



TOWN OF PEARL RIVER

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Aldermen

DAVID McQUEEN

Mayor

BRIDGETT BENNETT

Mayor Pro Tempore

CARLA O. BENELLI

Town Clerk

TIMOTHY MATHISON

Town Attorney

MATHIEU E. DAIGLE

Assistant Town Attorney

The following minutes were taken at the regular monthly meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on February 16, 2016 at the Town Hall in Pearl River. Mayor McQueen called the meeting to order at 7:02p.m.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor McQueen announced the passing of the husband of Brenda Wichterich, the Deputy Clerk, husband Ronnie Wichterich; to please keep and her and her family in your prayers.

Alderman Phillips gave the invocation; the pledge of allegiance was led by Alderman Phillips Grandson, Haven.

ROLL CALL:

Aldermen Walsh, Phillips, Cutrer, McGregor and Bennett were present. Also present were Chief Jennings, Attorney Mathison, and Town Clerk, Carla Benelli.

Mayor McQueen announced that anyone who wants to speak at the meetings must come to the podium and sign in for record keeping. The mayor also reminded everyone to turn off their cell phones.

RECREATION DISTRICT #5:

Peter Finger, representing the Recreation District #5 reported that they are alive and well and have several projects that are on the board. They are looking to improve the boat landing and that they still have use of the gymnasium at the old Pearl River Junior High. Mr. Peter announced that they are negotiating some land expansion, that their district is the smallest district in St. Tammany Parish. He announced that they are hoping to expand a lot of the citizenry and hopefully they will some good news soon. Mr. Peter also announced that they are always looking for new members to join the board and how to apply if interested. Mr. Peter said that they are always looking for new things that would benefit the community and if anyone has any suggestions, he would love to hear them.

FIRE DISTRICT 11:

Not Present

PLANNING COMMISSION:

Ms. Lola announced that the Planning Commission had three applications to discuss at their meeting this month; Mr. Barger on Hwy. 41 regarding an Annexation and there was no opposition as the land is zoned for commercial and Mr. Barger anticipates opening a small business; the 2nd was a variance for a mobile home at 39174 Pine Street for Bobby & Thelma Fleming, they have repairs being done to the home and can't live in it due to entire inside being gutted. The Flemings would like to put a travel trailer in

their driveway while the house is being renovated for approximately one year. The Planning and Commission Board recommends that the variance be granted. The 3rd is another variance at 39086 Susan Street, Richard Bice, the Planning Commission is unable to act upon this variance because Mr. Bice was not in attendance and the board did not receive the proper paper work. The Board will look at this variance request again on March 1st if the proper paper work is submitted.

The Mayor asked the council if they wanted to act on these recommendations at this time. Alderman Walsh made the motion that the variance be granted to the Flemings, the motion was second by Alderman Cutrer.

All in favor. So moved.

Mayor McQueen opened for discussion. The Mayor announced that he had been advised by the town attorney that the Fleming case is still under litigation. Town Attorney, Tim Matison, spoke about the litigation and that it is still ongoing but in a dormant state. No more discussion. Mayor called for "All in Favor",

All in favor. So moved

Alderman Walsh moved to accept the annexation on Hwy. 41 property, Alderman Bennett second. Mayor McQueen called for discussion. No discussion, Mayor McQueen called for "All in favor",

All in favor. So moved

Alderman Walsh requested that the council meet with the Planning Commission on their next meeting night to go over the two boards and how to move forward in the future. March 1st is the next Planning Commission meeting at 7:00pm, all council members agreed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor McQueen asked to approve the minutes from the January 19th meeting, moved by Alderman Walsh and second by Alderman Bennett. Mayor McQueen announced that New Business will continue after Peggy from the School Board and Gene from the Parish Council has a chance to speak.

PARISH COUNCIL:

Gene Bellisario discussed Rec. 16 and Rec. 5; he had a meeting several weeks ago, and Sharon Hewlett is willing to resign since she is now holding a senate office. Gene announced that he doesn't see any entity coming forth with a new tax that will pass. Gene would like to get with Rec. 16 to see if they will be going dormant and if they do, he wants to look at modifying the maps.

Gene also said that he had spoken to Mr. Barger several times on the phone about the annexation and told Mr. Barger to go ahead and move forward with it, he didn't have an issue with it because it was already zoned Commercial.

SCHOOL BOARD:

Mrs. Peggy discussed her trip to Baton Rouge with Mr. Gene Bellisario. She also said that she had been reassured by our governor and that we would not lose our MFP's, Minimum Foundation Program. She suggested that Rec. 5 and our Mayor get together for a meeting with the new incoming Sheriff, Randy Smith, very soon to discuss what will happen with the old Pearl River Junior High Building.

Mrs. Peggy gave an update on the tennis courts; there are 4 tennis courts that have now been concreted. She also hopes that by April one of the bids will be approved for construction on Pearl River High renovations.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor McQueen asked the council to approve October, November and December 2015 Council meeting minutes. Alderman Walsh moved that the minutes be accepted, second by Alderman Bennett. **All in favor. So moved**

Alderman Bennett recognized Sargent Chris Hammond and K9 Chase of the Slidell Police Department with the reading of their history together and how K9 Chase retired and passed away just recently from degenerative myelopathy; which is similar to ALS in humans. Alderman Bennett presented Sargent Chris with a plaque that represents the love and respect that we all have for him and his beloved partner, K9 Chase.

Alderman Bennett introduced a new Town Ordinance that would include animal control. Alderman Bennett and Attorney Mathison had been working on the final draft of the Ordinance and the vote will be on hold until the next Council Meeting in March. Alderman Bennett continued with reading about her compassion for animals and how so many are neglected, abused and left to roam our streets. She also read about how our beloved animals are helping children, the military and the police departments on a daily basis. She announced that she would like to see a new Town Ordinance be adopted to help keep these animals safe and off of our streets.

Alderman Bennett also presented a photo of a helpless dog tethered to the end of chain and a photo of a happy dog playing with its owners without the chain.

Mayor McQueen asked the Council to amend Ordinance 196-A, that it be revised so that employees would have off on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve to give a total of 14 holidays per year. Mayor McQueen asked the Council for a motion to make the ordinance change. Attorney Mathison announced that tonight would just be the introduction of the amended ordinance and that the council would vote on it at the March 15th Council Meeting. Alderman Bennett asked if the Ordinance would include the day before Mardi Gras as an approved day off. Mayor McQueen stated that it would be up to the Council to add that additional day, that this would be adding 3 additional days off instead of 2. This would give Town Hall employees 15 paid days off per year instead of 14 as required by law. Alderman Walsh reiterated that an employee personal day (birthday) is a floating personal day and that it can be taken at any time of the year.

Mayor McQueen spoke about the repairs that need to be done to the Town Hall/Police Department roof. The roof leaks every time it rains and Mayor McQueen announced that he has several bids and is impressed with the one that gave the 20-year warranty. Mayor McQueen passed around the sample of the roofing product to the Council Members. Mayor McQueen explained how the roof would be repaired and the product that would be used for the repairs. The 20-year warranty bid would be at the cost of \$27,000.00. Alderman Phillips asked about the other bids on the roof repairs, Mayor McQueen discussed the other two bids. Alderman Walsh moved that the bid with the 20-year warranty be accepted, second by Alderman Bennett. Mayor McQueen called for any discussion of which there was none.

All in favor. So moved

Mayor McQueen announced that speed bumps had been installed on Banks Street and that he had had two complaints. Mayor McQueen asked the council if they thought the speed bumps should be removed or if he should leave them down. Alderman Walsh asked a Mr. Allen if he would like to speak about the speed bumps. Mr. Allen spoke about how he thought the speed bumps were a great idea and how it has slowed down the traffic on Banks Street and how it is good for the safety of the children in the area.

Alderman Bennett asked why we had speed BUMPS and not speed HUMPS. Her concern is that if the speed limit on the street is 15 miles per hour should you be able to do 15 miles per hour over that speed bump? The consensus is that you should slow down less than 15 miles per hour to go over the speed bumps. Alderman Walsh announced that she had the Fire Department check out the speed bumps, the ambulance crossed the speed bumps at 15 miles per hour, which was rough, and then they crossed the speed bumps again at 5 miles per hour and it wasn't terrible at all. The impact on emergency vehicles and

getting to emergencies on Banks Street is very minimal as per the Fire Department. Mayor McQueen told the council that the town could get the Speed Humps like on West Hall in Slidell but that they are very costly. Another citizen asked that the town please add more speed bumps on Gum Street too.

Mayor McQueen called a public hearing on the Policy and Procedures for the Council. Alderman Cutrer announced that they would like to put into place an ordinance for Policy and Procedures for the council that would basically help the council keep things in order and help the council work together. Mayor McQueen asked if this ordinance would include the town clerk or all town employees. The Mayor continued to discuss the Policy and Procedures topic with the council. Alderman Walsh discussed the seven day advanced notice of special meetings called for in the Policy and Procedures for the Council. Alderman Bennett announced that this is the 3rd time this has come up and the Policy and Procedures for the Council has not changed, it is the same now as it was on the first day of discussion. Alderman Bennett does not want to see this new ordinance request take away any of the Mayors authority to run the town.

Attorney Mathison discussed one of the Mayors concerns about the Police and Procedures; that it may in fact take away from the Mayors authority. The Town Attorney also discussed and cleared up the questions about the seven day notice for special meetings. Alderman Phillips continued the discussion about the special meeting notice with Attorney Mathison.

Alderman Walsh commented that the Policy and Procedures for the Council is a work in progress and it can be changed as needed if voted on and approved.

Mayor McQueen called for question; questioned by Alderman Phillips. Mayor asked to move to adopt, move to adopt by Alderman Walsh. Alderman Walsh called for a roll call vote:

ROLE CALL: 3 – Yeas 2 – Nays 0 Absent
PASSED

Alderman Cutrer discussed the upcoming Spring Clean-up and “Polishing the Pearl” event. The clean-up is on March 12th from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. The poster contest will be the same this year as last, there will be ribbons for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Alderman Cutrer gave the route of the judges and asked that if anyone needed any orange garbage bags to please pick them up from the Town Hall because the orange bags of garbage will be picked up curbside and they need to be counted for our MS4 program. She also announced that there are “Polishing the Pearl” T-shirts for sale, \$10 each, at the Town Hall and any proceeds made will go back into the town. Alderman Cutrer also talked about painting, pressure washing and refreshing the mulch areas in the park behind the Town Hall.

Mayor McQueen announced that the Lion’s Club would be having a meeting about “Polish the Pearl” and would probably be doing the cooking for all of the workers. Lunch will be provided for everyone who volunteers to pick up trash.

Alderman Bennett announced that there would be a DVD sent out to area schools, this DVD was put together by the City of Mandeville and the School Board to help teach the children about recycling and littering.

Alderman Cutrer discussed that she had spoken to several people who live on Pine Street that would like to have STOP signs. Mayor McQueen announced that he had spoken to Chief Jennings and if okay with the council he would like to try a 3-Way Stop on Peach and Pine Street. Alderman Cutrer said that she had been asked by several citizens that live in the area to put STOP signs on Calhoun and Pine Street too.

Alderman Walsh talked about the Planning Commission and their plans to go up to seven members on the board. Ms. Terry Parker has had her application in with the Planning Commission and attends the Planning Commission and the Council Meetings monthly. Alderman Walsh made a motion to appoint Ms. Parker to the Planning Commission. Mayor McQueen asked for any questions or discussion. Alderman Bennett said that the council had agreed at one time that they would review and coordinate

together on the appointment of a new member to the board of Planning Commission. Alderman Walsh said that there were no other applicants; that they had all dropped out so there was nothing to review. Alderman Bennett asked if the Town had advertised for board members. Mayor McQueen said that they had been looking for board members for some time. Alderman Walsh said that the Planning Commission has their own form that needs to be completed for the board but that she had given the Town Clerk a form that included all of the different boards and had her put that form on the Town's FaceBook page. Mayor McQueen called for question;

**ROLL CALL:
PASSED**

4 – Yeas

1 – Nay

0 Absent

Ms. Lola with the Planning Commission asked if there were any more books, the Mayor has volume five. The Mayor said that if he could not find another copy, he would have one copied for her.

Alderman Bennett gave an update on the “Compassion Pearl River Project” that is currently in place and scheduled to take place August 1st thru August 7th of this year. The home is being built by all donation money and volunteers. They are trying to raise \$50,000.00 for the project. The ribbon cutting was several weeks ago and they want to let the public know that they will be holding several benefits to raise the money. One of them will be on April 2nd, Pearl River Gumbo Fest, the other will be some type of concert but there is no date set yet. The current project consists of 45 volunteers. We are asking for volunteers, any help at all, even supplies for the house will be appreciated.

Mayor McQueen wants everyone to know that this is a community effort and he wants to get everyone involved. These homes are for needy families in our area. The list is long and these families are still suffering from the effects of Katrina and the loss of their homes. Alderman Phillips said that there would be a sign-up sheet in Town Hall for volunteers. Mayor McQueen stated that the homes will be done up to 80% complete and the materials need to be there and ready for the contractors. An inspector also needs to be on the work site for quick inspections to get this house up in 10 days and the builders also donate \$10,000.00 towards the project.

Alderman Bennett talked about calls that she had been receiving about the rail cars sitting on the tracks, these cars were there because of a plant in Mississippi that was not able to house them according to the railroad company.

Alderman Bennett also gave an update on the Farmer's Market; they are now accepting the SNAP benefits. They also have a new organic farmer who is at the market on Saturdays. They will also be announcing an Easter egg hunt with some children's activities. They are looking at doing it on Saturday, March 12th, which is our cleanup day. This date is not set yet.

Alderman Walsh asked everyone to please go to our FaceBook page and like it, more information would be on our FB page about upcoming events.

Re: Saw Mill Creek; Town Attorney, Tim Mathison, discussed the third phase of Saw Mill Creek and how that phase will not be receiving Charter service. Attorney Mathison will be drafting a letter for the Mayor to send to Charter requesting that they please add service to that phase of Saw Mill Creek Subdivision. Attorney Mathison also stated that he had been in touch with a representative from Charter and that a letter to him will help to get the ball rolling internally at Charter to provide services for the third phase. Mayor McQueen asked for support from the Council to support the request to Charter.

All in Favor. So Moved

Kelly Barber spoke about the police department and the issues that he has been having with them. Chief Jennings also spoke for several minutes addressing Kelly Barber's complaints. Their discussion got out of control and Mayor McQueen intervened.

Alderman Bennett also voiced her opinion about calls to the police department; which had been ignored.

CHIEF OF POLICE:

Chief Jennings announced the statistics for January 2016: 595 Calls for Service, 241 Citations and 25 Arrests. Chief Jennings said that there are issues in his office that need to be addressed and he apologized to the citizens of the Town for any issues that they have had in the past with him or his department and that they would work harder and would get these issues addressed.

MAYOR:

Mayor McQueen updated the council on Hwy. 3081 and all of the construction going on. Pipe's put in by the previous administration were too small and the shoulder of the road was washing out. Mayor McQueen spoke about several street problems that still have to be addressed in the near future. Some of the repairs will have to be contracted out and will have to be brought before the Council for approval because of the cost. Mayor McQueen also announced that in 2017 the bridge on Spur 41 will be torn out and replaced by the parish.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

Alderman Phillips reminded everyone about the Annual Easter egg hunt on March 19th and that his grandson, Haven, had collected 110 Christmas Trees for donation.

MEETING ADJOURNED

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 16th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2016.


Carla Benelli, Town Clerk


Honorable David McQueen, Mayor