

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 1ST DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2022

The Caddo Parish Long Range Planning Committee met in legal session on the above date at 4:06 p.m., in the 1ST Floor Conference Room, with Mr. Hopkins, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, Johnson, and Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, and Jackson (3).

Mr. Johnson gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6251 Regarding Permanent Planning Board Membership*

Mr. Hopkins stated that the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission proposed having a six-member board, and that some Commissioners suggested the board consist of seven members. Mr. Hopkins said that due to a deadlock only four members were appointed to the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Hopkins stated that having an even number board will not hurt, because sometimes it is better to tie and return to a discussion later. Mr. Hopkins stated that he is open to discussion.

Mr. Atkins stated that he is open to adding people to the board but expressed concern that the discussion may take a path that the Commission may not want it to go on. Mr. Atkins said that the standoff had one member on each side and suggested that the Commission could add two more members to the board.

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the Commission has not decided on the appeal process for the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Hopkins stated that a six-member board would not be a bad deal. Mr. Atkins agreed with Mr. Hopkins.

Mr. Johnson stated that an odd number board would remove the deadlock and that an even number board is beneficial. Mr. Hopkins stated that the current Chairman of the Caddo Parish Planning Commission suggests seven members. Mr. Atkins stated that the Commission could get deadlocked again over a seven-member board.

Mr. Young wanted to know if there could be a seventh position on the board that is not partisan. Mr. Johnson responded that an appointee should be someone with knowledge and sense.

Mr. Hopkins stated that the title could be amended for a seven-member board could get support if the amendment is made at Thursday's regular session meeting. Mr. Atkins encouraged Committee members not to make an amendment for a seven-member board unless the idea has been thought through.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the names of the candidates that the Commission was deadlocked on. Mr. Hopkins responded that the two candidates were Mr. Jake Brown and Mrs. Kay Proby-Waller. Mr. Hopkins suggested that by increasing the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission to a six-member board the Commission could appoint those two candidates.

Mr. Young wanted to know why the Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission prefers a seven-member board. Mr. Hopkins responded that there would not be any deadlocks. Mr. Young also wanted to know how many members make up a quorum for a seven-member board. Mr. Hopkins responded that a quorum for a six-member board requires four members to be present. He explained that for a seven-member board a quorum would be four-members present. Mr. Hopkins stated that in a six-member board the two candidates could break the deadlock. Mr. Hopkins explained that Democrats wanted to support one candidate and he preferred Mr. Jake Brown. He said that it was a tough decision down party lines.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know how the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission member's terms were determined. Mr. Hopkins responded that each appointed member would draw staggering lots. Mr. Atkins said that a one-year term is short. Mr. Hopkins stated that the Commission could reappoint one-year term members and that there is no term limit for the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Hopkins explained that any scenario could cause the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission to have to appoint or reappoint members to the board. Mr. Young suggested having a term limit of two full terms. Mr. Hopkins responded the discussion for a later time. Mr. Johnson pointed out that the Commission has term limit of 12 years and suggested the Planning and Zoning Commission could have a term limit of 12 years as well. Mr. Hopkins said that in most cases the appointees might not sit there that long.

Mr. Alan Clarke from the MPC (Metropolitan Planning Commission) commented that he is staying up to date with what is happening with the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Clark said that the MPC will be responsive to citizens. Mr. Clarke stated that he would like the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission to have an odd number of members, because the MPC is delaying cases that have been denied due to a deadlock. Mr. Atkins expressed concern that the Commission may not reach an agreement on seven members and regress.

Mr. Young suggested setting the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission to seven members and randomly drawing the seventh candidate from a group of four qualified individuals. Mr. Johnson said that would not work. Mr. Hopkins said that the Commission could make amendments and change things. Mr. Atkins reiterated concerns that the Commission would regress and argue. Mr. Young stated that the Commission could select a random choice of four acceptable people. Mr. Hopkins wanted to know who decides which candidates are acceptable. Mr. Young explained that Democrats and the Republicans can pick two people each, then the Clerk would pick a candidate's number out of a hat. Mr. Johnson stated Mr. Young's idea would create crazy backlash.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the number of ties that have occurred in the four-member Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Clark responded that the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission would unintentionally vote along party lines and stated that an odd number of members would eliminate that process from happening.

Mr. Hopkins suggested that the Commission follow their ordinance and address the issue if a problem occurs later. Mr. Hopkins preferred the issue to be discussed in committee than during the full body session.

Mr. Johnson wanted clarification on what causes locks in the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Clark responded that appeals and testament appeals caused locks across party lines. Mr. Clark reiterated that having an extra person would stop the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission from staying locked. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if a member of the MPC could be appointed to the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Attorney Frazier responded that it would be dual office holding, because the MPC provides staffing for the Caddo Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Hopkins compared that to having the Clerk vote on the Commission.

- *Discuss Ordinance No. 6254 Regarding Memorial Garden*

Mr. Johnson stated that the budget for the memorial garden is high because more expenses were added. He explained that in the last meeting there was a request to add a QR code to open a video with audio to the memorial garden. Mr. Johnson stated that the cost of the video development, the QR code, the flower bed development and the marker is included in the cost. Mr. Johnson explained that on McNeill Street, near the judge's entrance to the Courthouse, there is an existing flower bed that could be developed. Mr. Johnson explained that a marker could cost two- to three thousand dollars but was not sure how much the QR code and video would cost. Mr. Hopkins suggested using an interpretive display panel that is aesthetic with the courthouse and looks nice. Mr. Johnson said the marker would be smaller and have room for pictures and a paragraph. Dr. Wilson stated that there is a security concern for the a large memorial garden that would conceal someone waiting on people to enter/exit the courthouse.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the garden would be called the lynching garden. Mr. Johnson responded that it is called a memorial garden. Mr. Atkins asked for clarification on what the marker is going to say. Mr. Atkins wanted to know more about it. Mr. Hopkins said not to call it a monument. Mr. Johnson explained that the marker will have some indication that the site is a historical memorial site of people who have died in Caddo Parish. Mr. Atkins said that he is supportive of a historical message but did not want it to be inflammatory. Mr. Atkins said that this is not an attractive part of our history. Mr. Johnson said that other cities have museums with large rooms specifically for memorials like this. Mr. Johnson wanted a living garden memorial that stated Caddo Parish had lynchings during a period and the garden represents a rebirth of Caddo Parish. Mr. Atkins asked that the language be agreed upon. Mr. Hopkins pointed out that Blacks and Whites have been lynched historically. Mr. Johnson pointed out that there is a difference between a lynching and a hanging. Mr. Johnson explained that a hanging had a trial by jury and were found guilty by a crime, but a lynching was a mob or individual that took someone and hung them. Mr. Johnson said that there is documentation of most lynchings, and the person was not arrested. Mr. Hopkins stated that in the west people would run them down, shoot them and hunt them. Mr. Hopkins said that there was no justice to it. Mr. Johnson said that in New Orleans people were brought out from jail. Mr. Atkins reiterated that he is in support and suggested that they write in the language. Mr. Atkins wanted to know what the language on the memorial would say before he voted on it. Mr. Johnson suggested that they move forward with the memorial garden now and write in the language later.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mr. Johnson, *that Ordinance No. 6254 with amendments of up to \$75,000 and include a caveat that the language used on the historic marker is approved by the Commission be forwarded to the full body for consideration. Motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Hopkins, Johnson and Young (4). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Gage-Watts, and Jackson (3). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:38 p.m.


Linda J. Montgomery

Administrative Specialist I