Square. It is an Italian steakhouse. They will employ 30 people.*

Councilman Francis Plaisance

- *Thanked Police Juror Ronald Darby for being here tonight. He also thanked Mr. Gerald Gaspard for being here tonight.*

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Piazza declared this meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza
Mayor