

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 17th DAY OF OCTOBER 2022

The Caddo Parish Long Range Planning Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 1:17 p.m., in the Government Plaza 1<sup>ST</sup> Floor Conference Room, with Mr. Hopkins, Chairman, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Hopkins, Jackson, and Johnson (5). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Young (2).

Mr. Johnson gave the invocation, and Mr. Atkins led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Discuss Ordinance 6254 Regarding Memorial Garden.*

Mr. Chavez introduced Mrs. Vernae Thomas with LBT Productions that wrote a movie script for that captures the history of Bloody Caddo to be accessible by QR code for the memorial garden.

Mrs. Thomas said that she came up with a story that would tell the story about what happened in the past and bring the community together. Mrs. Thomas thanked Mr. Johnson for providing information on the historical lynchings that occurred in the past, but it was too horrible to be used in the film. Mrs. Thomas said that the script includes a fictional story that reenacts history. Mrs. Thomas explained the story is about the main character, Mark, having to complete an elementary school report on the history of Caddo Parish. She said that Mark's classmate, Robert, do not get along, but the story shows how Mark and Robert journey through understanding Bloody Caddo and how the community can work together. Mrs. Thomas explained that the story is meant to be redemptive and entertaining.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know how long the film would be. Mrs. Thomas responded that originally the movie was for an hour, but it has been reduced to 30 minutes. Mr. Atkins commented that the memorial garden would have a QR code to watch the video. Mr. Hopkins wanted to know that the intent was to watch the movie later. Mr. Hopkins said that he would listen for the first few minutes, and he's done. Mr. Johnson said that the movie could be shorter but needed enough time to explain the Bloody Caddo to building unity. Mr. Johnson said that he did not want to end on a bad note. Mr. Atkins commented that he is in support of the memorial garden, but he is not in support of "airing our dirty laundry" and publicizing Bloody Caddo lynchings from 100 years ago. Mrs. Thomas pointed out that the script discusses the lynching tree, then clarifies that lynchings did not happen at that tree. Mrs. Thomas explained that she did not want the film to bash Caucasian people in a sob story. She said that the story talks about the two characters developing a friendship and is a restoration type of film. Mr. Atkins said that someone may see the film as divisive. Mr. Atkins voiced concerns about the content and that his initial support for the memorial garden was to review the content ahead of time. Mr. Atkins said that the Parish has spent the funds for the movie, but it has yet to be filmed. Mrs. Bryant commented that the Parish has not signed a contract yet, and this is the first time the Administration has seen the script. Mr. Atkins wanted to know the objective of today's meeting. Mr. Hopkins said that it depends on what comes from the Committee. Mr. Chavez said that this is the preliminary meeting, introducing the script and ideas, and the Committee can decide what to agree on. Mr. Atkins said that this is his first-time hearing about a movie production. Mr. Atkins wanted to know why the content is a movie. Mrs. Thomas responded that the film is family friendly, and the primary cast are children. She explained a scene in the movie where the main character's grandfather talks to the main character about what he experienced, and that bitterness does not help. Mr. Atkins said that the message is, "These white folks did some really bad stuff to us years ago, but we're going to forgive them and move on." Mr. Johnson responded not necessarily, because whites were lynched

as well. Mrs. Thomas mentioned that the main character's grandfather talks about Quakers. Mr. Atkins said that it will be hard to get him in favor of the script, but he is in favor of a nice garden with a plaque that has agreeable language on it.

Mr. Johnson said that he initially mentioned a garden and a plaque, but other Commissioners had other ideas for the garden. Mr. Johnson explained that Mr. Chavez put the story together because there are a lot of people that do not know about it. Mr. Johnson said, "It is history. It happened and so we need to embrace the history that has happened, but also grow upon that." Mr. Johnson said not to let history linger, ignore it, and not talk about it. Mr. Johnson said the story is going to tell how it happened, bridge the gap and the result is unity. Mr. Johnson said the push is that the Parish is embracing history and is unified, and that the story about classroom children portrays Caddo Parish today. Mrs. Thomas commented that she shared the script with her multi-cultural team, and they did not feel the script was bashing one ethnic group. Mr. Atkins wanted to know what Mrs. Thomas showed to her team. Mrs. Thomas responded that she provided her team with the script and the treatment. Mr. Atkins wanted to read the script. Mr. Johnson explained that the difference between a script and the storyline is that the script includes each character's lines, and that the treatment is the storyline. Mr. Hopkins said that the Committee is not voting on anything today. Mr. Chavez said he visited the WW2 Museum in Miami-Dade County and watched their 30-minute movies. Mr. Chavez mentioned that the memorial garden would be included in the civil rights trail project. Mr. Chavez said that he is not from Shreveport and that he researched Bloody Caddo after Mr. Johnson mentioned it in a Commission meeting. Mr. Atkins said that the Parish was like no man's land and a violent territory. Mr. Johnson said that Black people are scared to talk about it and white people that know about it do not talk about it. Mrs. Thomas commented that the story is not just about Bloody Caddo. She explained that the story is about relationships and how to move forward from pain. Mrs. Thomas said that the grandfather in the story is guiding the main character to be a better person regardless of skin color. Mrs. Thomas explained that she has seen films where a Black person dies, and people leave a film angry. Mrs. Thomas said that she did not want to produce or direct a film with those elements. Mr. Chavez wanted to know about Mrs. Thomas' credentials. Mrs. Thomas responded that she has a master's degree in Business Administration and a degree in marketing, with 11 years' experience, and that she has published books. Mrs. Thomas said that she was voted top 20 in last year's Film Prize Festival. Mr. Hopkins said that he has been involved in these types of projects for oil and gas, but the project was paid for with private funds. Mr. Hopkins said that he is not against the project and voiced concerns about using Parish funds for this type of project, when the Parish funds NGOs to support this type of project. Mr. Atkins said that whoever pays owns the content. Mr. Hopkins said that he is not okay with increasing the budget for the film. Mr. Chavez suggested having another meeting to have time to review the treatment and script. Mr. Atkins requested a copy of the script. Mrs. Thomas said that she will email the script. Attorney Frazier advised Mrs. Thomas to have the script copywritten before sending it to the Commission. Mr. Chavez recommended having an NDA signed. Attorney Frazier requested that the non-disclosure agreement be sent to her for review and approval before the Commission signs it. The Clerk, Mr. Atkins and Attorney Frazier provided Mrs. Thomas with their business card. Mr. Johnson reiterated the difference between a treatment and a script. Mr. Chavez mentioned that he toured schools as potential sites for the film. Mr. Johnson explained that the film is at different locations, with one location being Queensborough Elementary School. Mr. Johnson said that Queensborough Elementary School has the desired look, and the principal of the school is excited to work on the project. Mrs. Thomas provided a breakdown of the budget for the film to the Committee. The Clerk requested Mrs. Thomas to email Attorney Frazier and copy him to that email.

Mr. Jackson wanted to know how long the video would be viewable on site. Mr. Johnson responded that the movie will not be on site, and that it is a downloadable video. Mr. Atkins wanted to know the longevity of QR codes. He voiced concerns that technology could change in a few years. Mr. Chavez explained that a QR code is a URL address that is read by a phone device to go to that URL address. Mr. Chavez further explained that there are static and dynamic QR codes. Mr. Chavez said that a static QR code will go toward something, and a dynamic QR code extrapolates data of the user such as the location, time, and date when QR code was assessed. Mr.

Chavez said that the QR code on the memorial garden will be static. Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the QR code is going to be around for a while. Mr. Chavez confirmed and said that the world is going towards QR codes.

Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if the \$89,000 budget is for the film, plus the previously appropriated \$75,000 for the garden. Mrs. Thomas agreed that the \$89,000 is for the film. Mr. Johnson responded that the extra \$25,000 was to do the garden, the plaque and the video. Mrs. Bryant commented that the additional appropriation was for \$15,000, not \$25,000. Mr. Chavez said that the budget could be delayed because the Committee still has work to do. Mr. Hopkins commented that the budget is out of his ballpark. Mr. Atkins said not to feel bad for him being a slow adaptor. Mr. Hopkins said that the Committee will reconvene to determine the full cost of everything. Mrs. Bryant said that the Parish must receive proposals for the memorial garden project. Mr. Johnson wanted to know the starting number for proposals. Mrs. Bryant responded \$60,000.

The Chair delayed this agenda item until the next Long Range Planning Committee meeting.

- *Discuss Caddo Parish Roof Program.*

Mr. Jackson wanted to increase the budget of the Roof Repair Program using CAFA (Capital Area Finance Authority) program dollars, so that the Commission will not need to wait to make a budget amendment. Mrs. Bryant commented that the bulk of the budget is from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) and that is reflected in the 2023 budget. Mrs. Bryant said that the other \$30,000 could be included on the date of adoption. Mr. Jackson wanted to know if it is too late to increase the budget. Mrs. Bryant said that the budget books are in the printers, but the program has enough funding with the ARPA dollars. Mr. Jackson wanted to know the current budget amount. Mrs. Bryant responded that the total is \$260,000 plus \$56,000. Mrs. Bryant explained that Administration has spoken with The Fuller Center, but the Parish must open a bid to hire contractors. Mrs. Bryant said that The Fuller Center will help the Parish facilitate the Program. Mr. Johnson wanted to know about the new dollars coming in. Mrs. Bryant responded that the Parish earned \$34,000 from the CAFA loan fees and Mr. Jackson wants the funds to be applied to the Roof Repair Program. Mr. Jackson commented that the program costs more, whereas the Wheelchair Ramp Program is operating under budget. Mrs. Bryant wanted to know if the Wheelchair Ramp Program is operating under budget, then Mr. Jackson intends to reallocate funding from the Wheelchair Ramp Program to the Roof Repair Program. Mr. Jackson responded no. Mr. Jackson said that since the CAFA dollars are housing-related application fees, the earnings should be applied towards Roof Repair Program for seniors and veterans. Mr. Hopkins wanted to know if the Committee needs to do something. Mr. Bryant responded that the Committee does not need to do anything right now, but an amendment could be made at the date of adoption. Mrs. Bryant explained that programs that were previously budgeted under ARPA includes \$260,000 for the Roof Repair Program, but the \$34,000 earnings from loan fees were not included. Mrs. Bryant said that Administration is still working out the Roof Repair Program's eligibility for the ARPA dollars.

It was **moved by Mr. Jackson**, seconded to Mr. Atkins, *to recommend to the full body an amendment be made on the day of adoption of the budget to add \$34,000 from the CAFA program to the Roof Repair Program. Mr. Jackson's motion carried*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Chavez, Hopkins, Jackson and Johnson (5). NAYS: None (0). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Young (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Mr. Atkins requested an update on the activity of the Wheelchair Ramp Program. Mrs. Bryant responded that the Wheelchair Ramp Program is active, and it is administered by Caddo Council on Aging. She said that there are currently 16 applicants in need of ramps. Mrs. Bryant said that they are recruiting more people to install the ramps due to the interest and that Caddo Council on Aging charges the Parish for materials and a small administrative fee. Mrs. Bryant said that the Roof Repair Program has not gotten off the ground yet. She explained that the plan was to put out an RFP in 2023 and the Fuller Center will take applications to determine eligible individuals. Mr. Atkins wanted to know if the Fuller Center is the administrator. Mrs. Bryant said that the Fuller Center will facilitate the program to receive and review applications and set up applicants with a contractor.

MR. Jackson wanted to know if there will be an inspection. Mrs. Bryant responded yes because the Parish could not put a roof on a house without first inspecting it. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the RFP is for the Fuller Center to administer the program. Mrs. Bryant responded that the RFP is for the contractor.

Mr. Jackson commented that the goal of the Wheelchair Ramp Program and the Roof Repair Program is longevity and that is why the known entities that people trust administer the programs.

- *Discuss ERAP (Emergency Rental Assistance Program) Program*

Mr. Atkins wanted to know where the Parish is at for the Program. Mrs. Bryant responded that Finance and Administration has been approved for another \$10 million, but the Parish has not been received yet. Mrs. Bryant said that Administration and Finance are in discussion on how to use the funds. Mr. Atkins wanted to know whether the funds were from other entities that did not implement the program. Mrs. Bryant responded that the State has reallocated a portion of funds that the State did not use. Mrs. Bryant explained that there is a wide range of purposes that ERAP 2 could be used for. Mr. Jackson commented that the funds could be used for development, rehabilitation, and utilities. Mr. Jackson said that there are projects in Shreveport that have financial gaps who are asking recipients of ERAP reallocation funds for assistance in their projects. Mr. Jackson said that the Housing Corporation was able to save Galilee Apartments, United Jewelers, and a project from Fairfield Management for about \$6 million public-private dollars. Mr. Jackson said that Caddo Parish has a lack of quality housing stock and \$10 million could run out in two weeks. Mr. Jackson said that there is no rush to spend the ERAP reallocation funds, but the Parish could create program income for the Parish if the bids are right. Mr. Johnson commented that in a meeting with property owners, a property owner explained that they are remodeling rental units and increased the prices. Mr. Johnson said that it is wrong to raise rent on band-aid work. Mr. Jackson responded that the Parish would not be allowed to be involved in those kinds of developments, because the rule for reallocation says that the Parish must follow the same rules for the National Housing Trust Fund. He explained that includes a 20-year affordability period, which means that recipients of reallocation funds could not raise the rent. Mr. Jackson said that developers are aware of the rule and that the Parish must try to weed out bad actors.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.



Linda J. Montgomery  
Administrative Specialist I