

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Abbeville met in special session on July 25, 2023 at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting place, the Council Meeting Room located at 101 North State Street, Abbeville, Louisiana, with the Honorable Roslyn R. White, Mayor presiding.

Members Present: Council Members, Carlton Campbell, Brady Broussard, Jr., Terry Broussard and Tony Hardy

Member Absent: Councilman Francis Touchet, Jr.

Also, Present: Bart Broussard, City Attorney
Chris Gautreaux, Parks and Public Works Director
Charlene Becket, Main Street Manager
Cristian LeJeune, Digital Media Assistant
Bryan Fisher, prospective Code Enforcement Officer
Kim Touchet, Engineer
Charles Dill, Abbeville Planning Commission
David Ashley, Abbeville Planning Commission
Kim Marousek, CPEX
Joni Hammons, CPEX
Onezieme Mouton

Mayor White called the special City Council meeting to order and requested a roll call. She asked Mrs. Arlene Collee to lead those assembled in prayer. She asked Councilman Brady Broussard, Jr. to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor White asked if there were any comments on any agenda item prior to action. There were none.

Mayor White stated that item one was for CPEX to present their near-term policy recommendations and options for ordinance modifications related to nuisance codes, themes from listening sessions and master planning and authorize action if needed. She introduced Kim Marousek. Ms. Marousek stated they were here about three months ago and went through some early recommendations that they had related to the City's code. After that you asked us to take a deeper dive into the nuisance code so we are here tonight to report back on some of that. While we were here in April, we had a series of listening sessions to listen to the issues. Joni will present some of the findings from those listening sessions. They would also like to speak about future actions and comprehensive planning, in general. We wanted to consider things in three approaches. One was to list those things that were key issues that Abbeville is facing with development issues. The second one is a subdivision ordinance and the third is to look at a unified code for the City of Abbeville that is grounded in the planning process. We would develop that after we have an opportunity to engage with the citizens of Abbeville to find out what they want the future of Abbeville to be and where development and growth should occur in Abbeville. We would then craft future codes and regulations around that public process. They did take a look at the nuisance regulations that are currently in the code. She reviewed those to see how they aligned in law. She developed some best practices by looking at West Monroe's code as a peer comparison. The City should focus on updating regulations related to tall grass, trash and debris,

junked vehicles, abandoned and blighted structures and consolidating it to one nuisance regulation. All violation processes should be updated to provide clarity and to comply with legal timeline requirements as needed. The City should consider providing for a hearing officer to hear violation cases. These hearing would be in front of the hearing officer not in front of the City Council at a meeting. Mayor White stated that we have hired a Code Enforcement Officer that could do that. Mrs. Marousek recommended changes to several regulations and also to consolidate some regulations into one place. She discussed each recommended change in detail. Mayor White stated that it is a struggle to decipher the code when dealing with nuisances. We need to be more transparent for residents and make our processes clearer for everyone. We have now created the position of Code Enforcement Officer. We have someone here, Bryan Fisher, who has accepted that position. We will officially hire him on August 1, 2023. CPEX has provided a quote in the amount of \$20,000 to update our code with their recommendations. This quote entails the entire process of making the changes. Ms. Joni Hammons discussed the listening session themes that were held on April 18, 2023 with six groups of local stakeholders. The stakeholders represented a wide spectrum of community experience and a diverse range of interests. They were local law enforcement, real estate and housing professionals, mission-driven non-profit organizations, local educators, major employers, city planning commissioners, economic development professionals, local places of worship and other engaged residents. Participants were asked three questions: What if..., What I worry about... and What must happen? Themes collected provided valuable insight into the needed areas of focus for a future comprehensive planning effort. Some of the themes dealt with housing opportunities, opportunity for young people, landlord issues, ability to walk or bike ride and other transportation issues and safety. Ms. Hammons discussed the themes in depth. This is valuable for future planning efforts because those who contribute feel like the plan belongs to them. She shared a plan they recently completed for the City of Opelousas. She explained the process of how they developed it. She compared some satellite images of the region that included Abbeville and Lafayette from 1993, 2004 and today. You see a lot of growth in Lafayette and New Iberia but Abbeville basically looks the same. That is not a good thing or a bad thing. It is just a fact. Change will happen whether you guide it or not. There is a lot of opportunity for the City of Abbeville to guide that future growth. Councilman Broussard stated that we really don't want Johnston Street in Abbeville and the quality of life we have in Abbeville is the envy of many in Lafayette Parish. We need correct growth for our situation. Incorrect growth is bad. Councilman Campbell stated that we have a river that runs through our City so that should be a great economic advantage. Mayor White agreed. A strategic plan is a top priority. It needs to be driven in a place that rights the ship. Onezieme Mouton suggested that the planning be expedited in order to protect the assets we have. Ms. Kim Marousek stated she understands what he is saying but you really want to make sure you take your time when it comes to planning. It should not be expedited. You can use the tool of a moratorium for a limited time if need be. Mr. Bryan Fisher stated that he does not have family here except for the family he brought when he moved to Abbeville. He was living in Youngsville and because of the poor planning, it was deadlocked. Planning will be very important for Abbeville. Mayor White agrees that we need to keep the small town feel for Abbeville and it has the planning has to touch every part of the City.

-01 introduced by Mr. Tony Hardy and seconded by Mr. Carlton Campbell to authorize the Mayor to hire CPEX to revise the nuisance code at a quotation of \$20,000.00. The motion carried unanimously.

-02 introduced by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Tony Hardy to authorize the Mayor to sign all required documents to submit the application for the Delta Regional Authority Strategic Planning Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor White stated that we will do a master plan whether we get this grant or not. We have already put the money in the budget for us to pay it but we found this grant to apply for. It is a \$150,000 grant with no local match. The application is almost complete and will be submitted.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor White declared this meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk
Secretary-Treasurer

Roslyn R. White
Mayor