

Town of Abita Springs, La.



These minutes are from the meetings of the Public Committees on July 7, 2015. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper called the meeting to order; Alderman Curtis led the pledge of allegiance. Alderman Murphy moved to add discussion of the recent DOTD meeting regarding the Harrison Extension to the Infrastructure Committee agenda, seconded by Alderman Blitch Welliver.

GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE: Alderman Berrigan moved to open the Governmental Committee meeting and to accept the June 2015 Public Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

- Mayor Lemons advised the Board of progress regarding the donation, revocation, and the sale of a portion of Carnation St. to Abita Lumber and asked for an introduction of the ordinance at the next Town Council Meeting. Alderman Berrigan moved to present the ordinance for introduction at the July Town Council Meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.
- Alderman Berrigan introduced local resident, Adrienne Juttner, to speak about the effort to establish a Keep Abita Beautiful affiliate to the Keep America Beautiful organization. Ms. Juttner began by noting the seriousness of the litter problem and asked for the assistance of the Board to find solutions. Ms. Juttner explained the process by which the Town would apply for affiliate status adding that initially an organizational committee would be established consisting of approximately six to nine members. She asked the Aldermen if one of them would participate on the committee and for their support of the presented resolution endorsing efforts to establish the Abita Springs Chapter. Alderman Berrigan favorably recommended the resolution for adoption at the next Town Council meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.
- Local resident, Regina Benton, addressed the Board regarding the "Subdivision Ordinance" expressing concern over the included requirement that subdividers install hard surface roads. Ms. Benton explained that her neighbor, Mr. Tom Hahn is interested in subdividing his property into two lots. It is Ms. Benton's position that the original intent should apply to developers of property and not to subdividers like Mr. Hahn. Ms. Benton asked the Board to consider a review of the language of the ordinance. Ms. Benton added that the prior property owner sold a non-conforming lot to Mr. Hahn and failed to install a hard surface road, therefore Mr. Hahn should be allowed to do the same. Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper asked whether Mr. Hahn had gone to the Planning and Zoning Commission with his proposal. Mr. Hahn responded that he talked with the Planning and Zoning Director and the Mayor. Alderman Berrigan offered a suggestion that Town Attorney, Edward Deano, provide input, adding that he does not feel there is any latitude. Mr. Hahn agreed. Mr. Hahn went on to say that he would like to see the ordinance changed. Mayor Lemons pointed out that this decision was appropriately the responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Alderman Berrigan concluded that the Hahns should contact Ms. Chatelain to be placed on the Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting agenda and that the Town would consult with Mr. Deano for advice.
- Alderman Blitch Welliver opened a discussion of the need for a review of the Historic Guidelines and the Application Process. The Alderman reported that residents have commented on the confusing

nature of their experience and that in fact, as a former member of the Commission, she has experienced a lack of consistency in the adherence to required timelines and the provision of required documentation. Alderman Blich Welliver introduced Historic Commissioner Chairman, Ron Blich, and invited him to address the Board. Mr. Blich presented a handout and explained that yellow highlighted items were current requirements and other items were recommended additions. Mr. Blich went on to detail the recommendations including a requirement that the Historic Commission expand their role to make decisions regarding the removal of protected trees and the institution of an application fee. The application fee would be dedicated to fund the electronic publication of Historic Guidelines and updates. Mr. Blich also advocated extension of the application submission deadline to thirty days and suggested electronic posting of the documents. Alderman Berrigan stated he finds merit in the thirty-day application requirement noting that he does not find it cumbersome for the applicant. Alderman Berrigan added that the volunteers sitting on Town Commissions should be provided with the respect of presentation of complete materials with ample time allowed for a proper review. Also discussed by the Aldermen was the possibility of contracting the electronic publishing with possible funding coming through grant proceeds. Mayor Lemons expressed he had no objection if the funding through a grant could be secured. However, the Mayor did object to requirements that applicants provide documents, which are not germane to Historic Commission oversight. Discussion ensued regarding whether the referenced documents were required by Planning and Zoning, which approval came first, and the significance of the documents to the decision making process. Former Mayor, and current Historic Commissioner, Bryan Gowland, addressed the Board voicing his hope that Abita Springs avoids similarities to other municipalities where an applicant has a ninety day wait for a sign approval. Mr. Gowland went on to state that "the law clearly says that the Historic Commission shall not consider interior use or arrangement." He concluded his comments by expressing his opinion that a thirty-day application deadline is longer than he would like and that he would prefer the discussion to take place within the Commission with the Board of Aldermen empowered to review any changes. Alderman Murphy asked for clarification on the current application submission time requirements. Mr. Blich responded to the best of his recollection the thirty-day requirement was rejected by the majority of Commissioners and a seven day deadline was approved. He added that the majority agreed upon a seven day limit, which was never recorded in the minutes nor was it enforced. Currently applicants are required to submit applications and supporting documents the Friday preceding the meeting. Alderman Curtis expressed concern over Mr. Blich's claim that the will of the Commission was not properly recorded nor enforced and asked that the minutes and the audio recording of the last year's meeting be produced for his review. The Governmental Committee closed the discussion with a recommendation that the Historic Committee meet and present their conclusions to the Board at the next scheduled Public Committee Meeting in August.

- Alderman Berrigan turned to the discussion of the RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE UPDATED ST. TAMMANY PARISH NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN over to the Town Clerk, Kathy Armand. Ms. Armand explained that the resolution is required every five years to participate in the program with the Parish. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper advised that this cooperation allows the municipality to avail themselves to disaster resources and then moved to favorably recommend the resolution, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

- Alderman Berrigan opened discussion of the RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH WHOLESOME WAVE FOUNDATION CHARITABLE VENTURES, INC., ("WHOLESOME WAVE"), AS A SUBRECIPIENT UNDER WHOLESOME WAVE'S FOOD INSECURITY NUTRITION INCENTIVE ("FINI") GRANTS PROGRAM AWARD. Mayor Lemons detailed that the proceeds of the grant are dedicated to providing additional funds to match SNAP purchases at the Farmer's Market and to purchase materials to support the program. The Mayor also noted that an advisory Board has been established to recommend methods to further enhance and

develop the Farmer's Market. Mayor Lemons responding to a question posed by Alderman Berrigan clarified that the market and the program is fully controlled by the Town of Abita Springs and the Town Financial Clerk, Niki Mendow, to address financial oversight. Ms. Mendow explained that she has designed a process for administration of the SNAP program, which has been implemented and is working well. Alderman Murphy posed a question regarding the initial application for the grant. Ms. Mendow and Council Clerk, Leanne Schaefer, explained that information in the original application included projections. Ms. Schaefer communicated that a discussion with Wholesome Wave representative Leah Johnson revealed that the initial application document assists Wholesome Wave in determining whether a partnership with the Town is viable. Ms. Johnson advised Ms. Schaefer that Wholesome Wave maintains the original application and that it was not submitted to the USDA. Ms. Mendow directed attention to subsequent documents, which now constitute the agreement. A discussion of details related to figures and the dedicated purposes followed. The Mayor confirmed that the noted "in-kind" \$3500.00 match amount is derived solely from vendor fees. Ms. Mendow summarized her perception of the big picture stating that people are using the SNAP program at the Farmer's Market and that this program will help them to better their lives by helping them to provide more for their families. She said that from her perspective the oversight will not be too burdensome. Alderman Berrigan emphasized the importance that a Town employee administer these programs. Advisory Board Chairman, Bryan Gowland, spoke of the importance of the Farmer's Market in the community. He summarized points from the Advisory Board recommendation report. Alderman Murphy pointed out the merit of the Wholesome Wave program and his hope that issues of concern are worked out so that it doesn't fall by the wayside. Farmer's Market vendors and citizens expressed specific problems with the market. Topics discussed included discussion of produce bundles containing products not made or grown by the selling vendor and the choice of Sunday as market day. Alderman Curtis recommended that the Board of Aldermen appoint two people to the Advisory Board and move forward to sign the agreement for the first year. Alderman Berrigan agreed to nominate two people to the Advisory Board at the August Public Committee Meeting and to postpone the vote until the August Town Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper introduced Jeremy Hendrix from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture. Mr. Hendrix emphasized how important farmer's markets and partnering of programs like SNAP are to local farmers and the local economy, retaining ninety-five cents of every dollar in the community. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper thanked the speaker and allowed Ms. Chatelain to address the Board. Ms. Chatelain took exception to Mr. Blich's statement regarding her failure to include Historic Commission decisions in the meeting minutes. Ms. Chatelain produced the minutes and invited the Aldermen to review the information proving that the alleged omission was in fact included in the documents.

Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper moved to close the Governmental Committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE: Alderman Murphy moved to open the Infrastructure Committee Meeting and accept the June 2015 Infrastructure Committee minutes, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

- Alderman Murphy updated the Board relating topics discussed at a recent meeting with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development regarding the Harrison Extension. Alderman Murphy covered traffic issues, the possibility of a roundabout, and future development of the Harrison Extension. The Alderman explained that the State has initiated a program whereby the State will provide a \$420,000.00 credit for each mile of State Hwy within the Town for which the Town accepts future maintenance responsibility. The credit could be used to fund approved projects. Alderman Murphy concluded the meeting was positive, the Town is on their radar, and that DOTD agreed to conduct a safety study.

- Alderman Murphy moved to close the Infrastructure Committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: Alderman Blich Welliver moved to open the Finance Committee Meeting and accept the June 2015 Finance Committee meeting minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

- Financial Clerk, Niki Mendow, presented the "2015 First Quarter Financial Report." Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper reminded everyone who had not already done so, to please pay their property taxes prior to the upcoming tax sale.

Alderman Blich Welliver moved to close the Finance Committee meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Alderman Curtis moved to open the Economic Development Committee Meeting and to accept the June 2015 meeting minutes, seconded by Alderman Murphy. Alderman Curtis moved to close the Economic Development Committee, seconded by Alderman Murphy.

Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper moved to close the meeting of the Public Committees, seconded by
Alderman Blich Welliver

MEETING ADJOURNED
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 7th DAY OF JULY 2015.

Kathy Armand, Town Clerk

Greg Lemons, Mayor