



MINUTES OF THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2023 AT 6:00 PM

ST. TAMMANY GOVERNMENT COMPLEX

21490 KOOP DRIVE, MANDEVILLE, LA.

CALL TO ORDER BY THE HONORABLE JACOB "JAKE" A. AIREY

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY MR. TOLEDANO

INVOCATION BY MR. AIREY

ROLL CALL:

Marty Dean

David Fitzgerald

Martha Jenkins Cazaubon

Michael R. Lorino, Jr.

Rykert O. Toledano, Jr.

Cheryl Tanner

James "Jimmie" Davis, III ABSENT

Christopher Canulette

Michael "Mike" Maxwell Smith

Maureen "MO" O'Brien

Arthur Laughlin

Jerry Binder

Jacob "Jake" Airey

Ronald Randolph

PUBLIC COMMENT: A three (3) minute time limit is established for each member of the public wishing to speak (for or against) an item on the Agenda.

To ensure that all speakers are heard please hold cheers and applause. Anyone who wishes to place a comment in the record but who does not wish to speak at the podium may fill out a speaker card and check the box indicating they do not wish to speak.

SPECIAL ITEMS

ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

-Airey - 1. Ordinance Calendar No. 7391AA2 - Ordinance to adopt the 2024 Operating Budget.
(Airey/Cooper) (Re-introduced 12/07/2023)

-Tanner – spoke about changes in the budget. She mentioned the Corner standstill and also no new positions being added to the budget. She spoke about the Parish's budget and the \$8 million that is not put in. She said the Council needs to look into revenue sources to help the Parish's situation and cut some expenses. She also spoke about the need for the Council to educate the public on where they get money and where they can spend that money.

-O'Brien – said she is going to vote no because there is supposed to be a standstill, but there is a 3% cost of living increase added. She said it sends the wrong message to continue to give

raises. She said she just can't support this. She said it would be inappropriate given the financial situation.

-Cazaubon – said the key is educating the people. She said a lot of things on this are separate and people don't understand that.

-Binder – said there are reasons to vote for and reasons to vote against this. He spoke about revenue sharing and the mandates that are on the Parish. He said he supports cost of living increases and also about the current situation as Parish government. He said they need to really check to make sure they are not using money that is not there because they can't keep depleting what they know is coming. He said they need to be better stewards.

-Toledano – said he is convinced that St. Tammany manages their money well. He spoke about the Revenue Review Committee that was formed in the past. He also spoke about the sales tax and how that would help the revenue problem. He said he agrees that education is important.

-Airey – spoke about losing an employee recently and how trying to keep employees that are important.

-Binder – spoke about revenue. He said he wants the State of Louisiana to address the mandate and address removing the funding. He spoke about more sales tax going to the State than to the local governments. He thinks they should go to the state and ask for their help.

-President Cooper – said he appreciates them considering the budget. He thanked the Council for the amendments made last year. He spoke about last year's cost of living increase. He also spoke about the field workers' salary adjustments that were made. He also spoke about restoring the COLA so they don't get behind again. He said they have met with State Legislators about the mandated expenses and the burden. He mentioned the need to speak with the local delegation and the PJA board to push the state to get something done.

-Binder – made another comment.

-Tanner – moved to adopt, seconded by Cazaubon. Motion passes with twelve (12) yeas, one (1) nay (O'Brien), and one (1) absent (Davis); becomes Ordinance Council Series No. 23-5337.

-Airey - 2. Ordinance Calendar No. 7392AA2 - Ordinance to establish the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Budget and Capital Assets. (Airey/Cooper) (Re-introduced 12/07/2023)

-Tanner – moved to adopt, seconded by Toledano. Unanimous with one (1) absent; becomes Ordinance Council Series No. 23-5338.

-Toledano – moved to move up Ordinance Calendar No. 7465AA, seconded by Lorino. Unanimous with one (1) absent.

-Airey - 2. Ordinance Calendar No. 7465AA - Ordinance to rename and reorganize existing Part II – Land Development Code (LDC) of the St. Tammany Parish Code of Ordinances to re-establish Part II as a Unified Development Code (UDC), update standards within and across Part II: Unified Development Code in keeping with best practices, and to streamline, simplify and improve overall code navigation (Parishwide). (Davis) (Re-introduced 12/07/23)

-Airey – spoke about the UDC and the amendments.

-Binder – asked a question about the amendments.

-Airey – read the names on speaker cards that did not want to speak.

-Toledano – moved to adopt, seconded by Cazaubon. Unanimous with one (1) absent; becomes Ordinance Calendar No. 23-5339.

ORDINANCE FOR ADOPTION

-Airey - **1. Ordinance Calendar No. 7324AA** - Ordinance to amend St. Tammany Parish Code of Ordinances Sections 130-918, 130-945, 130-969 to remove the term apartments from the definition of lodging as set forth in those ordinances and to exempt certain zoned parcels with zoning as of right. (Airey) (Introduced 12/07/2023)

-Airey – spoke about a procedural issue and said they needed to recess and discuss the issue.

-Toledano – moved to go into Executive Session, seconded by Canulette. Motion passes with nine (9) yeas, four (4) nays (Dean, Lorino, Tanner, Airey), and one (1) absent (Davis).

**Council leaves Chambers for Executive Session.

-Toledano – moved to leave out of Executive Session, seconded by Randolph. Unanimous with one (1) absent.

-Airey – gave the opinion that they received from Legal Counsel. That the actions taken on the appeal at the last meeting were not valid.

-Smith – moved to postpone for reintroduction at the January meeting, seconded by Canulette.

-Jeff Schoen – asked if this action would still be the proper remedy.

-Airey – made comments.

-Schoen – asked if it could be amended and reintroduced?

-Diana Velez – stated that is the prerogative of the Chair and Council.

-Council discussion ensued.

-Clerk stated that they may need to rescind the motion that is currently on the floor if they want to make a different motion.

-Smith – moved to rescind the motion currently on the floor, seconded by Canulette.

-Schoen – asked if the amendment could be read aloud so he doesn't face the same problem at the next meeting.

-Airey – read the entire amended ordinance aloud.

-Patricia Fox – said she has been coming since June. She said she doesn't understand where it is situated, that even Stevie Wonder can see that it is bad. She spoke about flooding in the area. She also asked if renters get flood insurance. She said she is not against affordable housing. She also spoke about the traffic circle. She wanted to know what is the benefit to shareholders in St. Tammany Parish. She also asked them to consider what they are doing.

-Rob Barnett – said something is going on and he will find out sooner or later. He spoke about the lawsuits. He also spoke about permits and damages accruing.

-Claire Friedrichs – agrees that something is going on.

-Richard Celentano – said he has been here 40 years. Spoke about this being the wrong location.

-Mike Saucier – said he is not speaking on pros/cons of the project, but on the ordinance at hand with some of the other individuals who own property. He said this should be done as some type of rezoning, not just an ordinance.

-Karen Howard – said she lives next to this property. She spoke about traffic. She also spoke to the location and asked why people representing them would vote for this.

-Terri Lewis Stevens – said she doesn't know why they were speaking on the project. She spoke about zoning. She also spoke about taking apartments out of the UDC and putting it into PBC-1 OR -2. She said this is the same problem, just in a different part of town. She said they need to

think about where apartments need to be and also need low/moderate income housing. Asked Council to please reconsider.

-Binder – spoke about the ordinance and the issue being removing the term apartments in the definition of lodging.

-Laughlin – asked Saucier for clarification on something he said.

-Cazaubon – asked Barnett a question about the term lodging.

-Barnett – spoke about the grandfather clause.

-President Cooper – said he did not participate in executive session. He spoke about permits that Barnett mentioned. He clarified that no permits for a development have been issues and he has never denied the other 3 permits. He spoke about the ordinance and the matter at hand. He said this administration is following codes and ordinances as established by the Council.

-Airey – asked a question.

-Laughlin – moved to amend, seconded by Canulette. Unanimous with one (1) absent.

-Smith – moved to reintroduce as amended, seconded by Laughlin.

RESOLUTION

-Airey - 1. Resolution Council Series No. C-6859 - Resolution to **(1)** authorize the Parish President to negotiate and execute a Consent Judgment and Settlement and Release Agreement in the litigation styled Military Road Revitalization Company, LLC V. St. Tammany Parish Government; 22nd Judicial District Court for the Parish of St. Tammany, Docket No. 2023-13320, Parish of St. Tammany, Division "E."; **(2)** vacate in part the moratorium originally established by Ordinance Calendar No. 7254AA, and renewed and extended by Ordinance Calendar No. 7440AA, to impose a six (6) month moratorium on receipt of submissions by the Parish Zoning Commission for the rezoning of multi-family property and/or on the issuance of certain Permits by the Parish Department of Planning and Development/Permits for the construction or placement of new multi-family building structures on property zoned A-6, A-7, Or A-8 in Wards 1, 2, and 3 in Districts 1 and 2, specifically Lot 1 consisting of 5.328 acres located at 72147 Military Road, Covington, LA; and **(3)** authorize the Parish President and Administration to apply for, commit, contract and utilize one million five hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000.00) in Community Development Block Grant funding to be utilized for infrastructure in conjunction with the development of workforce housing in District 2 of St. Tammany Parish. (Airey/Cooper)

-Adair Brown – spoke against the apartments at that location. Also spoke against HRI.

-Lynn Fritscher – is opposed to the apartments.

-Jaren Simoneaux – thinks (3) should be handled by legal. Also spoke about the number of rooms.

-Rob Barnett – asked questions and spoke about the project being procedurally defective.

-Jeff Schoen – spoke about his client and the project.

-Dominic Luke – made comments against the project.

-Karen Howard – spoke about lodging and 100 rooms/studios.

-Patricia Fox – made comments.

-Tom Leonhard, President of HRI made comments.

-Council discussion ensued.

-Lorino – moved to adopt, seconded by Toledano. Motion fails with five (5) yeas (Lorino, Toledano, Canulette, Binder, Airey), eight (8) nays (Dean, Fitzgerald, Cazaubon, Tanner, Smith, O'Brien, Laughlin, Randolph), and one (1) absent (Davis).

2. **Resolution Council Series No. C-6860** - Resolution to conclude the Investigation and Review, including corrective actions taken to prevent similar issues in the future, originally convened by Resolution Council Series No. C-6775 on June 01, 2023, into the manner in which the proposed Covington Trace Ridge Apartments development has been processed. (Dean)

-Airey – this item should be postponed since they did not move forward on the last item.

-Canulette – moved to postpone until January, seconded by Fitzgerald. Motion passes with twelve (12) yeas, one (1) nay (Laughlin), one (1) absent (Davis).

-There being no further business, meeting adjourned at the call of the Chairman.


ARTHUR LAUGHLIN, COUNCIL CHAIR
KATRINA L. BUCKLEY, COUNCIL CLERK

