

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 9TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2024

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 2:00 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mr. Greg Young, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Cothran, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (5). ABSENT: Commissioners Gage-Watts and Jones (2).

The Pledge of Allegiance and invocation were given during a previous committee meeting. There were no Agenda Additions nor any public comments, so the Committee moved on to New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Discuss establishing a Film and Entertainment Sub-Committee*

Commissioner Greg Young introduced the guest speaker, Tommy Granville. Mr. Granville presented a visual presentation about the film industry. The presentation played, and then Mr. Young introduced him once more and advised Mr. Granville to give everyone a little biography and tell some demographics about himself.

Mr. Young pointed to the Louisiana Tower and advised that Mr. Granville's office is located there. He says he has been blessed to visit his office and Mr. Granville has an amazing view.

Mr. Granville introduced himself as Tommy Granville, 52 years old, born and raised in Shreveport. He later moved to Houston, where he worked for Sony Records for some time. He was heavily involved in the music industry, working with quite a few artists, including Lil Flip. His transition into film came as technology changed; iTunes streaming and film were the only reasonable transitions.

A friend introduced him to film at a film prize event. In 2014, that was his first time doing a short film for the locals. His friend stated he had the skill set for it, but he did not want to do the project. Since 2014, he has had 22 films in the top 20 for the Film Prize. He is the go-to man for post-production. He stated that 18 out of the 20 films are his. He received emails and phone calls from Hollywood.

Mr. Atkins asked Mr. Granville how his movies got to Hollywood. Mr. Granville stated he didn't do anything and thanked God. He says he has never promoted any of these projects because of supernatural progression, he knows that it was God. He has been very successful with making films.

Mr. Young asked Mr. Granville, why the credit part of a movie is so important. Mr. Granville mentioned you are only hot as your last song or last film. He says he is a voting Grammy member; when he was vetted, he was asked what has he done in the last 5 years. It is very relevant in the entertainment industry to stay current. Credits are important because they are like your resume. It is a lot easier to work with any company in the world when you get to that point. He mentioned that he has worked for Lucas and Marvel films.

Mr. Young advised that the committee is trying to see what kind of visions he has. He welcomed the presence of 50 Cent and that he brings. He envisions an industry like New Orleans, New York City, and Memphis to name a few. He wants to cultivate over the long term our own talent. He asked what lanes he saw us falling in.

Mr. Atkins wanted to elaborate and advised that we were hot in 2010 when we had some of the first state tax credits and Katrina hit. So, people came here for the state credits since New Orleans was not accessible. He wants to build internally so that maybe we can keep it.

Mr. Young asked once more what opportunities he envisioned for us. Mr. Granville thinks

we should build on the foundation of things that we already have here. Even though 50 Cent and other companies are coming in; we have an advantage because we know the culture and who we have here—finding a lane that doesn't interfere with what 50 Cent is doing and the types of programs he has. He holds the number 1-4 stop.

Mr. Atkins asked what Mr. 50 Cents' genre is, and Mr. Granville stated Urban Programming. He mentioned the show Power and all of the spin-offs that are fueling him. Mr. Granville says he doesn't have all the answers; he wants everybody's input, and he thinks a team should be established.

Mr. Granville can think from the entertainment perspective but it may not work from a financial or Public Relations perspective. If you have a committee or advisory board it should be diverse, where not everybody has the same expertise. He would like to see someone who specializes in the following: Marketing, Financing, PR, and Legal. An entertainment attorney would be optimal for a sub-committee.

Mr. Thomas asked if someone with expertise in geography would be beneficial. Mr. Thomas also used the example of watching a documentary on the Amish lifestyle. If a film is produced well, it grabs attention. He spoke on the advantage of knowing the landscape.

Mr. Granville doesn't know if there should be a sub-committee position for a location scout. The person should be from that area. He advised this is a different municipality than what he is used to.

Mr. Atkins mentioned to Mr. Granville he has convinced himself of a location Scout and how it would be a good idea to have someone always present that who knows the area. He advised that in the movie industry, they also have that.

Mr. J. Young had a question for Mr. G. Young about the sub-committee and wanted clarity. He isn't familiar with entertainment law and suggest that it should be an external board. He advised the economic development in the past and assisted in scouting. Mentioned lobbying the film credits between Shreveport, New Orleans, and other cities. By J. Young suggested we should reach out to the children at the Harbor, as well to help expand. Perhaps lessons on how to use the equipment in the new recording studio and may be a good way to home grow in the entertainment industry.

Mr. Granville mentioned he reached out to Mr. Clay Waler when he was the Director of Juvenile services about modifying a program. This would include bringing those residents out to see the environment and how things flow. Mr. Granville mentioned he could bring people to the Grammys with him. He says that is the prize for sticking with the program.

Mr. Atkins mentioned Jeffry Goodman and films that he worked on, as well as Charles Scott, who is no longer in town. He suggested that those mentioned have a lot of knowledge. Mr. Granville asked what success looks like in the role of an advisory board. He wants to know clearly what we are aiming for.

Mr. Young wanted to answer first and said we were in an abstract mood. He is unfamiliar but excited about it. He wants to find what is beautiful and put it in words. He says when we get more structure and purpose; we can recognize where we are and where we are going. He says just getting the parties together in the room successfully includes Mr. Granville's input. Mr. Young mentioned he is waiting for Mrs. Bryant and Mrs. Frazier to input in the conversation.

Mr. Atkins says it should be economically sustained. Mrs. Frazier says what would be the Commission's charge. Mr. Young stated that was beautiful and in his notes. Mrs. Bryant says we should set up an external subcommittee to develop our presentation or collaboration with developing the film industry and how the interaction would be.

Mr. Young says we want to see this industry grow and that it is important that we have skin in the game, instead of the bleachers. Mrs. Bryant mentioned having a City and Parish representative.

Mr. Cothran asked if we would be spending money where it has already been laid out. He also mentioned is this a duplication and are we looking to be in the film industry. Where are we trying to fit in, we are not Hollywood. He stated that all these questions can't be answered today but need to be thought about. He said we need to see what is here already to save money.

Mr. Young stated we had been trying to create a lane. He says 50 Cent has a monopoly on what he does and we don't want to get into that lane. The hope is to identify opportunities where they are. He stated if he is 50 cents then there is 50 cents left. The advisory board will be tasked to identify what we are doing. The mission of this advisory board is to discover those opportunities.

It has been articulated and how do we identify that team? Mr. Granville can assist with the comprehensive area. We need to identify who wishes to serve on the advisory board. Mr. G. Young asked Mr. Granville if knew of anybody to fill those positions. Mr. Granville says when he thinks of those positions, he relates to people who have had experience in entertainment, specifically entertainment law. Mr. G. Young suggested Liz Swain. Liz Swain advised that they have great questions. Mr. Clerk advised he learned a lot from Liz Swain back in his political days. Mr. Granville advised that is why she would be perfect in PR.

Mr. Cothran thinks the best way is to advise the public of what we are looking for and advise a team. He also mentioned just because someone doesn't get chosen doesn't mean they don't want to be part of what's taking place. Mr. Atkins mentioned the regional vote and did not walk away from that. He questions what is the city and tourist industry doing. He suggests that we should listen for a while and send some messages out and see what comes back. If we want our own committee or to facilitate not just with Caddo parish but with city residents.

Mr. G. Young agreed that was a great idea and that until we begin appropriating funds we can still organize. He states what you have prepared for you don't have to get ready for. He is for moving forward on organizing the advisory board.

Mr. J. Young suggested an intergovernmental board instead of Parish alone, he doesn't want to exclude any participants. Mr. Thomas mentioned Fulton County and said we should establish our own board. He says that there is already an intergovernmental board being established and that the Parish needs to be prepared to bring something to the table. He says that is why we should have our own board because we were left out of the 50-cent thing. He says a person should be sent to meet with those boards. He just wants to establish a board that we can operate and advocate our wishes. He says we have nothing to bring to the conversation. If nobody else is doing anything we should be driving and pushing it forward to other agencies and that is why he is in support. Mr. Thomas says we need to drive the conversation and we are the stepchild of the 50-cent thing because he isn't sure what is going on with that project.

Mr. Granville researched Fulton County and he mentioned permits and licensing and the conversations being left out. He stated that Fulton County has a gateway where all permits and commissions go through. He mentioned if it is structured right.

Mr. Thomas mentioned if a movie is being produced in Georgia all of that information goes through a process before approval. Mr. G. Young thinks that one concern is that firms don't want to do business here because of all the red tape and permits. Mr. Granville was asked to speak on this topic. Mr. Granville advised that there is one film company in particular, he didn't want to mention names, that came to Shreveport and had a lot of trouble with permits to complete tasks in a timely matter. So, they decided to film in Bossier, where Parish provided them all the things they needed. He can't speak to what specifically the impediment was. It was more easily obtained in Bossier.

Mr. G. Young thanked him for the observation and advised he doesn't like being at the hem of his own mercy. He mentioned he doesn't know anybody in their right mind with a healthy leg who would volunteer to get a prosthetic. Mr. Cothran called for the question. Mr. Atkins supported the motion but he feels we need to look for ways to integrate and partner. He will vote for the motion but we need to

collaborate.

Mr. J. Young advised that the City of Shreveport and MPC get on board in a big way. Close contact is needed to accomplish projects. Mr. Young isn't sure why the city of Shreveport and Bossier would collaborate with us when we are not stakeholders. He says right now we are just trying to develop something.

Mr. Thomas mentioned that the inter-governmental thing is happening. He said if he wanted to do something with sports, why would he approach him if he didn't show interest? Mr. Thomas mentioned that doing this lets them know we are interested. Our geography is very diverse and anybody is being excluded. Mrs. Bryant advised that people have the perception that the Parish has money and she doesn't know why. The city has never been asked for direct cash or an incentive for a project.

It was **moved by Mr. G. Young**, seconded by Mr. Cothran Commissioner, *to recommend a resolution to a family entertainment advisory board. Motion carried/failed*, as shown by the following roll call votes: AYES: Commissioners Atkins, Cothran, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (5). NAYS: (0). ABSENT: Commissioner: Steffon Jones and Gage-Watts (2). ABSTAIN: None (0).

Mr. G. Young mentioned we weren't talking about spending a dime and showed Mrs. Bryant appreciation. We should always solicit and put in our discussion. Mr. Granville was thanked and left the meeting.

- *Discuss regarding Urban Parks & Recreation (Thomas)*

Mr. Thomas mentioned he noticed that an urban park would help his district. He went on a tour and saw places he didn't know we had in Shreveport. He has been seeking advice and guidance from people downtown in Shreveport. He mentioned in his district there are no food places or fresh food that can be accessed. He mentioned the purchase of the Lot 400 Crocket. He has been in contact with Parks and Recreation and toured the facility. He wants Caddo Parish to increase its footprint downtown. He stressed the importance of returning a public space to the public. He would like to see a food truck market. The lot has been repurposed in several different ways. Mr. Thomas would like to see that brought back and he has spoken to the Farmers market and craftsman. Those people have expressed interest in a pop market.

When the lot was there weren't many residents now that the community has gotten larger, those people need places to eat. Bringing in activities, those people downtown can participate in. He wants to bring the information shared at Eddie Jones Park to downtown. He stated people aren't aware of the activities being taken place at the parks outside city limits. Mr. Thomas states that we could participate more if we had more parks in the city limits. We need more facilities and suggest this is a long-term goal and the Parish should communicate with SPAR, not only for low income. He wants to be more effective in the city.

He mentioned the city being tired of Princess Park, he mentioned how that can affect the homeless and other communities. Mr. G. Young mentioned we should stay focused on the subject of downtown. Mr. Thomas advised that the other subjects mentioned were long-term goals. Mr. Thomas spoke on 50 Cent as well and how outside people were brought in to make it happen. He also spoke of the limits in the City of Shreveport and acquiring more property. Mr. Thomas stated that 50 Cent is just a catalyst and he would like to see us do something before all of the properties are sold.

Mr. Atkins made an inaudible joke. Mr. Thomas recognizes that some of his ideas may be impossible but as a community, we need to make some investments whether it's city or Parish. Mr. Atkins if in his vision would he tear all that down to make a green space? Mr. Thomas advised an urban park, which is concrete.

Mr. J. Young wanted to get back on the subject, he had more important business to advise. Mr. Atkins asked if he could finish speaking. He would welcome people to buy any of our properties downtown. He mentioned it was not a sin for private companies to come in and buy properties. Mr. Atkins

thanked the chairman.

Mr. Cothran mentioned being inside the city limits you have to stretch. When people ask for things outside the city limits, we ask does it makes sense. Why not consider the people in the city limits they deserve something to assist them and not throw money away? If we did some projects right, we could make money.

Mr. G. Young wishes that private companies would buy the projects. He doesn't understand why we don't have the same philosophy for outside rural areas. He says the best way to spend the money is where the population exists. He says he is the most conservative person and he would have never voted to put 20 million dollars. He mentioned Sarah Palin as the masked singer and how she is famous for the bridge to nowhere in Alaska. He said the commission spends a lot of money on projects that lead to nowhere and expects the community to go out and find it. We could identify where we could make a significant impact. He thinks the challenges can be overcome if we become creative.

Mrs. Bryant mentioned they have spoken on this topic on multiple occasions. 1.5 million dollars was paid and maybe 3 to 4 commission have pitched an idea. She says the struggle is it costs money and they only have 16 employees in the parks department. She mentioned is more land needed, what is being proposed and we do not have the funds if it is a big undertaken. She mentioned other dollars are dedicated to other projects. She wants to know what the total cost to decide.

Mr. G. Young had a question for Attorney Frazier and she envisions and time wise. Mrs. Bryant says that we need to know the perspective from a marketing aspect. Mr. Young asked about a partnership that takes on the ongoing cost. Mrs. Bryant advised the city is not going to take on an additional cost, in her opinion, they are already struggling and not ready to take on additional cost. From a park's perspective, that recreational cost is no longer attractive to kids, and getting on a swing is not what they want to do. They want more hands-on and what we can put in the parks that our kids will use.

Mr. Young asked why doesn't the Parish get with the school systems; the kids already have playgrounds. He can't wrap his head around the redundancy. He apologized to Mrs. Frazier. Mrs. Frazier says we have a parks master plan and we have to abide by that plan or it could be negative consequences such as accreditations. The plan should consider the master plan. Mr. Atkins mentioned pickleball as well. Mr. Young says that is another subject that should be spoken at a later time.

Mr. Thomas would like to hear from Mrs. Liz Swain as far as the downtown perspective, as she was hands-on with the "lot". Mr. Thomas is looking to get some insight. The activities composed affect the conjunction of what the city has.

Mr. Young asked if Mr. Thomas would consider the previous way that the lot was used. He said it would be easier to use a pilot type of place. Mr. Young asked Mrs. Bryant if that went well with the master plan.

Mrs. Bryant says we have to generate money. She mentioned citizens are paying for these things. Mrs. Bryant says we have communication with the Red River Waterway. There was a conversation about the dog park. They also discussed the location of the pickleball park. It was mentioned the dog park is underwater. Mrs. Bryant is trying to see if we meet legislation to provide additional funding and revenue bonds.

It was mentioned there is a potential with the bonds and recommendations. General obligations don't have to generate dollars from the taxpayer paying them. If not, enough money is generated you have to show proof and that is where the general fund and trust fund will come into play. Mr. Young showed appreciation to Mrs. Bryant.

It was advised the citizens of the Parish voted for the 20 million dollars. Mr. Clerk mentioned he never thought about going to the park until he had kids, when he went the park was packed. Mr. Young stated that Louisiana is a peculiar state that doesn't allow its citizens to reprimand. The citizens can't put

things on the ballot. Mrs. Bryant said that the decision was already there and it is outdated. We were advised the exhibits needed to be updated.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ashlyn King". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Ashlyn King
Office Specialist