

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 31st DAY OF JULY, 2023

The Caddo Parish Natural Resources Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 1:35 p.m., in the Government Plaza First Floor Conference Room, with Mr. Atkins, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Lazarus and Young (7). ABSENT: Commissioner Jones (1).

The invocation was given by Mr. Lazarus, and Mr. Hopkins led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- Louisiana Mid- Continent Oil & Gas Association Led Noise Fundamentals Training

Heidi Gil, CEO Urban Solution Group, discussed the founding of Urban Solution Group and its purpose as an industrial mitigation service company that specializes in environmental acoustics. It was explained that the purpose of the training is for experts to explain industrial noise. Mr. Epperson discussed the citizen's need to be educated and involved in the training. Mrs. Gil explained that Urban Solution Group had engaged with oil and gas organizations and local governments to evolve regulations that are impactful for residents. Mrs. Gil discussed that the training would provide concepts and fundamental information and that Urban Solution Group is an independent company that does not work for any oil and gas organization or operator. Mrs. Gil discussed noise levels across the nation and the need to determine noise level acceptable by communities. Mrs. Gil explained the need for socially compatible industrial development and oil and natural gas development near people if it is socially and economically responsible. Mrs. Gil reviewed how perception is a factor in the noise regulation and how focusing on data could equalize and quantify the standard planning process.

Mrs. Lindsey Apland explained how data would create a roadmap of expectations between the law regulators and operators. Mrs. Lindsey Apland reviewed sound frequencies and the energies each frequency needs, and industrial noise produces broadband type frequencies. Mrs. Lindsey Apland reviewed decibel levels and the decibel levels of recognizable noises such as a whisper, a refrigerator running, and a vacuum that a human ear could hear. Mrs. Lindsey Apland explained how noise levels reach hazardous levels that OSHA regulates such as a jet taking off. Mrs. Lindsey Apland explained decibels, travelling sound and ambient area. Mrs. Lindsey Apland discussed how sound is not linear but logarithmic, and the decibel difference between ambient area and the impact noise. Mrs. Lindsey Apland reviewed lower frequencies, how lower frequencies travel long distances, and the sizes of octave bands. Mrs. Gil explained how Urban Solution Group had collected data on operational noise. Answering Mr. Young regarding humidity's effect on noise, Mrs. Gil explained that humidity, temperature and environment affect the impact. Mrs. Gil explained that noise modelling includes international standards and parameters for regulators to follow to manage environmental effects on noise. Mrs. Lindsey Apland explained that sound mufflers must have size to cover the sound wave of low frequencies. Mrs. Lindsey Apland reviewed sound pressure, environmental and topographical effects on sound, reflection and absorption of sound when sound comes into contact with an object, and the diffraction of sound when sound angles toward the top of an object. Answering Mr. Young's inquiry about sound wall design, Mrs. Gil reviewed wall barriers designed by structural engineers and the need to balance structural, operational and life safety of wall barriers. Mrs. Lindsey Apland and Mrs. Gil discussed operational feasibility and practicality to regulate noise and how Europe is ahead of America in noise standards and the enforcement of those standards.

Answering Mr. Atkins about the Parish's current process in noise enforcement, Mr. Chuck Wilson explained how the Parish's equipment is adequate. Public Works Director Mr. Tim Weaver discussed the acquisition of new equipment that is calibrated to capture noise. Mr. Epperson discussed field data from citizens' complaints in real time that the Parish staff responds to immediately. Mr. Epperson discussed issues with contacting operators and the timely response of customer service for operators. Mrs. Gil explained working with public and industry to communicate pro-actively with data driven and socially compatible information. Mrs. Gil and Mrs. Lindsey Apland introduced a brief overview of studies that could potentially go into the Parish's noise management. Mrs. Gil advised that Urban Solutions Group was still digesting data from LMOGA. Mrs. Gil and Mrs. Lindsey Apland reviewed equipment signature, planning tools and assessing offenders, continuous noise monitoring, and explained that not all acoustics have a one-size-fits-all approach.

Mr. Young inquired about establishing a maximum sound impact radius, which Mrs. Gil explained that a setback may not be compatible with technology and equipment that impacts people at varying distances. Mrs. Gil explained that innovations in oil and natural gas technology and equipment changes quickly. Mrs. Gil discussed the commonality of communicating with residents within a buffer zone that a registered operator is in the area and what residents could expect from an operator. Mr. Young indicated to have Urban Solutions Group's opinion before final passage of the noise ordinance, which Attorney Frazier advised that the Parish's current noise consultant is available. Attorney Frazier referred the Committee to Legal's recommendation on the noise ordinance that was done in consultation with the

consultant. Mr. Atkins advised that the Parish's noise ordinance was based on the noise ordinance from Bossier Parish, which Attorney Frazier indicated that the noise ordinance has been marked with the oil and gas industry's proposed changes. Mrs. Gil advised that Urban Solutions Group provides stakeholder participation in industry and does not provide contractor services.

- Additional Discussion Regarding Ordinance 6328 Related to Noise Regulation

It was **moved by Mr. Epperson**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to recommend to the full body a delay any final action on Ordinance No. 6328 of 2023.*

Mr. Epperson discussed delaying the ordinance until the Committee receives a PowerPoint of information from the consultants. Mr. Epperson explained representing the citizens and proactiveness towards noise complaints. Mr. Atkins clarified that the committee would request the delay at the next Commission meeting.

Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, Hopkins, Lazarus and Young (7). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Jones (1). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Attorney Frazier discussed the time sensitivity of the noise ordinance and that the current noise ordinance is still active for oil and gas operators. Mr. Epperson requested to have dates set to discuss the noise ordinance. Mr. Burrell advised that the noise ordinance could be amended. Mr. Hopkins asked the oil and gas industry representatives whether a later timeline would affect their operations. It was explained that Chesapeake Energy may be affected under their current operating permit. Mr. Hopkins inquired about consequences of halting operators from currently operating by delaying the noise ordinance, which Attorney Frazier addressed. Mr. Atkins suggested dates for the Committee to delay the noise ordinance. Mr. Young recommended hosting another Natural Resources Committee meeting to address the noise ordinance and publicly communicate the noise ordinance.

It was **moved by Mr. Atkins**, seconded by Mrs. Gage-Watts, *to call a Natural Resources Committee meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. and the date specific that Ordinance No. 6328 of 2023 be delay to the September 7, 2023 Regular Session meeting.* Motion carried, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Epperson, Gage-Watts, and Young (5). NAYS: Commissioner Hopkins (1). ABSENT: Commissioners Jones and Lazarus (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

The Chair provided copies of Legal and the Consultant's proposed changes of the noise ordinance to the Committee meeting visitors.

There was no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.



Linda J. Montgomery  
Administrative Specialist I