

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2020  
VIDEO/TELECONFERENCE  
CHAIRMAN LENNIX MADERE  
VICE-CHAIR KURT BECNEL

CERTIFICATE

The St. John the Baptist Parish Council, through its Chairman, Lennix Madere, Jr., hereby certifies as follows: In accordance with Executive Proclamations JBE 2020-30 issued by Governor John Bel Edwards on March 16, 2020, and concurrence by the Attorney General on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, this Notice shall serve as certification by the St. John the Baptist Parish Council of its inability to operate in accordance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law due to a lack of quorum as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Pursuant to Section 4 of JBE 2020-30 the St. John the Baptist Parish Council will provide for attendance at its essential government meeting on Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 via video conference in order to obtain a quorum of its members. Therefore, in accordance with JBE 2020-30, the St. John the Baptist Parish Council meeting on Wednesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 2:00 PM will be held via video conference and in a manner that will allow for observation and input by members of the public, as set forth in the notice posted on Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. All other Open Meetings Law requirements have been met.

The St. John the Baptist Parish Council members will meet via Zoom video/teleconference at the posted date and time.

Via Telephone access: Call 985-652-1702

Via Web access: [www.sjbparish.com](http://www.sjbparish.com) {click on (Government) Menu button, then select (Parish Council)}

Also, you can watch as normal on our Government Channels live with scheduled replays.

CALL TO ORDER:

PRESENT AT ROLL CALL: Lennix Madere, Jr., Councilman-at-Large, Div. A, Kurt Becnel, Councilman District I, Warren Torres, Jr., Councilman District II, Tammy Houston, Councilwoman District III, Tyra Duhe-Griffin, Councilwoman District IV, Robert Arcuri, Councilman District V, Tonia Schnyder, Councilwoman District VI, Thomas Malik, Councilman District VII, Michael Wright, Councilman-at-Large, Div. B

ABSENT: None

There was no prayer and pledge.

Legal Counsel Keith Green, Jr., Christopher Cortez and Kennilyn Schmill were present via video conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT - AGENDA ITEMS ONLY (90 seconds per citizen)

The public comment can be viewed in its entirety at [www.sjbparish.com](http://www.sjbparish.com).

**INTRODUCTION OF BUSINESSES:**

There was no introduction of businesses.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**ITEMS:** Approval of Minutes - April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Regular Meeting; Councilman Malik - Appointment of Kevin Patel to the Economic Development Board; Councilman Wright - Appointment of Evin Stein to the Economic Development Board.

**MOTION:** Councilwoman Houston moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to approve consent agenda items consisting of - Approval of Minutes - April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Regular Meeting; Councilman Malik - Appointment of Kevin Patel to the Economic Development Board; Councilman Wright - Appointment of Evin Stein to the Economic Development Board. The motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING AND ADOPTION ON ORDINANCES:**

There was no public hearing and adoption on ordinances.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilman Wright stated, *"At this time I'll offer a motion to accept the recommendations of the finance committee."*

**MOTION:** Councilman Wright moved and Councilman Malik seconded the motion to accept the recommendations of the finance committee. The motion passed unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

There was no new business.

**DEPARTMENT/ENGINEER REPORTS:**

**Jaclyn Hotard - Update on West Shore Levee Project:**

Jaclyn Hotard stated, *"Thank you, and I apologize if our screen is a little smaller for some reason we couldn't or I couldn't, get the little tripod thing to turn on the side, so I apologize if it is smaller. Just to give a really quick update, I've been in constant communication with our partners over at the Army Corp of Engineers, that are in charge of the West Lake Shore Pontchartrain Levee Project and also Pontchartrain Levee District. And right now, all of the vegetation clearing is complete for the levee project. There environmental clearances for public review began on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, and I guess the biggest question that we get from the public is will the pandemic affect the completion of our levee? And at this time everything that I'm receiving from the Corp is that, it will not impact the completion of the levee, and that the tentative delivery plan has not changed up to this point. And they're still looking for a completion of either 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2023, or either 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024. However,*

everything is subject to change but as it stands right now there is no change yet or the movement of the levee project has not been delayed or stalled in any way due to the current pandemic. Thank you."

Councilman Arcuri stated, "Yes Jaclyn, I'd like to know if we have had any discussions about our drainage canals on the northside of the Interstate, and also the Woodland Canal, the Montz Canal, I know the Corps the way they feel about it that they're just responsible for the levee and not for getting the water to the interior canal. But I believe that we really need to have some discussions with the Corp on that, and I would like to sit at a meeting with project engineer, and you, and maybe some of the other council people that encompass this district, it be Tyra and me, Michael Wright I would think. So, I would appreciate if maybe we could have some discussions with the Corp on that."

Jaclyn Hotard stated, "Okay, yep we can begin that I know I put you in contact at one point with Mr. Gilmore, with the West Shore Levee Project to discuss some of those specific concerns that you had. But we will be you know, open to addressing more of those individual issues."

Councilman Arcuri stated, "Thank you."

Councilman Torres asked, "Ms. Hotard, as far as the clay that's going to be needed for the levee, all indications I had, it was the clay was coming out the Spillway. With the Spillway being opened, I think they're closing it now and then you got the June rise, and Mr. Gilmore has no problem that we're going, that's going to impede his completion date or that wasn't discussed?"

Jaclyn Hotard stated, "Actually it was never the indication that all of the clay would come from the Spillway. Everything that we would receive from the Corp from the very beginning, was that only half of the clay would actually come from the Spillway. So, I just want to, you know, put that out there, so the Corp had already begun the process of sourcing burrow from either you know, private, commercial pits, or you now other means."

Councilman Torres stated, "Alright, I just wanted to let the public know."

Jaclyn Hotard stated, "Yes, thank you."

**Robert Figuero - Update on Water Meter Project:**

Robert Figuero stated, "Thank you Councilman. So, so as of today, the project is still moving forward. Unfortunately, there may be, there probably will be some affects from COVID-19, due to supply chains and materials gathering and so forth. But the project is still moving, unfortunately at this point and time, we don't have any specific impacts from COVID just yet, not until we move, till we get past this. But we do know that the companies involved have expressed some concern about their employees coming out here and working right now, so we anticipate some affects, but we won't know those affects until a little bit further down the road till we're out of this first phase per say, of COVID-19. But the project is still moving forward, there are several items that we're still accomplishing, you know there's a lot of IT and Networking that needs to occur, and that is moving forward. So, but again unfortunately we won't have a better handle on our schedule probably for another couple of months until we get out of this. But as

soon as we do receive an updated schedule, we'll definitely make sure it gets into your hands."

Councilman Torres stated, "Robert with these, what you had brought up with the Verizon on the water towers, that has to be moved cause that's going to interfere with the meters right?"

Robert Figuero stated, "So in order to get optimal performance out of the data collection units, antennas for the water meter project, they would need to be moved, in order for us to receive the optimal performance of our equipment. So that's, yes sir."

Councilman Torres asked, "That's on one tower or several?"

Robert Figuero stated, "The main one is the Belle Terre Tower that it currently affects, the other towers not so much."

Councilman Torres stated, "What I was wondering is if it's distance or if it's to the equipment being too close to one another?"

Robert Figuero stated, "A little bit of both. You know we can't install the equipment because it is a little too close and then it's the optimum performance aspect of it, you know facing the right direction you know for it to work as again in an optimum performance."

Councilman Torres stated, "Alright, thank you."

Robert Figuero stated, "Yes sir."

Councilman Arcuri stated, "Yes, I heard you say that they had a supply chain issue, is that with the hardware, and the other part of the question is; I heard them say there's some concerns about sending workers to St. John Parish because of COVID-19. Is that correct?"

Robert Figuero stated, "So, there's a couple of things here. For the data collection units that need to go on the towers, I mean there's a handful of people that can actually install those antennas. They're specialized group, because again the height and etcetera, etcetera. So there is some concerns there because again, a lot of you know some people may be coming from out of state, they may be coming from other parishes, and the company is just concerned with you know crossing state lines, brining them in from other locations in to any other area, right, for that matter. As far as the supply chain, it's a good assumption at this point and time, but again, we don't want to guess here, but some of the factories we've been told have stopped production, they're making other items whether it be masks, you know ventilators, etc. But again, we're still trying to gather all that information before we put that out. We want to make sure that we're on target and we're giving out facts as opposed to assumptions."

Councilman Arcuri asked, "Will this delay cause any increase in the price of the contract?"

Robert Figuero stated, "Everything is being reviewed right now. And again, it's until we get a little bit further down the road, it's really difficult to

determine if there's going to be any additional cost, if there's going to be any additional delays, you now we really need to see where we're going to be at here in the next 30-90 days, to see the affects. Because usually these contracts, they have some days built in them for contingencies and so forth. So, until we get to that point, we're just assuming and we don't want to make any assumptions at this point and times. This is the information that we're getting from our contractor."

Councilman Arcuri stated, "Alright, thank you."

Robert Figuero stated, "Yes sir."

Councilman Torres stated, "Mr. Figuero, as far as the billing side of this, is that included in with the water meters or that's a separate deal? Give us an update on an escrow, inquire or whatever."

Robert Figuero stated, "It is two (2) different projects, and that one has been slowed down. Because again they, the company that we deal with, Tyler Technologies, does not want to send their consultants here because they come from out of town, so that project has been slowed, even though we're still moving forward on it, cuz we are having some virtual meetings and we are doing some work virtually, but we really need them to be here in order to complete that actual project itself. So, it is going to extend the software portion of it a couple of months, however, there's not going to be a delay in a sense that it's going to kind of go hand in hand with the water meters. So, we couldn't put the cart before the horse, so to speak, from the get-go. So, looks like the software was going to have to wait till the water meters are installed."

Councilman Torres stated, "The sooner you get that done the easier your job going to be."

Robert Figuero stated, "It'll be better for everyone, yes sir."

#### **Thomas Malik - Update on blighted property at 2004 Longwood**

Councilman Malik stated, "Yeah I thank you sir. So, for the blighted property, 2004 Longwood, we've had number of discussions with Code Enforcement, and brought our Parish Engineer to look at the building. All observations of the property were made from public thoroughfares, streets, that kind of thing and we're currently waiting on the Engineer to submit his report. For all intents and purposes, just visual indications that there is that this structures completely void of structural integrity, and it's due to a number of things. But at the end of the day, if you own a piece of property and you're going to abandon it and expect your neighbors to live in next to your squalor, I don't see that happening. I had discussions with our Council-at-Large, Michael Wright, who came out to look at it, and he's in full agreement. I appreciate the work that Code and specifically Kristi Muller's done with this, and as well as Tweet. So, I know you have a couple a couple of issues as well as yours. So, at the end of the day I think the underlined message is, is that if you don't like the-what you're living next to just give us a call, and we'll see if we can expedite this thing. Thank you very much sir."

Jaclyn Hotard stated, "Thank you Chairman Madere. And just to touch on that a little bit, and just administration's position as it relates to demolition. As you know some of the Council members that were here, you know previously, it's

always been my position that we should be a little bit more aggressive with our demolitions, especially we could demolish a property one of two ways, right? One, we can bring it through the process, and get a judgement to demolish the property. However, in that past we would have judgements to demolish properties and not have funding to do that. In the last budget amendment that we just approved, I actually increased the demolition line item by \$75,000, because it has always been my intention to get a little bit more not only aggressive, but once we have a judgement if we don't have any money to tear a house down, then, it didn't make sense to spend the time and resources going through the process and I said that maybe, you know a year ago as a Council member, so that was the first thing. The other way we can demolish a house under an emergency ordinance, is if the house is in imminent danger of collapse, which is a little bit you know I mean that's a high threshold to meet, I'll also share with the Council members that probably a month into my term I actually tasks our Planning & Zoning Director with identifying to me properties that would meet this imminent danger of collapse so that we could start to remove some of these most egregious properties. And I believe he had sent me some over and then you know Coronavirus happened, so it, kind of got on the sidetrack if you will. But I just wanted to let everyone know, just for clarification purposes, what our position is and how serious I am about demolishing properties that are in imminent danger of collapse. Now as it relates to the property at 2004 Longwood, I don't believe from what I've seen from the engineer and Rene is on the line that it will have that classification of an imminent danger of collapse, and we're always having to be cautious of not tearing down a house that won't meet that requirement without going through the process of getting a judgment, because we open ourselves up to some potential liability, should we remove a house because we bill the individual, then once we've removed the structure it's gone. So, I'll allow Rene maybe to touch on some of the specifics of this particular property, but I agree with you Mr. Malik and Mr. Madere, you know we've sat next to each other, and you know I've even said that to you, we're going to put more money in demolition, we're going to get more aggressive with some of the blighted properties knowing that we have two (2) ways to demolish you know property in St. John. Thank you."

Councilman Madere stated, "Okay, before Rene say anything, I just want cuz this topic here is one Ms. Hotard know than anyone that was on the Council previous, known that that would've been my biggest problem I had, about blighted homes or abandoned houses. Okay cuz at one time there was a conflict as to abandoned, blighted, and this it all amount to the same thing. But Ms. Hotard is actually right, the Ordinance do say within 24 hours if it's in danger of collapse, and you have to be able prove that if you enact that part of the ordinance. Now I will tell and I spoke to Mr. Malik about it on the phone extensively, you have to go through these process and Rene is going to probably explain it to you a little better. But I have a couple of properties in which was shared the district now with Ms. Houston, particular property that been to court and had a judgement placed on it, okay but because it was not followed through because it didn't have the money in the budget at that time, now we have to go through that whole process again, and I want to commend this Administration for aggressively putting more money because it doesn't make any sense to go to court to tear something down, and get a judgement to tear it down and then you don't have the money in place to tear it down. So, you just waste precious time you waste time going to court. So, administration put that extra \$75,000 in, in that short period of time they had a couple of properties that would have been torn down by now, but because of the virus (COVID-19), we had to back off on it for a little bit right now. So, I do believe almost everyone on this Council is going to have this sort

of problem in their district. And I shared with Mr. Malik a letter I received from some of the companies you know that sell houses and when we had that discussion at the meeting, the letter came back to me (I'm not going to reveal the name of the company) but they said in the letter (that I was absolutely right, that every individual have the right to live next door to a property that's not blighted. And they also said in that letter (it doesn't matter whether your house is \$500,000 or \$50,000) everyone deserves the right to live next to a property if it's not abandoned or blighted. Okay so, that's the point I think that this Council is making, I think that's the point that the Administration have made, that we're going to make sure that these types of things are not brushed aside and put away. Because I have a problem with someone who have a blighted home and living somewhere, you know somewhere in a nice subdivision and the people have to live next door to a house like Mr. Malik talking about or any one of us, that's in deplorable condition. So I think myself, I know that's what I'm after, I'm pretty sure administration have demonstrated that by adding money to it, and hopefully when this virus is taken care of, then we can proceed at a normal pace, be ready and precise to rid our community of what we consider to be blighted homes."

Rene Pastorek stated, "So I think the Parish President really nailed down the process that we have in our current ordinances for demolishing hazardous and unsafe structures. I also want to thank all the Council members and the Parish President for prioritizing this issue, this is a big issue in many communities and of course adding money to the budget, making sure that we're following our guidelines and processes, is the best course of action and I'm sure that the limited liability to the parish when we're bringing these through the Administrative Adjudication Process. With respect to this case, you know it's not one that falls under that criteria for a 24-hour emergency demolition, I've identified properties that would fall under that of course Parish President mentioned that. This specific property as Councilman Malik addressed, this is in process for violation for board and secure, so that you know can be boarded and secured in a very swift manner, we're moving forward with in receiving an engineer's report stating that the property is not structurally sound enough to be repaired, and it's causing a danger to the community. With that report we can issue a violation for demolition, bring it through the process, you know that has certified return receipt, notification requirements to ensure that the property owner you know has ample time to demolish the structure themselves, that'll go through the hearing process, we'll receive a judgement and then we could use those funds that you all approved to be added to the budget we can use those funds to go out and clear up this blighted property."

Councilman Madere stated, "Okay thank you Mr. Rene."

#### **INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES:**

**20-05** An ordinance authorizing the acceptance of improvements and granting final subdivision approval of Coles Landing Subdivision, Phase IV, Section 2, Lots 148 through 156, Lots 169 through 177, and Lots 201 through 208, as shown in a survey prepared by Stephen P. Flynn, P.L.S. on January 23, 2020 (J. Hotard)

**20-06** An ordinance approving the re-subdivision of a portion of the Reine Subdivision and Lot B-1 of the Simon E. Clement Tract into Lot B-1A of the Simon E. Clement Tract and the remainder

of the Reine Subdivision, in the area generally bounded by W. Airline Hwy., Somerset Street and Jaubert Lane, as shown in a Survey prepared by Stephen P. Flynn, P.L.S. on June 10, 2019 (PZS-20-1234) (J. Hotard)

**20-07** An ordinance approving the re-subdivision of Lots 208 and 209, Lakeshore Estates Subdivision into Lot 208-A, Lakeshore Estates Subdivision, located in the area generally bounded by Rue St. John and Des Allemands Blvd., Vacherie, as shown in a survey prepared by Seth J. Mosby, P.L.S. on January 26, 2020. (PZS-20-1235) (J. Hotard)

**20-08** An ordinance approving the re-subdivision of Lot A-1 and a portion of the Alexis Jouty Tract into a lot herein designated as Lot A-1A of the Charles Jouty Tract, located in the area generally bounded by LA Hwy. 3217, Riverview Court, LA Hwy. 628, and the Y&MV Railroad, as shown in a survey prepared by Stephen P. Flynn, P.L.S. on January 13, 2020 (PZS-20-1236) (J. Hotard)

**20-09** An ordinance approving the re-subdivision of Lot 1, Square B, Woodland Plantation Farm Lot 5 into Lots 1A and 1B, Square B, Woodland Plantation Farm Lot 5, located in the area generally bounded by Highway 51, Airline Highway, and Main Street, LaPlace, St. John the Baptist Parish, LA, as shown in a survey prepared by Stephen P. Flynn, P.L.S. on February 3, 2020 (PZS-20-1239) (J. Hotard)

**20-10** An ordinance amending ordinance 19-42 relative to the annual Operating budgets for St. John the Baptist Parish General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Enterprise Funds, and Capital Project Funds for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2019 and ending December 31, 2019 (J. Hotard)

**PRESIDENT REPORT:**

The President Report can be viewed in its entirety at [www.sjbparish.com](http://www.sjbparish.com).

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 4:10 PM, Councilwoman Schnyder moved and Councilman Wright seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

/s/Lennix Madere, Jr.  
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

/s/Jackie Landeche  
Council Secretary

The meeting can be viewed in its entirety at [www.sjbparish.com](http://www.sjbparish.com).

Public Comment Form: <http://st-john-parish.com/council-meeting/>