

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 5th DAY OF MAY, 2025

The Caddo Parish Economic Development Committee met in legal session on the above date at 1:00 p.m. in the Government Plaza Chambers, with the following members were present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, Lazarus, Thomas, G. Young, and J. Young (7). ABSENT: None (0).

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were given during the previous committee. There were no Agenda Additions nor Public Comments, so the Committee moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Continued discussion regarding the Pickleball Complex*

Parish Administrator, Mrs. Bryant, explained at 40% utilization, the revenues generated would cover the expenses for the program. They are proposing using bonds for this project, not any cash. She said that revenue bonds would be issues and could be paid back within a few years. Mrs. Bryant also said that there were questions regarding who would keep the fees, she said that the Parish. It is their hope to have a management agreement with the Y in order to cover them for the costs that they would incur to help the Parish manage the facility. There were questions regarding sales taxes. Mrs. Bryant explained that this is entirely in the city limits of Shreveport, and the Parish does not collect sales taxes within the city limits. She further explained that the Parish could propose a TIF agreement with the City.

Mr. J. Young wanted to know if there have been any conversations with the City regarding the TIF. Mrs. Bryant said that they have not; they need guidance from the Commission to pursue a TIF. She also mentioned that they could break event without a TIF.

Mr. J. Young then wanted to know if the train tracks would be an issue with the park. Mr. Wesley said that there are no plans right now to address that. They will be working with the USA Pickleball Association to help with the design of the facility.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know who initiated the effort of this Pickleball facility. Mr. Wesley explained that Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the country. When they asked the citizens what they wanted in terms of Parks and Recreation, there was a huge request for a Pickleball facility. Mr. Wesley said that this process started approximately three years ago. Mr. Epperson understood, but wanted to know who proposed the site in which the facility will be located. Mr. Wesley explained that it was through a partnership with the YMCA. He said that several locations were looked at, but there was no park in southeast Shreveport. Mr. Epperson suggested that West Shreveport/West Caddo Parish should be an option for the Pickleball facility due to the logistics and hotels that are located in that area.

Mrs. Bryant mentioned that this bond wouldn't be a bond that goes to the people; it would be one that would be paid from the revenues that are generated by the facility.

Mrs. Gage-Watts is looking forward to supporting a pickleball facility in Caddo Parish to help stimulate the local economy and attracting visitors to the area.

Mr. Thomas also supports the premise of Caddo Parish having a Pickleball facility. He wanted to know how this would affect the Parish's bond capacity. Mrs. Bryant explained that this would not affect the bond rating, and the citizens will not incur any additional millages or property taxes.

Mr. Atkins is supportive of the idea and location, but he has concerns with the size of the facility. He would like to see a much smaller, much less expensive facility, but in the same location. He encouraged "going back to the drawing board" and propose a facility with half the capital costs. Mr. Wesley said that USA Pickleball Association recommends a minimum of nineteen courts to host a sanctioned Pickleball tournament.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know how many tournaments per year. Mr. Wesley said that they are anticipating 3-5 tournaments per year. Mr. Atkins said that the facility will be fully utilized 3-5 weekends per year, yet the Parish is funding it 365 days per year. Mrs. Bryant said that they will research those ideas, but for the level of success that they are wanting, they would like to attract the tournaments. She feels that it would be advantageous with the nineteen courts.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if these projected expenses include the interest expense. Dr. Wysong said that they do.

Mr. Lazarus is in support of the project and location.

Mr. Burrell would like the urban areas to be incorporated in this project. Mrs. Bryant explained that it is the Parks & Recreation's plan to establish grassroots Pickleball programs for underserved and rural populations in Caddo Parish. They will also seek grant opportunities from the National Pickleball Association, who provides funding towards that initiative. It is their goal to get people more interested in Pickleball.

Mr. G. Young asked about the methodology of the survey. Mr. Wesley said that they did public meetings, social groups, online surveys, etc. He also mentioned that they are part of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, no page 53. Mr. Wesley also said that the purpose of the Master Plan is the direction of where the Parks & Recreation Department is headed in the next 10-15 years.

Mr. G. Young wanted to know what is the Y providing for this project. Mr. Wesley said that the Parks & Recreation Department does not have the staff to manage this facility, but the Y does.

Mr. G. Young then asked the annual cost of the \$10M bond. The estimated expenses for the facility \$815k, which includes the bond payment.

Mr. J. Young said that they received an economic impact study on five pickleball tournaments, and there would be about \$1M economic impact annually.

Mr. J. Young said that he supports this project in its current location.

Mr. Epperson wanted to know the acreage for the facility. Mr. Wesley said that it is about 8-10 acres. He suggested a multi-sports complex, versus just a pickleball facility. He also said that hotels and interstates are located in his district.

Mr. Atkins pointed out that there isn't a parks facility in southeast Shreveport.

It was **moved by Mr. Thomas**, seconded by Mr. J. Young, *that the proposed Pickleball facility be forward to the full body. Motion carried unanimously.*

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned
2:04 p.m.



Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk