

OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TERREBONNE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
RECREATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018

President Chris Lapeyre called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m. The prayer and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Mr. Chad Hebert.

Members recorded as present were: Mr. C.J. Domangue, Mr. Chad Hebert, Mr. Nick Hebert and Mr. Chris Lapeyre. Also present were Mr. Matt Rookard, TEDA's CEO.

Mr. Lapeyre made three calls for public wishing to address the committee; no one responded.

Discussion ensued regarding TEDA's role in the funding of the Bayou Country Sports Complex (BCSC), with Mr. N. Hebert reviewing information he had obtained on local and regional recreation, and other sports parks in the region:

- Similar complexes are independent from any recreation district or parish organization, with their own staff to manage and maintain facilities.
- Grave concerns have been voiced that funds are being spent to develop the BCSC, but will it be competitive with the other parks to draw in big tournaments and will it meet the requirements for these tournaments. Also concerns over no overall budget, central decision-maker or attention to the master plan.
- Concerns about operational funding lead to an evaluation of the 2017 budgets of the five major recreation districts closest to the BCSC. They receive more than \$5.8 million dollars annually but spend only \$3.1 million each year to operate, leaving more than \$2.7 million in surplus. At the end of 2017, there was \$8.2 million surplus/cash on hand that is earmarked for capital expenditures.
- A recent Attorney General's opinion is the Parish Council has very broad discretion to appropriate recreation funding where necessary in accordance with the original millage. Therefore, the Council may be able to take a percentage of the surplus from each recreation district to dedicate to the BCSC. It was suggested to engage a knowledgeable bond consultant to create an entity for BCSC to have bonding capacity through either a cooperative endeavor or other agreement.
- Another funding consideration is that about \$60 million dollars of private properties that are not generating any revenue toward recreation. If these properties were put into the system, it would generate an estimated \$450,000 in new revenue.
- Also, the Assessor's Office, quite a few Industrial Tax Exemptions are expiring soon, so that could yield a significant increase in district revenues.
- In addition, partnerships with other entities can yield results; for example, the National Guard did all the dirt work on another project. There are also some grants to pursue.
- The major issue of structural management needs to be addressed. The easiest fix would be to form a group to manage the park, like the Greater New Orleans Sports Foundation (GNOSF), that would be responsible for overall development of recreational events in

Terrebonne Parish. The group would not focus just on the BCSC but on sports tourism for the parish, utilizing all recreation facilities. It would provide the ability to pursue big tournaments (300 or more teams) that would use lots of the local parks and fields for semi-final games, with the finals being held at the BCSC. The GNOSF receives state funding because it recruits national events; forming a similar entity to manage BCSC could also potentially receive state funding.

Action items needed for next meeting are:

- Mr. Rookard will review the statutes on the recreation millage.
- Mr. N. Hebert will reach out to schedule a tour of the Broussard facility.
- Meet with the local tourism representative who works to attract big tournaments and events to learn the requirements for hosting them and be sure BCSC is being built to those requirements.

Future meetings with the soccer, baseball and softball associations will be needed to start an educational campaign to inform the public of this approach.

A suggested was made to wait until next year to again seek capital outlay funding, at least until a better plan is formed, and the organization is created. All committee members should watch the Ways and Means Committee capital outlay testimony, which shows what lawmakers do and don't want to hear.

At 9:42 a.m., Mr. N. Hebert moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. C. Hebert. Motion passed unanimously.



Mr. Chris Lapeyre, President



Mrs. Dawn Henry
Minute Clerk