

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2025

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 12:00 noon, in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with Mr. Cothran, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Burrell, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (4). ABSENT: Commissioners Atkins, Gage-Watts, and Lazarus (3).

Mr. J. Young gave the invocation, and Mr. Thomas led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA ADDITIONS**

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to expand the agenda and add Presentation of Oasis of Hope, Dr. Sharon Green*, be added under New Business.

At this time, the Chair opened the floor for public hearings. There being no one to speak for or against the agenda addition, the Chair closed the public hearing.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously by those members present with Commissioners Atkins, Gage-Watts, and Lazarus being absent (3).

There were no Citizens Comments, the Committee moved to New Business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

- *Continued discussions regarding the Pickleball Complex*

Mr. Patrick Wesley, Director of Parks & Recreation Department, gave a brief summary of the proposed pickleball facility. The location of the facility has been changed due to the previous location being a flood zone. The new location is near the YMCA and restaurants, offering convenient access and potential partnerships. This project aims to attract tournaments and generate revenue through various sources, including facility usage fees, pro shop sales, and sponsorships. A \$10M revenue bond is proposed to fund the construction, with a 30-year payback period. The projected revenues includes tournament fees (estimated \$1M pre event, with three events yearly), pro shop sales, and potential sponsorships. Mr. Wesley highlighted significant community support for the project, including backing from USA Pickleball and local organizations. Partnerships with the YMCA and USA Pickleball are emphasized as key to the project's success.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know if there was a survey regarding the feedback that was mentioned. Mr. Wesley said he will submit the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to the Committee. He also pointed out that there are no park facilities in southeast Shreveport, so that will be part of the Master Plan as well.

Mr. G. Young raised questions regarding tax revenue distribution, potential state and city contributions, and the overall economic impact coming to Caddo Parish. Mrs. Bryant said that the fees will come to Caddo Parish.

Mr. G. Young then talked about the cost of the bonds for the citizens. Mrs. Barnett said that currently the total bond to the citizens is less than \$200. She also explained that there is only another \$10M in revenue bonds available to issue for this project. Mr. G. Young wanted to know the bond capacity of the Parish. Mrs. Barnett said that it is approximately \$338M. This is based on the Parish's current bond rating, the amount of current outstanding issuances, and the Parish's ability to pay back the bond.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if this site was inside the city limits of Shreveport. Mr. Wesley said that it was. Mr. J. Young then wanted to know if there was any possibility of removing this land outside of the City of Shreveport to be able to receive the sales taxes for this project. Mrs. Bryant suggested creating a TIF district if the Parish would like to go that route, but the City would have to agree to this. She also mentioned that this would only be temporary. Mr. J. Young then wanted to know if the City was bringing anything to the table aside from their enthusiasm. Mrs. Bryant said that Administration could have discussions regarding the TIF, if the Commission so desires.

Mr. J. Young saw the letters of support from the Lt. Governor, but he wanted to know if they were bringing anything to the table. Mrs. Bryant said that they will be asking later down the road, once the ball is rolling. Mr. J. Young wanted to know if they have a ballpark of the contributions from the State. Mr. Wesley does not think it will be in the capital funding of the project, but more so in the support of soliciting national events.

Mr. J. Young then wanted to know if Caddo Parish would get the money from the sales in the pro shop. Mrs. Bryant said that Caddo Parish will own the pro shop.

Mr. J. Young also wanted to know the interest on the \$10M bond. Mrs. Bryant said approximately 4.5% with a payback period of 30 years.

Mr. Thomas said that Pickleball has a growing interest. He then wanted to know if there were any other companies, aside from Carvana, that has a strong indication of partnering with this project. Mr. Wesley said that a consultant will be hired to do that portion of the project.

Mr. Wesley also mentioned the partnerships with schools and SportTran will ensure transportation to support the program. He reiterated that Caddo Parish is in a special and unique situation to take advantage of the growing interest of Pickleball. He highlighted the missed opportunities that Caddo Parish could have had, i.e. Nascar, basketball teams, etc.

Mr. Thomas stated that he is in support of this project.

Mr. Burrell talked about the 30- year payoff. Mrs. Bryant said that it is up to 30 years. She also explained that some of the revenues received will go toward the operations of the facility.

He then talked about developing feeder programs into this facility. Mr. Wesley said that this project aims to improve community health and wellness by providing accessible recreational activities and maximize community participation. He further explained that they will use the existing template they are using for the MLB partnership to help develop Pickle Ball in Caddo Parish.

Mr. Burrell then wanted to know if local contractors will have the opportunity to bid on the project. Mr. Wesley said that they will follow the standard bid process procedures.

Mr. Wesley also mentioned that this project will feature a walking trail, as well as, the adjacent soccer fields. Existing infrastructure and utilities will be utilized to reduce construction costs.

Mr. J. Young suggested having conversations with SPAR about turning existing tennis courts into Pickleball courts. Mr. Wesley said that is already in the works.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know when the feeder programs would begin if this project is approved. Mr. Wesley said that there are programs in place for this summer. He said that the programs will launch before the facility is actually constructed.

Mr. Atkins was not in attendance to the meeting, but he did provide the following statement regarding this topic that the Chair requested be part of the record:

*Unfortunately, I have a conflict with the proposed Economic Development meeting on Monday and will not be able to attend. But, I wanted to pass my views on to the Committee.*

*I appreciate the Parish's efforts to build a facility in the SE portion of the Parish, as we currently do not have any meaningful public facilities in this high-growth part of our community. I also like the idea of partnering with the YMCA on this effort, as the "Y" will bring additional participation and sports management expertise. So, in general, I support the project.*

*However, I am concerned with both the size and cost of the project. I know that the proposed 18 courts are intended to attract large tournaments to the area, and that there are economic benefits to the area associated with these events. However, I am concerned about the daily utilization of such a large facility. I would suggest that the Parks & Recreation Team look at reducing the size, scope and expense of this project. Do we really need 18 courts? Would 10 or 12 do the trick? Reducing the number of courts would also allow us to slim down the parking area, the clubhouse, and some of the other "ancillary" facilities. Perhaps a nice, but smaller, facility would lead to higher utilization of the facilities and a better return on the Parish investment.*

*Again, I am sorry that I will have to miss the meeting, but I will touch base with Chairman Young afterwards to get feedback on the meeting.*

*Thank you,  
John*

Mr. G. Young wanted to know what does Administration want from this committee. Mrs. Bryant said that they would like a recommendation of support to forward to the full body for approval to proceed with this project. The next steps include forwarding this to the full body for approval, issuing bonds, and beginning construction.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Burrell, *to expressing support from the*

Economic Development Committee, conditionally requesting Administration provide answers to all of the questions this Committee had in writing, and schedule an additional Committee meeting to discuss these answers. Motion carried unanimously by those members present with Commissioners Atkins, Gage-Watts, and Lazarus being absent (3).

- *Presentation from Oasis of Hope*

Dr. Sharon Green came before the Committee and gave a presentation on her NGO, Oasis of Hope. This program was founded in 2015 to assist moderate to low income citizens improve their lives. It focuses on STEM education, job readiness, and overcoming generational poverty. They use a holistic approach, addressing hard and soft skills, and providing mentorship. The program includes career exploration, workshops, and support systems to aid student success. Mentors provide encouragement and practical assistance, such as meals and transportation. Oasis collaborates with community partners to create enriching experiences for students. Activities include college tours, internships, and community service projects. Oasis aims to bridge educational and economic gaps within the community. Dr. Green aims to give citizens a hand up, not hand out. She suggested providing children with McDonald's meals at the Petroleum Club. Dr. Green is requesting \$100k to expand the program capacity and reach.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know what will be done with the funding. Dr. Green said that she would like to do college tours. Mr. G. Young then wanted to know what does Oasis provide that conventional education does not provide. Dr. Green said that conventional education does not do mentorships.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know which colleges will she be touring. Dr. Green said it would depend on the amount of funding she is receiving. Mr. J. Young pointed out that there is Centenary College, LSU-Shreveport, BPCC, LSUHC, etc. that are already in Caddo/Bossier Parishes. Dr. Green said that she would like to bring students to other colleges within the State of Louisiana. Mr. J. Young wanted to know if they were able to provide funding to travel outside of Caddo Parish. Mrs. Bryant said that it would be Caddo students participating in the program.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know the location of this program. Dr. Green said that it is in the 71108 zip code.

He then wanted to know how many students does this program serve each year. Dr. Green said that it serves 500 students with its partnerships. Mr. J. Young also talked about the Harbor and suggested that Dr. Green partner with them as well.

Mr. Thomas is familiar with this program. He said that this program provides experiences for youth that may not have been able to experience otherwise. Mr. Thomas wanted to know if Dr. Green is willing to expand this program out into the rural areas of the Parish. Dr. Green said that she is. Mr. Thomas appreciates the work that Dr. Green does for the community. He is in support of this request.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know what could be accomplished with \$50k. Dr. Green said that the program would be scaled back.

It was **moved by Mr. J. Young**, seconded by Mr. Thomas, *to forward to the full body an allocation of \$50k for Oasis.*

Mr. J. Young is in support of the socializing aspect of the program.

At this time, Mr. J. Young's motion carried unanimously by those members present with Commissioners Atkins, Gage-Watts, and Lazarus being absent (3).

There being no further discussion to come before the Commission, so the Commission adjourned.

  
Assistant to the Commission Clerk