

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2020

The Caddo Parish Natural Resources Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:00 p.m., via ZOOM teleconference, with Mr. John-Paul Young, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Chavez, Epperson, Jackson, Lazarus, and Young (5). ABSENT: None (0).

Also, in attendance were Parish Administrator Woodrow Wilson, Assistant Public Works Director Tim Weaver, Parish Engineer Dr. Ken Ward, and Commissioners Hopkins and Taliaferro.

Mr. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Epperson 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 Natural Resources Committee 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 July 1, 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: July 30, 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 the Water Utility District

- Discussion regarding The Red River Study, De-sedimentation & Watershed Initiative
- Discussion regarding herbicide spraying and vegetation management
- Discussion regarding draining culvert expansion options in Dixie Garden
- Mr. Young moved to the first New Business item, *discussion regarding the Water Utility District.*

Dr. Ward prepared a PowerPoint regarding the Water Utility District. He provided background information. In late 2008 a combined effort to address ground water issues and future water sources, the Parish of Caddo, City of Shreveport, and Bossier Parish began meeting to discuss options. The combined effort is with understanding that such large undertakings would not be possible without Washington DC assistance. In order to gain that assistance, a combined effort would be necessary. After much discussions it was determined we collectively did not fully understand the current water resources capable handling such a need. So in 2011, the group entertained proposals for a study to determine feasibility. The selected study was with the Shaw Group of Baton Rouge. The study had ten phases which could be stopped at any time to ensure funds are not spent if not needed. The study began in January of 2012. This study was being done during a time of a sever three year drought in our area.

He explained that these studies can be found at www.caddo.org on the Public Works/Environmental tab. Dr. Ward listed the ten phases:

- Phase 1 Identify And Define Existing Water Resources Completed Oct 2012
- Phase 2 Identify And Evaluate Existing Water Supply Infrastructure Completed 2012
- Phase 3 Development And Evaluation Of Future Growth Completed Oct 2012
- Phase 4 Feasibility Watershed Analysis Completed Oct 2012
- Phase 5 Public Stakeholder Involvement Completed Dec 2013
- Phase 6 Economic Evaluations Completed Dec 2013
- Phase 7 Environmental And Regulatory Considerations Never Funded
- Phase 8 Utility District Formation Memorandum Issued April 2014
- Phase 9 Summary And Recommendation Never Funded
- Phase 10 Final Report Never Funded

Since the study was completed, several different things happened. It was found that Option 5 would be best for the area while reducing the project scope. The Parish funded \$1.4M water line extensions for Vivian and Oil City to I-49.

Communication between the water systems also began happening. Blanchard took over Mooringsport; Rodessa took over the Tyson Water System; Blanchard began working with Bel-Di-Gil Water System; and Blanchard is now in talks with Oil City.

He continued with discussions regarding Option 5, and stated that there are three different options:

1. The Parish to fully fund the district 3 project (option 5), which is the plant on the Red River near the port. Parish of Caddo does not feel that they are the best to be in the water business. Would need to find an operating company.
2. Have been approach by third party local firm would construct, and operate water plant only. They would sell bulk water but needed a guaranty of purchase of 3M gallons per day. This would require the City of Shreveport to buy in. The City of Shreveport is not interested at this time, but could be interested in the future due to their own water plant issues.
3. Enter into an agreement that allow the Parish to provide some much funds, land, tax breaks, etc. to secure a firm to build and operate a water plant and infrastructure in district 3(option 5). The estimated costs to overcome the lack of financial sustainability is about \$50M over the next ten years. This number may vary a bit based on needs from that private firm that builds and runs the plant.

He then talked about the “future” for the northern part of the Parish. Support continued growth by water systems who wish and can operate water systems, such as Blanchard, and Water District 7, within the Parish. The Parish funded this Utility District Study. The Parish funded Oil City and Vivian line extensions to I-49. The Parish to strategically coordinate and fund projects for completion of Option 5.

Dr. Ward also said that fortunately, the Parish has received a sufficient amount of rain over the past few years, so there is not an immediate need to find ground water for those who utilize it. He also cautioned that one or two years of drought would dry up that supply for water.

Mr. Epperson said that he has received some calls about development south of Buncombe Road and Hwy 169. He wanted to know if that area would be able to sustain industrial usage of water with the former GM Plant. Dr. Ward said that the GM Plant is serviced through the City of Shreveport.

Dr. Ward said then talked about the area Mr. Epperson was referring to. He said that they have been in several talks with Greenwood. He also explained that Greenwood has the capacity, but they would need to “tie in”.

Answering a question from Mr. Hopkins, Dr. Ward said that it is part of Bel-Di-Gil Water System. Mr. Hopkins said that Blanchard is working hard to take over the Bel-Di-Gil Water System. Mr. Hopkins also explained that this will include 169 and I-49, so upsizing the lines may be needed for that area.

Answering a question from Mr. Lazarus regarding the usage of Water District No. 7, Dr. Ward said that they recent added a water well. They used about 250,000 gallons per day. Mr. Lazarus also wanted to know if coming south out of Greenwood would be an option. Dr. Ward said that could be an option, but he is not sure that they have the capacity.

Mr. Young wanted to know when the last discussion with the City was had regarding sharing water. Dr. Ward said it was during Mayor Tyler’s last term. He also said that there is current talk with Mayor Perkins, but it has not reached a “sit down” yet. Mr. Young said that the City’s Administration has changed, so it might be beneficial to have another talk. Dr. Ward stated that the staff is still the same as Mayor Tyler’s term, and they are not in favor of tapping into a water system in the southern part of the Parish.

Mr. Young talked about the Blanchard Plant. Dr. Ward said that they now have the capacity of 1 million gallons per day. He also said that Caddo Lake can provide the Parish with 100 million gallons per day.

Mr. Young wanted to know the average age of the water infrastructure throughout the Parish, as well as the average life expectancy. Dr. Ward said that Blanchard has the newest infrastructure. He also said that the average age of water infrastructure in the Parish is about 30 years old or more. Dr. Ward said that those water systems are approaching their 50 year life expectancy. Dr. Wilson said that the City of Shreveport's infrastructure was built in 1954. He also explained that they would like to create a new utility district.

Mr. Young said that he has a cabin and captures rainwater. He further explained, by his own calculations, that a 1,000 square foot roof captures about 25,000 gallons. He wanted to know if there was a possibility of roof water rain capture in any of these systems. Mr. Young explained that it is cleaner coming from a roof than it is in the river or lakes. Dr. Ward said that there are several residents that capture and harvest their own rain water. He also explained that the City captures its drain water and send it through a terrarium to help cool down some of their systems. He said that is definitely an option and on the table. Mr. Young said that he would like to continue these discussions in the future.

Mr. Rogers made a recommendation to have the language in creating these districts as broad as possible. He gave an example of Lafayette utilizing their utility district to run fiber optic cables. He said that, depending on the wording, they may be able to get broadband service to the rural areas of the Parish.

- At this time, Mr. Young moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion regarding The Red River Study, De-sedimentation & Watershed Initiative*. Dr. Wilson said that Mr. Kent Rogers, NLCOG, is on the line to discuss this.

Mr. Rogers provided copies of a presentation regarding the Region 1 Louisiana Water Shed Initiative to the Committee. He said that HUD has approved the overall Watershed Initiative & Plan, they still do not have a final agreement in place between HUD and Office of Community Development (OCD), without that the money cannot be spent on projects.

Through the first round of application process, there were eight projects within Region 1 that were accepted to fill in the full application process. Those were the initial eight that the State said they would fund with their pot of money. There is an additional pot of money that would go to the individual watershed regions. That list has not been compiled yet, but there is an option to add to that list. Of the eight projects selected, only one is in Caddo Parish. It is the Ockley Basin Storage project.

Mr. Rogers announced that the next Region 1 meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon. A Regional Flood Risk presentation will be made at this meeting.

Regional Steering Committees have been set up throughout the state of Louisiana. Members were appointed to represent values, contribute expertise and express short and long-term concerns of stakeholder groups represented. Region 1's RSC is comprised of representatives from each of the 12 parishes, as well as 3 at-large members who serve for the entire region.

The Region 1 watershed covers the Northwest corner of Louisiana, following the boundary of the USGS hydrologic units of the Red-Saline and the Big Cypress-Sulphur basins. The region includes portions of 12 parishes.

Mr. Rogers also listed the names of the Region 1 Steering Committee: Rodney Warren (Bienville), Butch Ford (Bossier), Ali Mustapha (Caddo), Dennis Butcher (Claiborne), Steve Brown

(Desoto), Morgan Briggs (Grant), Rick Nowlin (Natchitoches), Matt Johns (Rapids), Shane Hubbard (Red River), William Ruffin (Sabine), Nick Cox (Webster), Mike Carpenter (Winn), Lindsey Gouedy, John Michael Moore, and Zazell Dudley.

Mr. Young asked about the contract with HUD and OCD. Mr. Rogers explained that the overall agreement has to be with HUD and the State of Louisiana through OCD. From that, they develop the watershed areas. Their overall proposal was agreed upon and told everyone to move forward even though their formal agreements have not been put in place just yet. Mr. Rogers further explained that he is not sure of the delay.

Mr. Young wanted to know the purpose of the Watershed Initiative. The goal of the program is to support strong and effective governance for each watershed region and ensure each region operates in a way that maximizes flood mitigation efforts and funds for risk-reduction projects as they become available.

- At this time, Mr. Young moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion regarding herbicide spraying and vegetation management.*

Mr. Young explained that this topic came up because a citizen came before the Commission regarding spraying that was near a drainage ditch. The citizen said that it feeds directly into Cross Lake. Mr. Young said that it seems that the Parish spends a lot of money on herbicide. He wanted to begin the conversation to see if there were other ways the Parish could control its vegetation.

Mr. Young then said that one option could be to use foraging animals, such as goats and sheep. Mr. Hopkins said that there was a company in Oil City that utilized goats to clear properties. Mr. Young would like a trial run with this company or another company like this. Dr. Wilson said that they will revisit this. He also brought the point up that most of the spraying is done on the roadways, so that it is safe to travel the roadways.

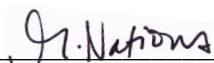
Mr. Epperson wanted to know if the herbicides being used are poisonous or detrimental to animals or fish. Dr. Wilson said that the herbicides are environmental friendly. Mr. Epperson requested that the names of those chemicals be provided to the Committee.

Mr. Lazarus pointed out that the spraying is done by a third-party contractor.

- Mr. Young moved onto the next New Business item, *Discussion regarding draining culvert expansion options in Dixie Garden.*

Mr. Young said that one of the neighborhoods in his district is having issues with flooding. Mr. Rogers mentioned that the State is looking for those types of projects to fund. Mr. Jackson asked for more clarification on this topic. Mr. Young explained that it is a ditch and culvert that goes under 70th Street where the water goes. He said that there is speculation if the ditch was cleaned, another culvert was added, or a pump was installed, the area would not flood. Mr. Jackson wanted to know where the water goes. Mr. Weaver said that it goes into the Red River. Mr. Jackson suggested that the Red River Waterway Commission is responsible for the Red River and its tributaries. He also suggested that Mr. Young reach out to Mr. Burrell. Mr. Weaver said that it is more of a Levee Board issue because it is behind the levee.

There be no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.



Michelle Nations

Deputy Commission Clerk