

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 1st DAY OF OCTOBER, 2021

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 9:00 a.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Cawthorne, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Johnson, and Young (5). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1).

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

NEW BUSINESS

- The Chair moved to the New Business item, *Discuss and Make Recommendations Regarding Project Quatro*.

Mr. Justyn Dixon came before the Committee to discuss Project Quatro. He said that this project has to be kept confidential so he will inform the Committee of the details that he is able to share. They've been working with NLEP for about five months now on Project Quatro, and are in competition with another state. The investment for the project is going to be approximately \$1B over the course of eight years. There will be about 630 jobs created over the course of the eight years, with an average salary of \$50,000.

The area they are looking at requires substantial development and infrastructure that will cost approximately \$30M for rail, water, sewer, mitigation, etc.

They are asking the Commission to support a pilot. They are also asking \$3.8M from the Parish for infrastructure. Through their economic impact analysis, the Parish would have a \$17.4M payback over fifteen years; the Sheriff would have a \$14.7M payback over fifteen years; and the school would have a \$81M payback over fifteen years.

Mr. Dixon also said that this is a three-phase project. In Year One, the company will invest \$290M. Once they complete Phase 1, they will roll directly into Phase 2, which will begin approximately four years down the line. The investment for Phase 2 will be about \$452M. Phase 3 will begin about six to seven years down the line, and the investment will be about \$184M.

Mr. Dixon also mentioned that this is an established company with multiple locations all over the country.

Answering a question from Mr. Burrell regarding the type of company, Mr. Dixon said that it is complimentary of the industry that's here.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know the extent of the State's involvement in this project. Mr. Dixon said that the State is heavily invested in this project through performance-based grants, job training, and support for this project.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know where the project is in process with respect to competitors and timelines. Mr. Dixon said that they are ready to make a decision, and it is possible that it may be next week or next month. As far as competing, they feel like it is very competitive at this time.

Mr. Atkins then wanted to know if this will be placed on the next agenda for consideration from the full body. Mr. Dixon said that they are trying to show a high level of support from the Committee, and does not feel that it needs to be passed by the full body just yet.

Mr. Burrell asked about the request being made. Mr. Dixon said that it is \$3.8M for a pilot.

Mr. Burrell also wanted to know if the Parish's workforce has the skill set required for this project. Mr. Dixon feels that the Caddo Parish's workforce is here and trainable.

It was **moved by Mr. Johnson**, seconded by Mr. Cawthorne, *to recommend to the full body an appropriation of \$3.8M for Project Quatro*.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if there were any ARP funds available. Mrs. Barnett said that there is approximately \$2M available. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if this project would qualify for the ARP funds. Mrs. Barnett said that it is possible because of water, sewerage, and broadband.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know the fund balances for the Reserve Trust Fund and General Fund. Mrs. Barnett said that there is about \$14M in the General Fund and \$38M in the Reserve

Trust Fund. Mr. Johnson also suggested that \$2M be used from the ARP funds, and the remaining \$1.8M be split between the General Fund and the Reserve Trust Fund.

Answering a question from Mr. Johnson regarding the benefits of the pilot program, Mr. Dixon said that the net benefit over fifteen years is approximately \$17.5M. He also said that there will be about 1,200 spinoff jobs, 38 new homes, and 250 relocations.

Mr. Dixon also said that there are “a lot of people with skin in this game” from cities, the State, the private sector, etc.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if the City of Shreveport is supporting this project. Mr. Dixon said that there are multiple cities supporting this project.

Mr. Hopkins, who is not on this Committee, is in support of Mr. Johnson’s motion.

At this time, Mr. Johnson’s motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Johnson, and Young (5). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

- The Chair then moved onto the next New Business item, *Continue Discussion Regarding Amazon TIF*.

Mr. Cawthorne recognized City Councilwoman Tabitha Taylor and School Board Member Dr. Terence Vinson who were in the audience today.

Ms. Taylor came before the Committee and said that she is in support of the TIF. She said that it is important for all of the governing bodies to work together to bring economic development into this area. She also said that she would like the City Attorney, Parish Attorney, School Board Attorney, City CAO, and Dr. Wilson to sit down have more discussions regarding this TIF. Mr. Atkins suggested that the City Economic Development person also attend that meeting.

Mr. Atkins said that he is in support of the initiative, but also feels that it is important to have economic development professionals at the discussion table.

Mr. Young mentioned that at the previous Economic Development Committee meeting, the Economic Development Director for the City suggested that the lack of a parishwide and citywide comprehensive strategic plan for economic development was something important to consider when instituting this TIF. He understands that this type of plan takes place across many agencies and parties and could take months to set up. He also prefers moving quickly to get ahead of a baseline before economic activity sets in this area. Mr. Young said that his concern is that if we put together a large general plan for economic development across the whole of Caddo Parish, including all those who had a position to influence it, the TIF might be delayed too long to take advantage of all the increment that would accrue in that time.

Mr. Johnson believes that we already missed our lowest baseline because construction has already started.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if a forecast for property taxes has been done for this area. Mrs. Barnett mentioned that Mrs. Bryant has begun work on the forecast, but she does not have access to it at this time.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if the TIF goes forward as proposed, which taxes are going to be captured by the TIF. Attorney Bernstein said that it would be the Parish. Mrs. Barnett said it would be general fund property taxes because the others are still dedicated.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know if it would have to be voted on if the City or the School Board wanted to impose other taxes. Attorney Bernstein said that he would have to research it further.

Mr. Jackson reiterated that there is no increase in taxes. Mr. Johnson said that the discussion is the increase in the baseline, not a tax increase. Attorney Bernstein agreed and said that it is the increase in collections.

Mr. Jackson also said that the School Board can choose to put all, a portion, or none in the pot.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know if an MOU would need to be executed with the City in order for the Parish to operate the TIF for infrastructure improvements. Attorney Bernstein said that it would depend on the type of infrastructure improvement that is being done. For example, if it is improvements to a city street, then a CEA would need to be executed in order to fund the improvements of city facilities.

Mr. Jackson mentioned that he asked the City and the School Board to offer resolutions in support of the TIF on their agendas.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know how this would overlap with the payment in lieu of taxes agreement. He wanted to know if the TIF would start to be funded now or in another ten years once the pilot expired. Attorney Bernstein explained that the pilot with the Amazon project is solely with regard to the property and the building that Amazon occupies; the TIF district is much larger. He also explained that as the assessments within the district rise because of people remodeling buildings or constructing new building, that would result in increased property tax collections within the entire district. That increase would be captured as the tax increment, he explained. Once the pilot expires, the property associated with Amazon would roll in as well, he said.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if the taxes associated with the School Board would have to be reinvested in education, and non-education taxes would have to be for economic development activities. Attorney Bernstein said that there is a dividing line between use of School Board funds, and they have to be used within the "mission" of the agency. Mr. Jackson added that the increased that is projected for this area will be put back into those neighborhood schools, i.e. Cherokee Park, J.S. Clark, Booker T. Washington, etc.

Mr. Young wanted to know if the district could be changed after its been instituted. Attorney Bernstein said that it could be changed. Mr. Young then wanted to know if there is a sunset on the TIF. Attorney Bernstein said that at this point, it is indefinite.

Mr. Young also wanted to know which governing body controls the uses of the funds from the TIF. Attorney Bernstein said that since this Commission is creating the TIF district, it will become the governing authority for that district.

Mr. Jackson said that East Baton Rouge Parish is an excellent model to follow.

Mr. Burrell said that when he was on the City Council, they created economic development districts. He wanted to know if those districts are still in place and if they would overlap the proposed TIF district. Mr. Jackson said that there is the Center City Economic Development District, but it was never fully utilized, and there was never any funding identified.

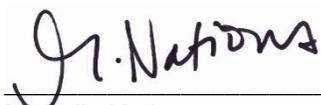
Mr. Young asked for clarification regarding day-to-day operations with the TIF. Attorney Bernstein said that this does not create another layer of government, and more likely will be year-to-year operation.

It was **moved by Mr. Cawthorne**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to direct Administration to move forward with a discussion with the City of Shreveport, City of Shreveport Attorney, School Board, School Board Attorney, City of Shreveport Economic Development Personnel, and David Wolfe.*

Mr. Jackson pointed out that the ordinance was already introduced. He said that he is open to discussions, learning, etc., but it will need to be voted on at the next Regular Session. Mr. Jackson also mentioned that he is going to make a recommendation at the next meeting to postpone the ordinance.

At this time, Mr. Cawthorne's motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Cawthorne, Johnson, and Young (5). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioner Gage-Watts (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

There be no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned
9:57 a.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant Commission Clerk