

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 6TH DAY OF MAY, 2021

The Caddo Parish Long Range Planning Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 11:00 a.m., in the Government Chambers Conference Room, with Mr. Mario Chavez Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Chavez, Hopkins, Young (3). ABSENT: Commissioner Jackson and Johnson (2).

Invocation was led by Mr. Young and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Chavez.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Chair moved to the New Business item, *Discuss Cost for Planning and Zoning Study*. He explained that the next two speakers are experts in economic development on how they can help Caddo Parish.

Dr. Wilson introduced Mr. Butch Forward, interim Bossier Parish Administrator, to discuss their planning experience.

Mr. Butch explained the Bossier Police Jury had a need to complete zoning planning and contracted Wilbur Smith, who did a comprehensive land use study in 2003 that helped the City of Bossier and Bossier Parish to develop a unified development code. The Parish wide zoning was positively accepted by those living in the zoning area but the rural areas outside of the city limits refused the zoning. He mentioned that the limitation to areas that are not covered in the zoning area can experience having an industrial business in a residential area and there is nothing that the Parish could do to address complaints in that situation. Mr. Butch stated that their restrictions decrease from city to parish in geographical tiers. He added that there is a pet cemetery amid a subdivision because that areas does not have zoning.

Mr. Hopkins acknowledged that Caddo Parish's zoning plan for his district must be as least intrusive as possible due to citizen's rejection to zoning laws. He also wanted to know if Bossier Parish gave up on their plan.

Mr. Butch explained that they tabled their plan and laid in wait until Houghton decided to join their planning. He detailed that they could cover areas by having a 5- to 10-mile zoning buffer for each town in the Parish and adopt and expand the town's current zoning regulation.

Mr. Hopkins recalled his experience as a mayor that main issues were zoning and sewerage resulting in discord among family and citizens.

Mr. Young wanted to know how they separated industries and residents. Mr. Butch acknowledged that the process should be to develop a land map, zoning classifications. Then, identify what is in an area and where is the best fit for that area including buffers and limitations, and hold a public hearing.

Mr. Young also inquired about the size of buffers. Mr. Butch acknowledged that based on the industry and that typically there is a 20- to 30-foot buffer. He advised that research must be done to understand what buffer works best for their Parish and other regulations to identify the buffer.

Dr. Wilson asked Mr. Butch about enforcement. Mr. Butch acknowledged that their MPC Director staffed a team of enforcement officers who would investigate complaints and present evidence to the Parish attorney for citations. And that the process is not quick and resolutions may take longer than desired. He advised that although every MPC has to handle zoning violations, based on the location of the complaint, the MPC team overseeing that area would investigate the complaint. And that achievable because of the cohesiveness of their zoning plan.

Dr. Wilson inquired about their zoning maps. Mr. Butch explained that they use their GIS team, who updates the zoning maps and maintains their most recent maps. He advised that it is a group effort with their Parish Administrator, MPC team, Parish Engineer, and the GIS team.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know if incorporating municipalities into the Parish of Caddo's zoning plan. Mr. Butch acknowledged that starting off with a 3- to 5-mile zoning will help with annexation later on.

Dr. Wilson also asked about using consulting. Mr. Butch advised that hiring a third-party consultant provides them recommendations and insight.

Mr. Chavez inquired about the town hall meetings and whether the consultants were present. Mr. Butch acknowledged that after about six months they received their report from the consultants and then they had their public hearing. They handed out fliers and informational material to receive citizen's input.

Mr. Chavez explained that Bossier's geographical tiers is similar to class airspace.

Dr. Wilson stated that the Parish has a citizen advisory committee and requested Mr. Butch's opinion on that. Mr. Butch acknowledged that including citizens in early planning stages could be time consuming and result in low participation. He explained that his team and policymakers met first before they introduced the plan to the citizens.

Dr. Wilson discussed that citizens complained that they weren't included in the planning. Mr. Butch advised that the plan is just a working template to go on and that the Commissioners make the final call.

Mr. Hopkins asked whether they designated land use in their northern Parish area. Mr. Butch acknowledged that they presented the plan to them but they don't have any zoning laws due to overwhelming rejection to it.

Mr. Hopkins explained that citizens complained they weren't included in his district.

Mr. Butch addressed that zoning planning is a work in progress to target the north Bossier Parish area and that they are doing more outreach to inform citizens on it.

Mr. Hopkins concluded that the Parish of Caddo has a time restriction and they should work on the plan and then introduce it to the public. And that in north Caddo people take care of their own problems and are a community in that way.

Mr. Butch explained that they were activated by the citizen's complaints.

Dr. Wilson inquired about their growth and expansion and how the zoning is affected. Mr. Butch acknowledged that they started off with the 3- to 5-mile buffer around the cities and towns so that areas are covered. As areas develop, they would need to be prepared for planning. He advised the Committee to drive through their city streets and see how the areas changed for proper development.

Mr. Chavez asked about the firm Bossier Parish used and if they are recommended for Caddo Parish. Mr. Butch advised that they should use the firm that is familiar with Caddo Parish or one they have used before.

Dr. Wilson thanked Mr. Butch for his presentation. He asked the Chair if Dr. Ken Ward can provide a presentation regarding an update on the corridor planning.

Mr. Chavez acknowledged and opened the floor to Dr. Ken Ward.

Dr Ward discussed how their zoning and regulation planning process for the Interstate 49 corridor was very similar to what Mr. Butch described earlier. And they hired a third-party consult to aid in their master planning. He explained that they have completed a public hearing, where residents were adamant about zoning of certain businesses. He added that they have drafted an ordinance, but it has yet to be presented to the Commission. He added that they use property standards helps to regulate properties along the corridor.

Mr. Young asked what are the gaps that the Parish would need for the MPC. Dr. Ward acknowledged that they avoided townships and focused on the interchanges on I-49 and what could be covered in a 1- to 3-mile radius of each interchange. He added that it took time to review the property lines within the radius so that regulations were sensible on both sides of the interchanges.

Mr. Young also wanted to know if their plan would cover zoning regulations if it is joined by the municipalities near the northern and southern I-49 corridor at a later time. Dr. Ward agreed that the northern I-49 corridor would cover well, but the southern I-49 has several types of zones in effect. And recommends that the southern I-49 corridor adopts the IN-R subdistricts which includes rural land use but does not include the IN-1 and IN-2 subdistricts.

Dr. Wilson thanked Dr. Ward for his work and mentioned that there was some confusion among the citizens regarding a firm in Chicago doing all the planning for the project, but they were a consulting firm and they did the work locally. Dr. Ward acknowledged that Zelle Dudley is a local contractor that assisted in community outreach, the Parish staff and the MPC developed this I-49 corridor project.

Mr. Chavez commended Dr. Ward's goal on making sure the zoning was practical and wanted to know if the I-49 corridor planning is a part of the UDC planning. Dr. Ward explained that the two plans are separate plans and that the UDC is a more rigorous and detailed plan and that the Commission would have to decide if they use the UDC or the plan of the I-49 corridor.

Mr. Chavez referred to Mr. Bernstein whether the Parish is able to repeal the UDC and adopt the I-49 corridor plan in its place. Mr. Bernstein informed the Committee that they can repeal the UDC, however, the Commission would have to be recommended the plan by a planning and zoning commission. He explained that the Unified Development Code (UDC) is an ordinance that combines laws of zoning and law of subdivisions that allows them to create and set requirements for a subdivision and the zoning and planning committee would develop an ordinance to amend and adopt a new plan.

Mr. Hopkins requested that the Parish's legal team begin to draft an ordinance and then have it reviewed in Committee for any amendments.

Mr. Chavez requested that the ordinance be available by 11 a.m. the following week.

Mr. Bernstein advised that the zoning and planning committee under supervision of the Commission would be in charge of handling the ordinance and hosting a public hearing.

The Clerk advised that there is a meeting scheduled at 10:30 am with the Coordinating and Development Center. Mr. Chavez requested that the meeting be held at 12:30 pm.

Mr. Young referred to Mr. Bernstein about qualifications of creating a zoning and planning commission. Mr. Bernstein explained that it is created by the Caddo Parish Commission that focuses on zoning and planning based on their statutes and for the Commissioners to meet the requirements to create a new zoning and planning commission could be challenging and that the Shreveport Metropolitan Planning Commission is their established zoning and planning commission.

Mr. Young then wanted to know the quantity of zoning-based cases in the Parish that they receive and if the Parish would save money if they handled. Mr. Bernstein acknowledged that the Parish has fewer number of cases compared to the City of Shreveport.

Mr. Hopkins discussed that they appoint a trained board to handle zoning and planning cases and maintains a balance keeping the Caddo Parish Commission and the legal system separate from the zoning commission.

Mr. Bernstein warned that some zoning case appeals challenged in court would be approved due to a body vote on an appeal case politically and neglect the recommendations of the zoning commission. And advised that a trained and experienced independent zoning commission can apply their knowledge to advise the Commission on handling zoning cases.

Mr. Young asked if they could add to their policy to be recognized in the court system. Mr. Bernstein advised that they would not be able to do that because they are under state and federal law on how to enforce zoning on private property.

Dr. Wilson warned about using politics to establish policies that someone late on could try to use laws unethically. He then referred to Mr. Bernstein on the best way to adopt the zoning plan of the I-49. Mr. Bernstein acknowledged that they would undergo a process with a zoning commission based on the statutes at the time of adoption.

Mr. Chavez inquired the affect of the current house bill on the 5-mile buffer in January 2022 and if the MPC could push the I-49 corridor zoning plan before then. Mr. Bernstein explained that the UDC zoning laws is still in effect even after January 2022, however the Parish will not be a part of the Shreveport MPC. And that they must put something in place to enforce the UDC.

Mr. Chavez invited all Commissioners to attend the next Long Range Planning Committee.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.



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Linda Montgomery  
Administrative Clerk III