

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 28TH DAY OF APRIL, 2020

The Caddo Parish Natural Resources Committee met in legal session on the above date at 1:00 p.m., via ZOOM teleconference, with Mr. John-Paul Young, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Young, Epperson, Lazarus, and Chavez (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Jackson (1).

Also, in attendance were Parish Administrator Woodrow Wilson, Assistant Administrator Erica Bryant, Parish Attorney Donna Frazier, Public Works Director Robert Glass, Assistant Public Works Director Tim Weaver, Parks & Recreation Director Patrick Wesley, Mr. Kent Rogers, Mr. Rich Brontoli, and Commissioners Hopkins and Johnson.

Mr. Epperson gave the invocation, and Mr. Lazarus led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

***CERTIFICATE FOR TELECONFERENCE***

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Louisiana has issued Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, stating that, due to the current Public Health emergency declared in the Governor's Proclamation Number 25 JBE 2020, and citing the provisions of La. R.S. 29:721, et seq., granting him the authority to control the "ingress and egress to and from a disaster, the movement of persons within the area, and the occupancy of premises therein; and

WHEREAS, the Governor, in Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020, has limited all gatherings of 10 or more people, for public safety purposes; and

WHEREAS, Governor has issued a general stay at home order "unless performing an essential activity," 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and

WHEREAS, attendance at a Caddo Parish Commission Work Session meeting is not stated in the list of essential activities, listed in 33 JBE 2020, Section 3; and

WHEREAS, the usual conduct of the meeting would require travel and the presence of a number of persons in excess of ten (10); and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State, in Proclamation Number 30 JBE 2020, Section 4, issued on March 16, 2020, has invoked the aforementioned statutes authorizing him to allow attendance at essential governmental meetings via teleconference or video conference during the pendency of this emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State, in Proclamation Number 41 JBE 2020, Section 13, issued on April 2, 2020, has extended the Stay-At-Home Order until Thursday, April 30, 2020; and

THEREFORE, the Caddo Parish Commission hereby certifies that it will not be able to obtain a quorum and convene a meeting in a public forum on April 20, 2020 due to the Governor's proclamations, and will be required to meet by video conference, and, if necessary teleconference, on that date as allowed by law and the Proclamations of the Governor listed above.

Date: April 15, 2020

/s/Mario Chavez, President

At this time, there were no agenda additions and no public comments. Mr. Young welcomed everyone to the Committee and stated that they will be discussing the following items:

- Discussion regarding dredging the Red River

- Discussion regarding The Louisiana Watershed Initiative
- Discussion regarding developing and expanding the Caddo Parish Food Security Project (Gardens)

Mr. Young moved to the first New Business item, *discussion regarding dredging the Red River.*

Mr. Young explained that the agenda items are all related and this meeting was called in response to the request made by President Chavez to develop a 50-year water plan for Caddo Parish. He conducted some preliminary research and discovered that Texas counties are also devising 50-year water plans in expectation of an increase in population in the Central and Eastern Texas region, including Dallas. He also mentioned there are limited water supplies in Texas compared to the states east of them, which Louisiana is the western-most of those states. He said that Louisiana is in a good position to utilize extra water resources as a supply for places that are drier. He has also read about pipelines being constructed in Hays County, Texas, which shares the same Carrizo Wilcox Aquifer with us. Those supplies are limited, but Caddo Parish has surface water here that could be processed and transported and brought to market from Texas to California.

Dr. Wilson also explained that a citizen named Mr. Kenneth Meyers approached the Commission in 2005 with his concerns regarding water. During that time, a Water Committee was established, which consisted of all the local governing bodies including Bossier Parish. He explained that there was an investment of \$650,000 to complete a water study analysis to determine how much water it would take to have water supply for the next 100 years. The report is available and they had ambitious objectives to build two plants at the Port and off of I-220, which did not materialize due to the need of a larger population to join the efforts. The City of Shreveport was approached, but they did not want to participate because they have their own system. As a result, the Commission encouraged Blanchard to expand their system and use the Red River as a secondary. Dr. Wilson said that they are still utilizing the objectives from the engineering study that was performed. He stated that the new Commissioners need an update on their most recent efforts on trying to obtain a reliable water source for the next 100 years from Desoto Parish to Arkansas. He also mentioned that Bossier Parish is a part of this plan and that they envisioned installing a pipe under the Red River to supply south Bossier Parish. The plan did not come into fruition because the City of Shreveport did not want to participate in it. Thus, they were unable to make the plan affordable enough for the rural areas of Caddo Parish to invest in the type of infrastructure needed to make it a successful project.

Dr. Wilson also explained that in 2005, they received federal appropriations from State Senator David Vitter, but that was slow on coming. Due to this, the Caddo Parish Commission partnered with Bossier Parish to fund the \$658,000 project. He recommended to update the Commissioners and not “reinvent the wheel”. He also mentioned that Mr. Ken Ward, Project Engineer, can provide the most recent update on the Red River project.

There being no other discussion, Mr. Young moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion regarding The Louisiana Watershed Initiative.*

Mr. Young mentioned to Dr. Wilson that there is a deadline to submit a report on April 30<sup>th</sup> for the River and Rain Gauge Network Feedback at the Louisiana Watershed Initiative. Dr. Wilson confirmed that the speaker, Mr. Kent Rogers, will proceed in giving an update.

Mr. Rogers forwarded a document to Dr. Wilson and requested that he share it with the Commissioners. The document gives an update on the project as a whole. Mr. Rogers explained that Region 1 is the area they cover in the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, and includes Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Bienville, Red River, Desoto, Natchitoches, Sabine, Winn, Grant, and Rapides parishes. They are looking for information on the Rain Gauge Initiative and the sooner they get that information to the State the better. He explained that deadlines are going to be pushed and their next regional meeting was pushed due to the covid19 pandemic. Their initial meeting was held on March 10

with a representative from each one of the parishes in attendance. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled on June 9 where they will select officers and working on by-laws for the Regional Watershed Initiative. Mr. Rogers also provided a couple of key deadlines for the project inventory is October 31, 2020, to get an inventory on all known projects currently in the region. There were eight projects that were submitted in the initial round that is eligible for the state program. The ones selected by the State will be moved forward for funding. The ones that were not selected would go to the regional coordinators to be considered for funding and could be moved forward from there. He also mentioned that there are some later rounds of funding, but the amount of funding and when the funds will be received are unknown. Also, they will be doing some outreach.

Mr. Rogers added that the Red River dredging project and the comprehensive look at water for this area would help in the process down the line. Mr. Rogers also added that there is a multi-state compact between Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma regarding the Red River Dredging Project. He recommended that the Committee reach out to Rocky Rockett with the Greater Bossier Economic Development Foundation, because he is working with that compact. There are some issues most states have with Texas in terms of that compact. He explained that Texas is looking at water everywhere and they have been trying to suck water out of the Red River and everywhere they could get hold of. We need to do whatever we can to stop that effort. He stated that they would suck us dry if they had their way, mainly for the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Returning to the Watershed Initiative, he pointed out the feedback for the rain gauge has been extended to April 30 and may be extended again. Mr. Rogers requested feedback on that as quickly as possible. There is a link in the document that he sent which will lead them to the network program.

Mr. Young asked Mr. Tim Weaver whether any information has been collected on the rain gage and river levels that is readily available to be sent to the Watershed Initiative. Mr. Rogers commented what they are looking for are potential gaps in areas that may need to put more gauges and readers.

Mr. Young changed his question to whether they can get the data being requested by the Watershed Initiative together to send to the State as quickly as possible. Dr. Wilson responded that Mr. Robert Glass is on the Technical Committee of NLCOG. Mr. Glass commented that they already have readings on Red River, Wallace Lake, and most of all the local lakes. That information is made available to the Initiative and is in play. Mr. Rogers stated that they do have access to all of that and what they are looking for is if there are other areas that need additional rain gauges and meters.

Mr. Glass stated that he is not aware of additional places that need water gauge because they have them on every lake and river in the area. Mr. Rogers said that the major bayous are also covered. There is one on Bayou Pierre, Twelve Oaks and Acadiana. Mr. Young suggested reviewing the map to see if there is a place where they would ideally have a rain gauge and if they don't then they could inform the State they have enough rain gauges already.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know if the Caddo Commissioner should send a resolution stopping Texas from utilizing the Red River for water. Mr. Rogers recommended working through Rich Brontoli or Rocky Rockett, from the Bossier Economic Development Foundation, because they could give more detail on that and they know who the specific appointees are on the compact. He added that every time they go to Washington D. C. the issues has been raised on Texas trying to steal water from everybody. He stated that the more resolutions the State can get from local bodies encouraging our use of the water versus their use of that water the better.

Dr. Wilson commented that they are on top of this issue already. He explained that they have a compact agreement that no one can get water from Caddo Lake without talking to them first. They have police on the Sabine River where they put a halt on any water being taken out of that except what is being allowed. He expressed that they will be at the table for future decisions when some approach has been made to getting our water. He also stated that Mr. Ken Ward, is working diligently on this. Mr.

Young does not want Dallas to steal our water and would be happy for them to buy some of it. He thinks that would be a good long-term idea to sell our extra water.

The Committee then moved onto the next New Business item, *discussion regarding dredging the Red River*.

Mr. Brontoli commented first on the Red River compact. He said that the local representatives are John Michael Moore from Bossier City and the Director of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD). Their mission is to ensure a certain amount of water passes each state's boundary. He stated that some years ago in the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma, Texas tried to put a dam on one of the freshwater rivers and they prevented them because they weren't allowing the allowable amount of water to pass into Oklahoma. He explained the compact's mission to ensure so much water passes state boundaries.

He then talked about dredging. He explained that there are two things about dredging. The first one is dredging for navigation. He said that this is what the Corps of Engineers (COE) does. The navigation channel is 9 foot to 200 foot wide to ensure the way into Shreveport Caddo-Bossier Port is navigable.

He also talked about dredging in relation to flooding. Due to the 2015 flooding, the Flood Technical Committee was created. He explained that in 2015 floods occurred due to higher river stages and lower flows. The COE received \$1.5M to complete sedimentation surveys and hydraulic surveys all over the Red River in Louisiana. Mr. Brontoli explained that these surveys are supposed to be completed in the next month. Once the surveys are completed, the COE will make the final presentation to the Flood Technical Committee before doing public meetings.

Mr. Brontoli said that the modelling will do ask 'what if's'. For example, 'what if we dredge so much silt, how much will that impact flooding?' He clarified since the river is high silt, every time we have a high water like now, how much would silt back in and would you have to re-dredge and how much would that cost. Mr. Brontoli stated that the modelling will be a great tool to work with the leadership of the communities to determine what we can and should do. The modeling shows the combination of siltation of the River between the levies and urbanization. It will also show the impact those have had flooding has on the rivers. He stated the Flood Technical Committee consists of engineers from Caddo and Bossier Parishes, the two cities, the two Levee Districts, The Waterway Commission, The Port, and himself as the chair, an unbiased party to oversee the Committee. He stated they are having meetings and hope to have the last updated final report and model ready in a month or so.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the status on this subject. When they lobby the Congressman about it, the COE had to do a study first. One of the major problems with the silting is because of the lock and dam south of Caddo Parish, but there is not a lock and dam north of Caddo Parish. He said that this will continue time and time again. He said that it will be only a matter of time if the River is dredge that it will silt up again. He suggested to place dam in north Caddo Parish to keep the level between the two dams controlled. It would cause flooding north of the dam, which is just farm land. He said without the dam in the north of the Parish, dredging it will only be good for a while, before it silts back up again. More money will be spent with no actual solution to the problem. Mr. Johnson stated that the only way to make the Red River navigable and used year-round is to put another locking dam north of Caddo Parish.

Mr. Brontoli said that they received approval from Arkansas to install lock and dams north into Arkansas and the COE agreed to complete the feasibility study. They are now looking into getting the funding to do full feasibility studies further north. The structures below us do not have flood control value. Regarding the silt, there are a lot of dykes between the locking dam and Shreveport that have siltation behind them. He explained the dyke's purpose is to maintain the channel, so they wouldn't have to dredge the channel. For example, Hamel's Park or by Jimmie Davis bridge areas were silt and the trees take away from flood storage. Urbanization is also a cause of the silting in to the Red River. He clarified that Clyde Fant is not the levee. The levee is a mile west and they do not want water to come past Clyde Fant. He added that if the water doesn't spread out it has to go up. And this is what the models show-

quantifies impact of siltation and urbanization and what we can do to reduce future risk. Mr. Brontoli agreed that we would end up dredging every year, because it silts back in.

Mr. Young asked about a dredging option such a silt pump or a type of brackish, muddy water pump that could be installed in the river that would continuously pump sediment and water out and if anyone has considered using one or a system of them to maintain low level of silt once the dredging was done. Mr. Brontoli responded that there are two types of dredging: in river and up land. If they want to take the silt out of the river they would need a lot of land to put it on. They would need environmental approval and whose land you will take. With the amount of silt we would need a lot land or it will build up pretty quickly. They will look into it, but the cost benefit analysis would evaluate that.

Mr. Young further stated that the farm land in north part of Caddo Parish has been farmed continuously for many years. He also said that river silt is very fertile and a symbiotic use in some places might improve crop value and might help convince some people to use their land for that. Mr. Brontoli will investigate that. He stated that Baton Rouge and New Orleans have organza bi-way diversion, but the problem in north Caddo Parish is that any diversion comes into Twelve Mile Bayou, then back in the river. In Shreveport on Bossier Parish's side, they would be compounding Barksdale Air Force base. After review that didn't look very good, but they would revisit the idea.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know how many times the Red River has been dredged since it was made navigable. Mr. Brontoli stated that the 200 feet wide 9 feet deep channel is dredged every year because after high waters go down it will silt in at the lock and dam. Strictly, the only dredging that has been done is the channel from Shreveport Caddo Bossier Port and south which is 200 feet wide and 10 to 11 feet deep.

Mr. Young asked whether the navigational dredging is not helping for flooding noticeably. Mr. Brontoli replied that they do in-stream dredging that whatever they take out is put back into the river flowing south and says that it does not impact any level of flooding.

Mr. Young concluded that he would like to have access to the report once it is completed and asked that Mr. Brontoli or Dr. Wilson to forward it to all the Commissioners. Mr. Rogers commented that there is a bigger, broader model being developed for the entire watershed area that will help address some of this. Such as, 'if you do these things to the river, what does it do the rest of the watershed area?' and 'if you do these projects within the whole watershed area, what will it do to the river?' He added that Atkins Engineering from Baton Rouge is leading the model development and it is being done through the La DOTD as part of the Watershed Initiative.

Mr. Young asked when the report will be available. Mr. Rogers stated that they just started the work and they have roughly a year to complete the model.

Dr. Wilson wanted to know if the Watershed Initiative will take into account the flooding in the MLK area and around Ford Street areas. Mr. Rogers stated that the Watershed Initiative is to take a look at the smaller projects like that and what it will do for the whole area. He was unsure if that project was submitted under first rounds but can get something put in for the future rounds.

Dr. Wilson asked Mr. Johnson to clarify if his concern on the issue was addressed. Mr. Johnson stated that it should be a part of the Initiative because the way the Twelve Mile Bayou, McCain Creek and Bushy Bayou, as well as the Cross Lake flood water going into the Bushy Bayou, and then into the Red River. If the Red River is high then those waters cannot get into the system and the areas around the bayous end up flooded. Some areas that floods include MLK area, Hilry Huckabee, and all along Clyde Fant Parkway. There were floods in 2015 and 2016. In 2015, the I-30 flood came into the Shreveport area. In 2016, Cross Lake flooded, while the Red River had high water, and the water from Cross Lake had a hard time getting out. This caused the water flooded more of the neighborhoods around the lake. Mr. Johnson elaborated if we receive a storm raining along I-20 and I-30, would flood Cross Lake, the bayous and neighborhoods aforementioned on the Caddo side and massive flooding on the Bossier side. There are a lot of businesses and city investments on both side of the river that would be

impacted. Mr. Rogers stated that is the basis for the whole watershed model is to look at the area together and not just the Red River and then look at projects with the most benefit for the area as a whole that could get funded.

Mr. Young thanked Mr. Rogers and asked for him to keep the committee abreast of the Watershed Model that Atkins Engineering is developing as information comes available.

At this time, Mr. Young moved to the next New Business item, *developing and expanding the Caddo Parish Food Security Project*.

He further expressed that the watershed management strategies could take place on the smallest level, inexpensively, by getting water to soak into the ground. He voiced the strategy does not work everywhere, but if they are on a hill you can get some water to soak into the ground then take it out through the storm drain. The federal government through the EPA is encouraging communities all over to examine and invest in Green Infrastructure Project, which is what they call ways to change the shape of the ground that forces water to soak in. It creates many benefits and one of the benefits is there is ground water on-site that easiest to extract through the roots of plants. Mr. Young continued that we should plant more plants here to produce food. We've started a proto-type community garden that utilizes this technology. The few planted fruit trees are doing well, but the vegetable garden is not operational.

Mr. Young wanted to know from Mr. Wesley or Dr. Wilson whether they have received any offers for the labor and design of the garden and if there are any movements on it at all. The garden would capitalize on better water management. Mr. Wesley responded that his tenure began in the winter season of the garden. Since then, the Parks & Recreation Program Coordinator has resigned and they have not had the opportunity to identify anyone to take over those garden activities. They were concerned about the community garden's time and resources for one individual to maintain the garden. Mr. Wesley has reached out to Shreveport Green, LSU Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter), and the Red River Coalition of Community Gardens to assist them with the community garden activities. Shreveport Green was not interested in one or two gardens, they wanted supplementing their whole garden program and they have not moved forward yet. The LSU AgCenter and Red River Coalition did not have any staff labor to assist. Lastly, since the pandemic starting they have not been able to establish any gardening activities since the first of the year.

Mr. Young asked Mr. Wesley whether he had received any contacts or proposals from Tyler Sanders or Brittany Maddox. Mr. Wesley responded that he has spoken with Tyler Sanders and he will visit the MLK and the Greenbrook park sites, however, he has not received any proposals.

Dr. Wilson commented that their primary objective in gardening was to provide educational knowledge to students at Southern University. They signed an agreement last June with Southern University so they would be able to provide skill training for the youth built program. The corporate endeavor agreement states that Caddo Parish will provide gardening tools, seeds, picnic tables, fertilizer, and educational training. The labor was supposed to be done by the kids in the youth built program and they would gain knowledge by participating. Dr. Wilson stated that it seems the focus has shifted to the Caddo Parish Commission maintaining the garden and that they do not have the man power or the funding resources to do it on that level. Last year, we had to forego some things in our core programming area that they should not have done. For example, they concentrated more on gardening and did not some critical things like basketball, baseball and flag football leagues. He elaborated the two people who coordinate sports and recreation's manpower had to be taken away from those activities and put it on gardening. They have since corrected that but from the very start we do not have the manpower or resources. Dr. Wilson stated that he received two different quotes from Shreveport Green- one is \$68,000 and one for \$79,000. He stated the Parks & Recreation budget cannot sustain anything like that. Shreveport Green didn't want to do one or two places. He explained they had 35 sites throughout Parish of Caddo and they wanted to do the collective for the price they provided. Dr. Wilson concluded that they need to go back to the original corporate endeavor agreement with Southern University and the CDC that we provide knowledge and limited help and they would provide bulk of man power for the purpose of training young people on how to do this. The Parks and Recreation department has the smallest budget

and fewest amount of people in Parish government. His concern is that they cannot do it on a level that is being talked about right now, it is not sustainable, and does not have a dedicated funding source to help in that expense.

Mr. Johnson commented that the intent of a community garden is that the community would maintain and harvest the crop. We must engage the community to get involved. The only time outsiders would be needed is to till the ground and prepare it for the next crop, but the community would maintain the crops to harvest. Mr. Johnson stated that he spoke with the Director at Southern University Baton Rouge and they have expressed interest in inviting students to come do work in this garden. LSU AgCenter should be willing to do it as well on a seasonal basis. He also explains that the Parish Administration doesn't take full responsibility of handling the garden but can include the citizens of the community. The garden is a way to help not make this area a food desert. They can plant food crops, pull the weeds and harvest foods. The same model is being done in Mooretown area - a private investor tills the ground and the citizens plant the garden. Mr. Johnson closes with providing a gardening plan of what to plant and when and it will have a more of an impact on the community.

Dr. Wilson agreed with Mr. Johnson, however, he explained they haven't had any volunteers to take the lead, but they had a CEA with an agency that was supposed to be doing all the labor. Mr. Johnson stated that he could get some NGOs in the MLK area to assist, which isn't a problem, except that people didn't know about the gardens.

Mr. Wesley commented that they support the community garden program, but it has been a staffing concern. In regards to community engagement, He speaks with Shreveport Green, the Red River Coalition, and LSU AgCenter the major problem is not being able to sustain community engagement on a year round basis. The community gardens would be nice for a few months, then become eye sores for the remainder of the calendar year. They have four maintenance staff overseeing over 16 assets and properties throughout Caddo Parish and cannot afford to take one of the guys to till the garden. It becomes an issue with getting things done.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know whether the community gardens could be moved to a different department, such as Public Works. Dr. Wilson replied that they must pay strict attention to funding that they are getting to do these various functions and they may not be at liberty to change the parameters if it take away from what the citizens voted for at the ballot box.

Mr. Johnson stated that one of the reason this was voted yes on parks and recreation was for the community gardens. Now we say there are no resources to do the gardens. The commission at the time stated that we want a community garden and we will make sure the community supports the tax renewal. There are other ways to do the gardens. If we look at inner city communities and then talk about Shreveport Green, the LSU AgCenter and Red River Coalition coming in to help, the engagement will not be long because the communities do not know them. Mr. Johnson recommended to get the person serving the area and the neighborhood association involved to get accountable people to be there and help run with the program.

Donna Frazier stated that the CEA with Southern has expired and the Parish does not have rights to that land. Mr. Johnson clarified that the community garden she is referring to is a different property than the garden on MLK that is Parish adjudicated property.

Dr. Wilson stated that we support gardening programs to the extent that we can support it with available resources. The vision was training people to gardening procedures and learn to do it themselves. He mentioned being in contact with the Stoner Hill Community Gardening Association who also stated the issue they have is to get enough volunteers to maintain the garden in Stoner Hill. Dr. Wilson closed in saying they don't have the manpower to implement the community gardens on the scale they had it. Mr. Johnson responded that they had the young lady working on all the gardens by herself.

Dr. Wilson corrected that she had help plus the Parish paid an additional \$22,000 to Shreveport Green to help with that effort. Last year, the Parish has spent \$77,000 on gardening.

Mr. Johnson recommended lowering the number of community garden to between six and eight. Dr. Wilson stated there are properties located throughout the area are community driven, but the Parish gardens should be used to passing knowledge.

r. Young stated that having a Parish employee who has part of their job description as liaison is something to consider.

Mr. Chavez wanted to know whether the communities where the gardens were identified and selected based on the neighborhood interest. He also wanted to know if there is a plan of action into the garden. Mr. Chavez closed stating that investing parish dollars into a garden is great but without laborers then it is pointless. So, before creating a garden in a neighborhood there should be a documented interest in the area where the garden is located.

Mr. Hopkins commented that the LSU extension center and their master gardener program which requires to have so many volunteer hours and that might help in getting some laborers.

Mrs. Frazier requests a list of properties that the Parish is using the resources on to determine which property is on owned property, because adjudicated property is not owned by the Parish. She states that there are legal precautions to be taken to have other people come onto the property to garden. Mrs. Frazier asked Mr. Johnson to clarify the cross streets of the MLK garden. Mr. Johnson responded the garden is located at the corner of LaGuardia and Martin Luther King Drive.

Mr. Young wanted clarification that the both Parish garden properties are flood mitigation property from FEMA. Dr. Wilson confirmed that the property is a flood mitigation property and can only be used for gardening and cannot have any structures on it.

Mr. Young stated that he is extremely interested in reducing the food insecurity, which is a crises in the city. He also mentions that some of the priorities that they had in the past in the way of taking care of our land, such as mowing is not as important as doing some things to reduce food insecurity, which is starvation, in our communities. It also leads to enormous health problems with outweigh pretty much any other benefits that we get from our other form of land management. It does seem to be a genuine priority that we should evaluate to make sure we are doing something to prioritize gardening over what our normal routine has been. The normal routine has led us to a situation where MLK area is a food desert and that is not okay. Mr. Young recommended focusing on one particular garden for a while and develop a protocol, establishing contacts with community, figuring realistic costs of starting a garden, and include getting more people involved. He stated that interest in having the Parish fund some kind of grant or camp program to give volunteers a small hourly wage for working in the garden. It has worked in other communities to generate interest and could work here too.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Young has hit a key point and this corona virus has shown that there are some deprived areas. Some people are high risk for the food they eat and their lifestyle. This is an opportunity for something that we can do and now there are so many obstacles. He explained there are ways we can get this done. Community involvement is first thing to get done by building the trust then they will take on the responsibility of. Many people in the MLK area come from rural area so the buy in wouldn't be that hard. The people that are there are getting older and using a machine to till the land will allow them to do the rest. Mr. Johnson continued to state that he was against the property by David Raines on MLK that was going to charge people harvest crops, but the Parish garden nearby is free. He states that the parks are maintained on a frequent routine basis. The grass gets cut about two to three times a year on the walking and bicycle trail on Lakeshore Drive.

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



Deputy Commission Clerk