

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 6th DAY OF JUNE 2022

The Caddo Parish Long Range Planning Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 2:00 p.m., in the 1ST Floor Conference Room, with Mr. Hopkins, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson, and Young (6). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).

Mr. Chavez gave the invocation, and Mr. Young led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss and Make Recommendation Regarding Ordinance No. 6237 Of 2022.*

Mr. Hopkins said the previous Long Range Planning Committee did not have a quorum, but they did have a lengthy informal discussion on this agenda item. Mr. Hopkins informed the Committee that Mr. Eric England from The Port and Mr. David North from LADOTD are present today.

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded to Mr. Jackson, *to recommend to the full body Ordinance No. 6237, an ordinance regarding an exchange of roadways with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and 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 Administrator to execute agreements as necessary to accomplish that exchange, and to otherwise provide with respect thereto, for consideration.*

Mr. Young asked about the certainty that I-69 will be built according to the drawn map. Mr. David North responded that he is highly confident as long as construction is established along the I-69 corridor in a timely manner. He also said that Texas is wanting I-69 to be a Texas highway instead of a Louisiana interstate or highway. Mr. North further stated that there are forces in place to hinder I-69 in North Louisiana. Mr. Young wanted know the estimated cost of the I-69 project. Dr. Wilson responded that the total project will cost approximately \$40 million, and Caddo Parish is funding \$2.5 million. Dr. Wilson also said that Bossier Parish, DeSoto Parish, Caddo Parish, and the Port are also put funding towards the project, but majority of the project funding is from the State. Dr. Wilson further explained costs kept increasing since COVID and now the parishes are seeking a grant to cover the gap. Mr. Young wanted to know if the funding is for frontage roads. Dr. Wilson acknowledged that the project budget is to build service roads that would preserve a path for the future corridor.

Mr. North mentioned that the roads they are building are an investment in itself and will benefit the area even if the I-69 project does not happen. Mr. Young inquired if the interstate would cross the river. Dr. Wilson responded that the future I-49 project includes a bridge. Mr. Young clarified that the I-69 project would have a bridge over the river eventually if I-49 builds it. Dr. Wilson said yes.

Mr. Chavez asked for clarification about Texas stealing I-69. Mr. North responded that Texas is actively building along the I-69 corridor and relabeling Texas Highway 59 signs as the future corridor of I-69. Mr. Chavez wanted to know how they can guarantee I-69 in Louisiana. Mr. North responded that he is not sure who has final say, but Texas received 35 times more funding than Louisiana. Mr. Eric England explained that the State of Texas committed \$64 billion to the I-69 project and that I-69 has multiple routes throughout their state. He advised the committee that an I-69 service road will go through The Port based on the SIU 15 decision. I-69E will go to The Port and I-69W will go to Texarkana. This will provide Louisiana the connection through SIU 16 which will carry I-69 into Texas. Mr. Chavez wanted to know if Texas could change their interstate number. Mr. England responded depends on a numbering system and the Eisenhower interstate system. Mr. England stated it is the connection that is important, not the name.

Mr. Jackson asked if the DOTD has targeted any grants from the infrastructure bill. Mr. England explained that their approach to I-69 project is in three parts: two outer parts and a middle part. The middle part is funded by the State. The two outer parts Caddo-Bossier Parish Port Commission applied for an infra-grant to cover the costs of an 80% price increase in roadway construction. He also said that grant recipient results will be disclosed in the fall. Mr. England further explained the infra-grant is a part of the IJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). Mr. Jackson wanted to know if they have any letters from the State Congress. Mr. England responded they have received a letter of support from Senator Cassidy and Representative Johnson. Mr. Jackson asked when will the Parish know that the I-69 project was successful. Mr. England responded that of the infra and mega category of the IJA, NLCOG developed a plan for the I-69 SIU 15 with intention to apply for the IJA mega category.

Mr. Jackson commented that some things get caught up in the environmental part of the project. Mr. England explained the I-69 project has already gone through the NEPA process and with that record of decision, they are ready to go.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know how the project will receive the funding. Mr. England responded it will be routed and they have a letter of support from the LADOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson for the I-69 Service Road. At this time, Mr. Jackson's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson, Johnson and Young (7). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: None (0). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- *Discuss Off Track Racing Ordinance*

Mr. Hopkins commented that the Senate passed an off-track racing bill that would allow local communities to set distance requirements. Mr. Hopkins recommended that the ordinance be exactly like the Caddo Parish's gaming ordinance so that gambling is not within 500 feet to a church, synagogue, school, hospital, etc.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded to Mr. Jackson, *to forward the proposed off-track racing ordinance* to full body for consideration.

Mr. Jackson requested clarity on land use regulation. Mr. Hopkins responded that they will regulate and protect Caddo Parish schools, synagogues, churches, and hospitals. Attorney Bernstein explained this ordinance will prohibit off-track betting parlors and video pokers from receiving an occupational license if the location is within a set number of feet of schools, etc. Mr. Jackson asked if this would apply to all of Caddo Parish. Attorney Bernstein responded it will apply to the unincorporated areas. Mr. Jackson expressed his support of this ordinance.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if an established business could be grandfathered in under this ordinance. Attorney Bernstein responded the previous state statute provided distance requirements, but the recently adopted bill provided that distance limitations would not apply if a racing license was bought by a certain date. Attorney Bernstein explained that the bill is very specific and appears to focus on Northwest Louisiana. Attorney Bernstein stated that this ordinance would add a distance limitation to sensitive areas that would prohibit businesses to receive an occupational license.

Mr. Johnson confirmed that the National Register of Historic Places, public playgrounds, residential property or building used primarily as a church, synagogue, public library or school would be protected by the distance limitation. He suggested there should be a grandfather clause in the ordinance. Attorney Bernstein pointed out there is language in the ordinance that says "this ordinance does not apply to a qualified truck stop facility, para-mutual facility or off-track wagering facility that is operational on the date this ordinance is passed".

Mr. Atkins asked for clarity on whether offsite betting is relative to new construction or an activity at existing businesses. Mr. Hopkins explained that it could be a new construction, a refurbished new or old building, or a facility historical for horse racing and off-track wagering.

At this time, Mr. Atkins' motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Jackson and Johnson (6). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Young (1). ABSTAIN: None (0)

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.



Linda J. Montgomery
Administrative Specialist I