

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION
OF THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
HELD ON THE 20th DAY OF JUNE, 2022

The Caddo Parish Commission met in a Work Session, on the above date, at 3:30 p.m., in the Government Chambers, with Mr. Atkins, presiding, and the following members in attendance constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Taliaferro, and Young (8). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4).

The invocation was given by Mrs. Gage-Watts, and Mr. Hopkins led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to expand the agenda and add action item to lower the flags at half-mast until City Marshal Charlie Caldwell has been laid to rest* be added under New Business.

The President opened the floor for anyone to speak in favor or against the agenda addition. There being no one to speak, the President closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, Jones, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Miriam Burkes came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Thank you. I'm Marian Clayville Burkes. Address 2827 rural Shreveport, Louisiana, and I was coming today to speak on behalf of the resolution for Bloody Caddo. I'm not sure if this is the time to speak now or okay. Well, I was coming because I have been doing community work in this area for a long time. Of course, born and raised here, and there was always a misconception for about Caddo Parish, especially in light of the things is going on in the news with violence and everything. And so, traveling around the state, I always wanted to just kind of find out what other people thought of our community on the outside. And so, that's when I came across a great conversation with a state official. They talked about Bloody Caddo, and when I learned about it, I was completely enthralled and stayed up probably for four days researching Bloody Cattle and what it meant. Just to learn about the trauma that our community has went through over a number of years, was devastating to me, and I could see how it tied into what's going on today. So, I'm here to speak in favor of the resolution for Bloody Caddo to be publicized, so we can get to the healing. We can't, we can't get anywhere without healing what we have to heal in our community. And to heal what we have to heal in our community, we have to acknowledge the past. And unfortunately, it's uncomfortable, but it's very needed. So, I am speaking in favor of it today.

Craig B. Lee came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Great afternoon. Great afternoon. Craig Lee 1112 Prospect Street in Shreveport, Louisiana. Right now, on you're in hand activity band and it reads 'we are one' that's from the Caddo Parish class from 1985. Parish Commissioner Lyndon Johnson and myself were at Fair Park at the same time. He's a year younger. Stormy Gage-Watts came out of the same phenomenal institution. So, I'm handing that to you specifically. You know, today is a very important day. It's first day in United States history that Juneteenth is being observed as a federal holiday and this body has done a phenomenal job in moving forward for the removal of the Confederate statue. That's been a very contentious issue since the past three decades, over the past three decades. Mr. Ron Hamilton started this process over 30 years ago. I picked up the banner baton after he passed over 20 years ago. I picked up the baton and we've now move forward. Your colleague Lyndon Johnson is going to be putting forth legislation to remove the Lynching Tree at the Caddo Parish Courthouse, which is a very important symbol also of racism and white supremacy in Caddo Parish. And I think as we move forward, that the removal of that symbol, that tree, is going to also go towards the healing that my good colleague Marian just talked about. Today, wouldn't have happened if it had not been for the Radical Republicans of 1865. Because on January the 31st 1865, Radical Republicans, my good partner Dr. Woodrow, they wrote and passed legislation that created the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution. That was on January 31, 1865, and some two and a half months later, our ancestors in Texas and certain parts of Louisiana found out that they had been freed. Although they incorrectly celebrate Juneteenth by connecting it to the Emancipation Proclamation, it was really the 13th amendment that actually gave my ancestors that freedom. It really is a Texas and Louisiana holiday that's now been expanded, because there was never any actual Independence Day or Emancipation Day for our ancestors. So, Juneteenth has kind of taken on that enormous thing, but it was the Republican Party that set out to begin the process of righting some of the wrongs of the past. And I asked the Republican Party of this body to basically take on the same spirit of the Radical Republicans of 1865 and now invoke this legislation that counsel Caddo Parish

Commissioner Johnson is going to be pushing for, for the removal of the lynching tree. Thank you very much for the time and I look forward to engaging you guys in September when we have our CC Antoine birthday celebration, and we will be honoring Ron Hamilton and some of the other courageous individuals here in Caddo. Thanks.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

- Juvenile Detention

Dr. Wilson said that there are twenty-two children in the Detention Center; seven of which are OJJ. There are eleven 17-year olds, and eleven children at CCC.

Mr. Young wanted to know if the seven OJJ children are the same children from the last report. Mr. Walker said that some have gone to OJJ custody, but four are over the 14-day limit. Mr. Young wanted to know how long over the 14 day limit are the OJJ children. Mr. Walker said that the longest is 10 days over the limit, and the shortest is 3 days over the limit. He said that he can provide that information to the Commissioners. Mr. Young then wanted to know what is done if a child is over the 14-day limit. Mr. Walker said that OJJ can ask for an extension.

- May 2022 Financial Reports

Dr. Wilson said that the May Financial Reports are attached to the agenda.

- Commissioners Request to Administration

Mrs. Gage-Watts would like the courthouse to be lit in red today in honor of Sickle Cell Awareness.

NEW BUSINESS

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Young, *that Ordinance No. 6240 of 2022, an ordinance to adopt Section 12-27 relative to Occupational Licenses, enacting provisions regarding video poker truck stops, pari-mutuel facilities, and off-track wagering facilities, to prohibit within a certain distance from particular facilities or properties, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Hopkins explained that this will put the same off-track wagering facilities in line with truck stops and video poker establishments. He also mentioned that this came out of Committee favorably.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (7). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Chavez, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (5). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that Ordinance No. 6241 of 2022, an ordinance relative to the compensation of commission members, to provide for an increase in that compensation, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Johnson said that this is a 5% increase for Commissioners starting next term. He further explained that he will not benefit from this because he will be term-limited.

Mr. Chavez agreed with Mr. Johnson on the amount of work that a Commissioner does. He said that "a good Commissioner" does about a 20-30 hour work week making only \$1,500 per month.

Mr. Hopkins said that he is against raising salaries for elected officials, whether it be here or any other elected official. He further explained that this "job" is community service. Mr. Hopkins said that he will not be supporting this motion.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that she will be voting in support of this motion because Commissioners work more than 40 hour work weeks. She said that this salary is not conducive to the amount of work that is being done. Mrs. Gage-Watts also mentioned that inflation is causing financial stress on everyone, including elected officials.

Mr. Atkins respects everyone's views on this, but to him, the current wages are sufficient. He will not be in support of raising the Commissioners' salaries.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, and Johnson (3). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (5). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Chavez, *that Zoning Case 21-39-P, Ordinance No. 6242 of 2022, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located on the north side of Wells Island Road, approximately eight hundred feet northwest of Reverse Drive Caddo Parish, LA, from R-1-7, Single Family Residential District and NA, Natural Areas District to OS, Open Space District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction.

Mr. Hopkins said that this ordinance affects District 3, and that Commissioner asked that this be forwarded for introduction.

At this time, Mr. Hopkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *that Zoning Case 22-7-P, Ordinance No. 6243 of 2022, an ordinance to amend Volume II of the Code of Ordinances of the Parish of Caddo, as amended, the Caddo Parish Unified Development Code, by amending the zoning of property located on the north side of Old Mooringsport Road, approximately two thousand three hundred and fifty feet east of North Market Street, Caddo Parish, LA, from Tract A R-A, Rural Agricultural Zoning District to R-1-7, Single Family Residential District and Tract B from R-A, Rural Agricultural District to R-1-5, Single Family Residential District, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for introduction. Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Hopkins, *that Resolution No. 35 of 2022, a resolution authorizing the Parish Attorney's Office to request an opinion from the Louisiana State Attorney General's Office regarding the authority of the Parish Commission to pass an ordinance requiring that certain types of ammunition be carried separately from the gun, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Johnson said that the Commission voted in favor of obtaining an Attorney General's Opinion, and this is the resolution for that opinion.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that Resolution No. 36 of 2022, a resolution declaring a public apology for Bloody Caddo and systemic racism perpetrated on African-American citizens of Caddo Parish, and otherwise providing with respect thereto* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Gage-Watts: As you heard from two of our citizens today about this public apology, this is a multi-prong approach to promote healing in Caddo Parish. As we search for our identity, is imperative that we acknowledge from our hurtful past. I've heard often that there's a lot of black and dark energy that hovers over Caddo Parish, which could be a direct result of high violent crimes in our area; the poverty; the inequities in health and in race; the severe trauma that has overshadowed our land and caused many to live up to the awful name of Bloody Caddo. From 1896 to 1937, there were lynchings in Caddo Parish. In 1942, began electrocutions. The D'Artois Era from 1952 to 1977, and from 1984 to 2013, that were wrongly convicted innocent men collectively who spent 33 years on death row. From the answer now, we're nationally known for racist remarks, peaceful protests that escalated into counter protests armed with guns to kill innocent protesters. COVID exposed many deficiencies, unprecedented deaths, along with housing deficits in the black communities. As Mrs. Clayfield Burkes words, here's an attempt at us to apologize and to move forward on making it right. I ask for your support passing this resolution. Thank you.

Chavez: Thank you President. I'll be voting to advance this forward, but in the interim, I've requested some comments from my constituents in my district. My family is not from here, we're from California. Being Hispanic, we're obviously from Mexico. So I didn't really know about Bloody Caddo and a lot of the history that went on here. I think it would be kind of cool if if we had maybe the Robinson to do like a PSA and people could learn more about what's going on or what had happened. I didn't know about the stories, but I've asked some citizens their comments on this. I know one constituent emailed you Commissioner Watts. She asked me, 'she said I'm waiting for a response from the commissioner.' And I know a couple other people had emailed me about it just asking questions. So, I know

between now and Thursday, we'll get more information on this. I'll be offering to move it forward to investigate this further. Thank you, President.

Substitute motion by Mr. Young to remand to Committee and postpone Resolution No. 36 of 2022 to the first meeting in July. Motion failed due to the lack of a second.

Gage-Watts: I would just like to ask to that resolution is a response to support of this resolution. Is there something that you're offering?

Young: So, Commissioner Gage-Watts seems to me that this is a very sensitive topic. The apology is wide ranging. It would be easier for more people to agree about the terms if we had a longer discussion in committee to talk about what terms were agreeable to more of us. Then move forward with an apology that more people could get behind.

Johnson: Yes. So basically, what I'm interpreting what you just said is basically watering down the words and the apology. Is that correct?

Young: Watering down would be a way to interpret what I said. What I intended to say was to use the democratic process and discussion to reach compromise language that everybody or more people would vote for. The majority of us.

Johnson: So, I guess when we talking about a subject that is as sensitive as this. The watering down process really doesn't have the effect of the apology. It just means that you came to some words collectively to say that it appeases both groups, and the apology is not the same. The apology has to be heartfelt, and the recipient of it has to feel that you made the words that were actually written and not a version that has been changed. There are some sensitive things that are going to be hard to vote on. We voted on those things in the past. We still got the gun thing that's still floating around. We got another point on the meeting today besides this. You turned down to the compensation deal, which you felt was too controversial. At the same time, we can't vote no on everything that we feel is controversial, and yes on everything that's business as usual. People don't look for us to do that. I mean, they look for us to make some tough decisions and to actually step out there and do some things. To come down here and just say we're gonna vote on this 9.4, 9.3, which is pretty much from the Administration and say we can vote yes on that. That's easy, but when we get sensitive topics-- nobody wants talks about it. They want to put it to a committee; let's change the words here; let's do that there. It doesn't make us good. Vote your heart on this. People were wrong for years...public display. Just think about that that time in that era. If roles were reversed, you wouldn't like it. You know, just put yourself in the shoes in the clothes are those individuals that were wrong. Then sit back and say, Why I can go with this? Because I wouldn't want myself to be done that same way. That's all I have.

Chavez: Thank you President. I may reiterate my I don't know if it's called a compromise--but I think Commissioner Young tried to make compromise. I know when we had the discussions on the monument, we set up a Citizens Committee. We did a lot of town hall meetings, and a lot of people were able to come out and speak to give their opinion on it. I think when Mr. Johnson recommends voting your heart, there may be some people that they don't know what exactly happened, or how other people feel about it. I think maybe an education piece may be beneficial for everybody. Maybe not just that they see some elected body vote on something up or down, yes or no, but that some education is provided. Maybe on both sides of the fence, there comes an agreement of what actually happened and so people can know in their heart, and then maybe they can change and vote a different way or see your side of the fence. Maybe education may be a good compromise. I don't know if it's his committee, but some history for some people that don't know what actually happened could be a good compromise. Thanks, President.

Johnson: Yes, I would like to Clerk to read this into the minutes. The public can actually hear what the resolution says and see if there's some words that need to be changed or watered down.

The Clerk of the Commission read aloud Resolution No. 36 of 2022:

BY THE CADDO PARISH COMMISSION:

A RESOLUTION DECLARING A PUBLIC APOLOGY FOR BLOODY CADDO AND SYSTEMIC RACISM PERPETRATED ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS OF CADDO PARISH, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDING WITH RESPECT THERETO.

WHEREAS, the African-American community in Caddo Parish has endured decades of systemic racism;

WHEREAS, that systemic racism included over 500 lynchings;

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish became known as "Bloody Caddo" for the racist violence in Caddo Parish;

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish continues to suffer with a human development index score of 3.56 on a 0-10 scale;

WHEREAS, systemic white privilege has continued;

WHEREAS, Caddo Parish needs to heal from the trauma inflicted upon it; and

WHEREAS, the healing process can begin with an acknowledgement of and apology for the violence perpetrated on African-Americans.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Caddo Parish Commission in due, regular and legal session convened, that the Caddo Parish Commission does hereby offer a public apology for the violence perpetrated on African-Americans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this public apology be publicized and distributed in and out of Caddo Parish as a step in the healing of the trauma inflicted on African- Americans in Caddo Parish.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED if any provision or item of this resolution or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items or applications which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this resolution are hereby declared severable.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all resolutions or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Johnson: Now, I want you to also think about not only the lynching's and the kidnappings, but just to give you one where you can find it really quick. Dr. Harry Blake that was down the street on Milam and Little Union. They sent horses in there to get him. They beat him until he was half-dead. They thought he was dead. Then you have students from Booker T. Washington that was beat up by the police as well for marching. I mean, it goes on and on and on. But if you feel that that language is too strong, then I'm sorry. People died. Some people died for no reasons. To say that you want to organize to help yourself and help your race, you lose your life. That's unacceptable. Thank you.

Gage-Watts: Commissioner Johnson did the very thing that I was about to ask Mr. Clerk to read that resolution aloud. I do know that this is a very, very sensitive conversation for some of us to have, but as it has been stated, it was a very sensitive time for some of us to live. I was also going to mention the two resolutions that were passed by the City of Shreveport Council with unanimous support, which was the Little Union Baptist Church apology, as well as, to the students of Booker T. Washington High School. One of the very problems that we have here in Caddo is this Commission not being willing to acknowledge these types of situations. That causes us not to be able to move forward and not to be able to heal. I know that if we were in a committee setting that we might be more comfortable to discuss which language are uncomfortable for us to discuss around this horseshoe. I'm amicable to making a resolution that would reflect the body of Caddo Parish. For us not to be able to point them out during this Work Session, I think that also raises another issue. I'm thankful that Commissioner John Paul Young offered at least some type of resolution to move forward, but he didn't have any support from the other side to say yes, I'll second that or I want to talk about it further. I think what I'm hearing today is that I just don't want to talk about it and I don't want to move forward. And I think that that is in the wrong direction for addressing this issue. Yes. Bloody Caddo exist. Yes, we have enough time between now and Thursday to get as much education as you could request about this era. If you don't have knowledge about and you want to support, then you could move this forward to Thursday for for the discussion. And that is what I'm asking of you on today. Move it forward to Thursday, and get the information, and then if you are not comfortable with what you have learned, or making a resolution or an amendment to this resolution, then vote your conviction. That's what I'm asking you today. I think that we owe it to the public to say I wasn't a part of that era, but I am willing to say as an elected official, I feel responsible at this point to help us heal and to move forward. When I go places, I want Shreveport to be known for prosperity, not for death. I want economic development to happen. I want our land to be able to heal. I want to remove the dark cloud, but it has to start more than just with the conversation. It has to start with a body who is serious about moving forward. Thank you.

Atkins: I know that many horrible things have happened in our community in the past. That there's been racism and hatred and violence. I certainly don't condone those types of activities, but I believe in looking forward and moving forward. And I'd like to see us move forward together. To me these types of statements--I know that everybody has a different view of things-- but from my perspective, these types of statements, push us further apart rather than bring us together. So that's just my view. And for that reason, I won't be supporting it.

At this time, Mrs. Gage-Watts' motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, Johnson, and Young (4). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, Lazarus, and Taliaferro (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Hopkins**, seconded by Mr. Young, *that the reappointment of Mary Irvin to the North Caddo Hospital Service District Board of Directors (term to expire January 7, 2028) be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.*

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to englobe and move the following special resolutions to Thursday's agenda for consideration:*

- *Reappointment of Mary Irvin to the North Caddo Hospital Service District Board of Directors (term to expire January 7, 2028)*
- *Special Resolution of Recognition & Appreciation for the Philadelphia Center*
- *Special Resolution Honoring Dr. Ray Belton for his service with Southern University*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming African American Music Appreciation Month*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming World Sickle Cell Awareness Day*
- *Special Resolution of Appreciation for Ernest Lloyd Aaron Williams (E-LAW)*
- *Special Resolution Proclaiming National Safety Month*
- *Dr. Martha Whyte as a Visitor for the June 23rd Regular Session Agenda*

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the authorization requesting Administration to obtain quotes to remove the live oak tree on the South Side of the Caddo Courthouse (facing Milam Street immediately West of the entrance) be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.*

Johnson: So, this is part of the trilogy. Basically, the monument is gone. The tree that was used for lynching--this is the tree. Then the apology. For some citizens in Caddo Parish, it is difficult for them just to go to the courthouse when they have witnessed lynching's. To see someone hanging from a tree is something that traumatizes a lot of people. What I was trying to do in this particular one, is try to make it right by having the tree removed and then also planting a tree. Planting something like a magnolia tree that would stand in its place. It's our State flower and gives out a pleasant smell. It will be different it will stand out as opposed to all the other trees that are there on the courthouse grounds. Yeah, this stuff should have happened a long time ago. You know, the removal of the trees, the statute, and apology. It should have happened way a long time, but the people at that time did not have--I will say the courage to do it. And they didn't want to do it because of the way they were brought up I wanted to say. At some point in time, things should be right of all the wrongs that have happened. It's not gonna happen overnight, but this is decades now, since that has taken place. And you know, I would think that at this time that everyone would step up and saying yes, we need to do this. Instead of finding a way that, naw, we don't need to do it because of multiple reasons. Why will we do that? It's been there for so long. But we got to be I will call game changers. We are not going to be game changers, and we're just down here pushing buttons and go along with status quo.

Gage-Watts: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to say to Commissioner Johnson publicly that I'm very proud of your courage that it takes to bring up this issue about those trees. And I'm sure that many people are not aware that those trees were used for lynching in Caddo

Parish. And that is why we presented this is a multi-prong approach. We're moving forward in one direction, and we have an opportunity to take a stance in all directions. So I just wanted to say to you, thank you for bringing this forward, with our without t support from the full body--we brought it to the public's attention. And whatever we need to do to continue to fight. We will. Thank you.

Chavez: Thank you President. While we were discussing other topics, somebody sent me a text message that said Pastor Blake had horse feces rubbed his face in that situation that you were mentioning. So, there's a lot obviously that people don't know about that situation. I think that education piece may help to describe what happened. On the tree agenda item, I want to ask Dr. Wilson--I heard two different stores that the tree was given as a gift in around 1900s like 1904, but that the lynching's and the hangings were before the 1900s back in the 1800s. So, I wanted to verify, are we accurate that this is the tree is indeed the tree that this occurred on? Just for clarification of the body.

Dr. Wilson: Commissioner, we would have to research that one because I'm not aware of the data surrounding what you're saying. We will have to research it, and get back with you.

Chavez: If this is a point of pressure and issue, I can understand Commissioner Johnson's intent with this. I think concession of a magnolia tree would be nice, but I wanted to figure out if this is the right tree. If we could be willing to wait to find out that information for sure. If it does come back that it is, then we can revisit this. Of course, I've already spoken so I can't make a motion. It's just something I could offer up to the board.

Hopkins: I'm just gonna say that, according to my studying on the history of it, Judge Fletcher Bell donated those trees. They were seedlings in 1904, and they were put in. You know, it's one of those things I can't see cut down a tree. The tree didn't do anything. I would say that there is an opportunity that why don't we take a display or something inside the courthouse and educate the public-- white and black, Hispanic, Asian, about what happened. You know, Auschwitz was one of the worst places on Earth, and they kept it so we would never happen again. Maybe that's the way we need to be looking at that. Something different when we're educating the people that this happened, but we need to make sure it never happens again. That's all I have.

Johnson: Commission Chavez, those lynchings continued until the 1950s, not just the 1800s. Caddo, in Shreveport/Caddo, there were 389 at that courthouse. That's alot, second to a small city in Arkansas. We're not talking about well we're at the bottom category; we're up high, and that's why it was called Bloody Caddo. So, we just I think we need to educate ourselves up here first, to be able to get the right vote. But these are some things that are in our community that some people don't want to remember; some people don't want to learn about happened. And so being that it happened, and people know about it, we need to address it.

Young: Thank you, Mr. President. When I was growing up, I read a poem about nature. The most famous line and it is only God can make a tree. people killed in a loss. They never do anything to harm people. Trees don't tie knots. Trees don't hate people based on their skin color. Taking out revenge on a tree because it's a symbol means that we are symbolizing something voluntarily when we could not we could choose to forgive the tree. The way our God tells us to even though the tree isn't an inanimate object. I don't think that this is a rational way to deal with the trauma of lynching or destroying a being that can give shade on that spot for another 1500 years because these trees can live that long here in our climate. So I'm gonna vote no on this every time it ever comes up again. Thank you.

Taliaferro: I'm very interested. I'm very humbled that we do have Black History Month because without Black History Month, I would not be as educated as I am-- even having been born in Shreveport--about the situations of our black residents in Caddo Parish and across the nation and the world for that matter. While I believe it's a painful history, I don't believe it's our responsibility to attempt to eliminate everything that is embarrassing in our history. And we must acknowledge that it is truly man's inhumanity to man. And that is global. It is right here in Caddo. It has gone on for quite some time. But I agree that to try to eliminate those pieces of history that we should be learning from. I agree with Commissioner Hopkins is that maybe the best thing is to allow people to be educated. I spoke with a gentleman who I ran into on Texas street while we were talking about the monument and this is before I came on the commission. He was a black gentleman with his son, he says if you remove everything to do with our colorful, embarrassing history, then how am I to teach my child? So in other words, I think things in public display are a great opportunity for education and not to be hidden not to be destroyed. It is embarrassing. It is shameful what we've done to another man, but I just don't think it's our responsibility to try to eliminate everything that we possibly can to try to make things right because they will never be right. We can possibly be whole, but we can never make it right; we can never make that injustice go away.

Chavez: Thank you President. I'm just gonna ask is the intention of this to take that tree and remove it and transplant it somewhere else or to destroy it?

Johnson: This is primarily not even to cut the tree down. it is to go out and get quotes on how to remove it. Removing the tree, we'll need to cut it down.

Atkins: So, removing the tree would be to cut it down?

Johnson: Yeah, we're not going to transplant it somewhere else.

Hopkins: Not a 119-year-old tree...

Johnson: So, this request is for them to go out and get quotes on cutting it down, that's all. We still would have to come back with an ordinance to allocate funds to do it.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion failed, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, and Johnson (3). NAYS: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (). ABSENT: Commissioners Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *that the flags be set to half-mast until Shreveport City Marshal Charlie Caldwell be laid to rest* be moved to Thursday's agenda for consideration.

Mr. Chavez suggested putting up a Shreveport City Marshal flag as well.

At this time, Mr. Johnson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Johnson, Lazarus, Taliaferro, and Young (8). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Burrell, Epperson, Jackson, and Jones (4). ABSTAIN: None (0).

COMMUNIQES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Mr. Johnson said that the NGO Committee met today to discuss potential changes to the NGO application process. He asked that the Commissioners review those changes before Thursday's Regular Session.

CITIZENS COMMENTS (Late Arrivals)

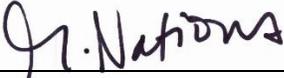
Craig B. Lee came before the Commission and gave the following comment:

Once again, Craig Lee 1112 prospect. The sad part about-I got back to Shreveport in 1994 as a pharmaceutical sales rep and I'm a student of history. So, I knew when Commissioner Hopkins said what he said I knew he was lying. So I went on to pull this up. So I'm going to send this to everybody about Auschwitz. And it's about the demolition of the gas chambers. Now he went on public record and he said that they preserve the gas chambers in Germany. That is a lie. So, I'm going to read this for you. The first crematorium and gas chamber and the two markers were withdrawn from use in 1943, when the four large crematorium and gas chambers in Bergen went into operations. They destroyed the gas chambers in 1943 and in 1944. See, the whole-see we would if we were discussing this as relates to European Jews, this was this would not even be up for discussion. This only comes up when you're talking about African American individuals and we have individuals who don't know the history. And I appreciate Commissioner Chavez. Because it least Commissioner Chavez says he doesn't know. But, Commissioner Hopkins for you to sit up and say that, and you knew you didn't know but you were just saying that to try to advance your point, is completely wrong. It's completely wrong and this is why Shreveport-Caddo is in the position that we're in at this stage in the ballgame, period. And that's a lie. Elaine, Arkansas, Commissioner Johnson. If you go to the African American Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, the number one and the number two counties in the United States for murdering African Americans, Caddo Parish and Bossier Parish. Caddo Parish and Bossier Parish. And the only reason that Elaine, Arkansas is ahead of it. It's because they murdered over 300 African Americans in one night, because white folks said that we just going to kill off Black folks. So, when you when you state history, Commissioner Hopkins, make sure you know what you're talking about. Because of you go on record with me, I'm going to fact check. Because what you said was categorically incorrect. Now, you all can do what you want to do, but you're on position as it relates to these things. And you, all of you know, all of you know if there was anything disrespectful to any European Jew, in this city or in this country, you know what the response would be. It only comes up this way when it comes to African American individuals. I don't tap dance around these situations. I speak straight up, real. I did the same thing in corporate America. Because if you are not willing to have these serious conversations, you're never going to progress and this is where we're going right now in the city, in this state, in this country. Because we cannot move forward. Because truth telling doesn't want to go on. Thank you guys very much.

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Direct Administration to make proposed changes to the NGO Application Process*
- *Ordinance No. 6237 of 2022, an ordinance regarding an exchange of roadways with the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development in connection with extending LA. 3276 to LA. 1, to authorize the exchange of certain portions of Parish roads in return for certain portions of State highways, to authorize the Parish Administration to execute agreements as necessary to accomplish that exchange, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*
- *Ordinance No. 6239 of 2022, an ordinance amending the Budget of Estimated Revenues & Expenditures for the Riverboat Fund an appropriation for Charles Johnson Ministries, Inc., and to otherwise provide with respect thereto*

At this time, there was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned at 4:40 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk