

Town of Abita Springs, La.

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MAYOR
GREG LEMONS

ALDERMEN
GINA KILPATRICK HARPER
(MAYOR PRO-TEM)

PATRICK BERRIGAN
DANIEL J. CURTIS
RYAN MURPHY
LESLIE BLITCH WELLIVER

UTILITY MANAGER
DEBRA MACLEAN

UTILITY CLERK II
LINDA MEEKER

PLANNING & ZONING DIRECTOR
CINDY CHATELAIN

TOWN MARSHALL
JOE CANDILORA

The following minutes were taken at the regular monthly meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on April 19, 2016 at the Town Hall in Abita Springs. Mayor Lemons called the meeting to order.

Alderman Berrigan gave the invocation; the pledge of allegiance was led by Alderman Murphy.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Mayor Lemons opened the hearing on INSTRUMENT 2015-007 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ZONING AND ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN LAND INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF ABITA SPRINGS, LOUISIANA AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS. The Mayor explained that the property owners requested the annexation and that the Planning and Zoning Commission made a favorable recommendation. Local resident, Evette Randolph asked how the Town and property owners would benefit. Mayor Lemons answered that the Town benefits through increased revenue by way of additional ad valorem tax and the property owner gains through access to Town utilities. Alderman Curtis moved to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Alderman Murphy. All present were in favor.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Lemons recognized Linda Meeker as Employee of the Month. The Mayor noted that among other tasks Ms. Meeker diligently follows through with complaints related to the Town's garbage collection service. Mayor Lemons then presented a proclamation to Dee Wild Assistant Director and RSVP Director with the Volunteers of America Organization. Volunteers, Linda Hawkins and Robert Couvillon were also in attendance. The Mayor thanked the representatives from the organization and proclaimed April 5, 2016 a day of National Service Recognition. Mayor Lemons also announced that his appointment to the Fire District 8 Commissioner position is Sandra Slifer.

ROLL CALL:

Aldermen Berrigan, Curtis, Murphy, and Blitch Welliver were present. Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper was absent. Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to accept the March 15, 2016 Town Council Meeting minutes, seconded by Alderman Berrigan. All were in favor.

FARMER'S MARKET REPORT:

Market Manager, Mike Norman gave a report of Farmer's Market increases over this quarter compared to the final quarter in 2015. Mr. Norman communicated that 120 families have participated in the Louisiana Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the Market. Mayor Lemons announced that the Abita Springs Art and Farmer's Market was second in a list of the top ten Farmer's Market in Louisiana.

STPSO:

Lt. Williams gave a brief report of calls adding that the Busker Festival was a big success. A local resident suggested a pedestrian crosswalk leading to the new parking area.

FIRE DISTRICT 8:

Chief Glenn addressed the Council, reporting 74 calls for the month of March. The Chief reported a dispatch problem with a medical emergency which will be further investigated.

TOWN MARSHAL:

Marshal Candilora presented his monthly report of code violations. The Marshal stated there was a complaint related to standing water in old tires and a boat at a local residence. In an effort to control mosquito populations, the Marshal asked residents to be vigilant and report observations of standing water problems.

TOWN ENGINEER:

Engineer Jean Thibodeaux will continue to work on some of the Town's projects including the Trace Lighting, Park Wetland Project, Cemetery Parking Area, Sidewalk to Recreational Trails Project, Drainage on Minkler, Walker and Caroline Streets, Debris Monitoring and Removal Bid, and finally street and parking striping. Mayor Lemons reported that Principal Engineering Inc. has been selected to work on sewer and street maintenance and improvements, the Harrison Rd. Extension, a roundabout at Harrison Rd and Hwy 59.

OLD BUSINESS:

Mayor Lemons opened discussion of an amendment to INSTRUMENT 2015-007 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE ZONING AND ANNEXATION OF CERTAIN LAND INTO THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF ABITA SPRINGS adding the most recent survey to the document. Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to adopt the amendment, seconded by Alderman Curtis. The vote was: Yeas: 4 Alderman Berrigan, Curtis Murphy, and Blitch Welliver, Nays: 0, Absent: 1 Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper, Abstain: 0 The Mayor asked to defer the final adoption of the amended ordinance until the next Town Council Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Alderman Murphy moved to adopt a RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE 2015 FISCAL YEAR LOUISIANA COMPLIANCE QUESTIONNAIRE related to the Town's annual audit. The motion was seconded by Alderman Blitch Welliver. The vote was: Yeas: 4 Alderman Berrigan, Curtis Murphy, and Blitch Welliver, Nays: 0, Absent: 1 Alderman Kilpatrick-Harper, Abstain: 0

OPEN/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Jay Hawkins, speaking as chairman of Fire District 8 and a citizen of Abita Springs addressed the Aldermen. Mr. Hawkins told the Council that he recently learned the town will install a water meter at the firehouse on Hwy 36. He said he does "recognize we do use some water" adding "if we need to look for ways to pay for sewer improvements, I think there's some other ways that we need to do this." As an alternative, Mr. Hawkins suggested layoffs and elimination of employee raises. Other comments included reference to alleged problematic deficits and his opinion regarding the need to immediately restructure the way utilities are charged. Mr. Hawkins concluded with an objection to the Financial Reporting Schedule and his desire to see it published more quickly.

Local resident, Stewart Eastman encouraged the Aldermen to move away from a focus on fossil fuels as one of the Town's primary sources of energy and to plan for that eventuality.

Mayor Lemons mentioned upcoming Town events including the Cajun Dance, Friday Night Bingo, the Men's Club Meeting, the Opry, and the Aqua Fest.

Alderman Murphy moved to adjourn the Town Council Meeting, seconded by Alderman Blitch Welliver.

MEETING ADJOURNED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 19th DAY OF APRIL 2016.

Kathy Armand, Town Clerk

Honorable Greg Lemons, Mayor