

**RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSION  
FOR THE PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**  
**Regular Meeting – 5:00 p.m.**  
**BREC Administration Building**  
**6201 Florida Boulevard**  
**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**  
Commission Minutes  
June 22, 2017

**Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) was held at BREC's Administrative Offices on June 22, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Lloyd H. Benson II, Chairman. Mr. Benson recognized Elder Lester Coleman with Nazarene Baptist Church who offered the invocation. Commissioner Shelton C. Dixon led the pledge of allegiance. Roll was taken and a quorum of Commissioners was present including Shelton C. Dixon, Vice Chairman; Larry Selders, Treasurer; Sandra Davis; Kenneth Pointer; Davis Rhorer; David Tatman; Mike Walker, and Rossie Washington, Jr. Staff members present were Carolyn McKnight, Superintendent; Dale Auzenne, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation, Programs and Facilities; Reed Richard, Assistant Superintendent Planning and Construction; Corey Wilson, Chief of Management and Business Services; Phil Frost; Michael Hutchison; Steven Knight; Cheryl Michelet; Mike Raby; Brandon Smith; Justin Smith; Stephanie Trim; and Chris Marchiafava. Murphy Foster, legal counsel, and Carl Stages, Executive Director of BREC Foundation, were also in attendance. The audience consisted of BREC staff, media, and the general public.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Benson opened the floor for public comment on the agenda items and asked if there was anyone who would like to speak on any agenda item. Mr. Benson recognized 26 speakers who offered their comments on Item A under Unfinished Business – Greenwood Regional Park / Baton Rouge Zoo. Speakers spoke both in favor of and in opposition to moving the Zoo and some only provided information. Others submitted cards in favor or in opposition but did not wish to speak. The Chairman then read a letter in opposition to moving the Zoo from Senator Regina Barrow, a resolution in opposition from the Zachary City Council, a resolution in opposition from Mayor Darnell Waites of Baker, a letter in opposition from Mayor Jr. Shelton of Central, and a letter in opposition from Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome. Mr. Benson asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak. Hearing none, Mr. Benson closed the floor.

**Adoption of Minutes**

Resolved, That the reading of the minutes of the Recreation and Park Commission Meeting of May 25, 2017 be dispensed with and that they be approved as written.

Motion by Mr. Walker

Second by Mr. Selders

Approved by unanimous consent

**Consent Calendar**

Resolved, That the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge does hereby approve the Consent Calendar items.

Motion to approve by Mr. Rhorer

Second by Mr. Dixon

Approved by unanimous consent

The following items were approved as part of the Consent Calendar:

**Acceptance of Recommendations for the Human Resources Advisory Committee**

Resolved, That the Commission approve the Routine Personnel Transactions for the month of June 2017.

**Presentations**

Mr. Benson recognized Councilmember Chauna Banks and stated that she had twenty minutes for her presentation. Councilmember Banks asked for a few minutes to hand out some documentation and the Chairman agreed. Mr. Benson restored order and asked Councilmember to begin. Councilmember Banks gave her presentation and then took her seat.

Mr. Benson stated that he would like to entertain a motion to suspend the rules and move to take agenda Item X – A out of order to be addressed next on the agenda. Mr. Walker made a motion to take up the agenda item, Mr. Tatman seconded and it was unanimously approved.

Mr. Benson read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission, through staff recommendation, accept the recommendation in the Schultz and Williams' 'New Vision, New Experiences – A Conceptual Facility & Site Planning Report for a new Baton Rouge Zoo' and authorize the BREC Superintendent to proceed to determine the best new location for the Baton Rouge Zoo allowing for the longest-term sustainability and to begin negotiations with said owner(s).

Further, the Commission authorizes the BREC Superintendent to work with staff to develop plans for BREC's first regional park - Greenwood Regional Park, including strong input from the surrounding community.

In addition, the Superintendent is to work with staff and appropriate consultants to develop a funding strategy for the implementation of these major Parish-wide improvements.

Said recommendation for the most sustainable location of the Baton Rouge Zoo, plans for Greenwood Regional Park, and funding strategies for both initiatives to be brought before the Commission for final approval at the appropriate time.

Mr. Tatman made a motion to defer the item to the August 24 meeting of the Commission. He stated that he thinks the issue needed more discussion and community input. He encouraged Superintendent McKnight to get input from the public from across the community. He stated that he would like to see a concerted effort to hear from everyone who is willing to step up and then have the vote on this issue at the August board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and it was unanimously approved.

The Commission viewed an informational video highlighting the Juneteenth Celebration held at Gus Young Park, and the upcoming events in July.

**Reports of Officers and Standing Committees**

Mr. Benson recognized Ms. McKnight for the Superintendent's Report. Ms. McKnight stated that there were three items for consideration under Administrative Matters and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Official Journal of Record for the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge will continue to be The Advocate; approve continuing the contract through June 30, 2018 to be used for the public posting of minutes, resolutions, budgets, and other official proceedings and announcements of said Commission as required by law for the current price of \$0.33/agate line with the same terms and conditions.

Motion to approve by Mr. Rhorer

Second by Mr. Dixon

Unanimously approved

Ms. McKnight recognized Dale Auzenne for the next two items. Mr. Auzenne briefly explained that every year July is recognized as National Park and Recreation Month and that July 9 – 15 (second week in July) is recognized as National Therapeutic Recreation Week and then read the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Commission approve proclaiming July as NATIONAL PARK AND RECREATION MONTH in East Baton Rouge Parish and encourage all citizens to celebrate by taking part in their favorite sports, visiting the outdoors, spending time with family and friends, or just relaxing.

Resolved, That the Commission approve proclaiming July 9 – 15, 2017 as NATIONAL THERAPEUTIC RECREATION WEEK in East Baton Rouge Parish, and urge all citizens to support this observance, and to promote and enhance the quality of life for persons with physical, mental, emotional and/or social limitations.

Motion to approve by Mr. Pointer

Second by Ms. Davis

Unanimously approved

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Washington for the Communications and Information Technology (I. T.) Advisory Committee report. Mr. Washington asked I. T. Director Steven Knight to review the item recommended for approval. Mr. Knight explained that the next item was a result of a department audit done in 2016. He then read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve Information Security Program Master Policy as written.

Motion by Mr. Washington

Second by Mr. Rhorer

Unanimously approved

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Selders for the Finance Advisory Committee report. Mr. Selders asked Michael Hutchison, Finance Director, to review the items recommended for approval. Mr. Hutchison stated that the financial statements had been reviewed by the committee and read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve the unaudited financial statements for the five months ending May 31, 2017 (fiscal year-to-date period January 1 – May 31, 2017), as presented.

Motion to approve by Mr. Dixon

Second by Mr. Rhorer

Unanimously approved

Mr. Hutchison stated that there were three Contracts and Bids items that required approval and then read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve Change Order Three in the construction contract with Structural TOPCOR LLC (contractor) for Olympia Stadium Restoration in the amount of

\$48,810.00 and Change Order Four in the amount of \$59,600.00. Change orders one and two totaled \$81,860 (12.12% increase of the original amount). Current Contract cost (with Change Orders 1 & 2) is \$757,490.00. The new contract cost with Change Orders Three and Four will be \$865,900.00 (28.16% increase). Also approve the reestablishment of the \$100,000 threshold for future change orders.

Motion to approve by Mr. Pointer  
Second by Mr. Walker  
Unanimously approved

Mr. Hutchison read the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Commission approve accepting all qualified high bidders for the sale of surplus equipment opened June 14, 2017, as noted on the bid recap, for a total of \$39,011.00.

Motion to approve by Mr. Dixon  
Second by Mr. Washington  
Unanimously approved

Mr. Hutchison read the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Commission reject all bids for the Sealed Bid #1701 – Cohn Arboretum Event Building Renovation due to the lowest bid of \$428,000 exceeding BREC's maximum budget of \$400,000 for the project.

Motion to approve by Mr. Washington  
Mr. Selders clarified that the low bidder was going to withdraw their bid anyway.  
Second by Mr. Walker  
Unanimously approved

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Rhorer for a question. Mr. Rhorer asked if everything was in order for the audit. Mr. Hutchison stated that he is expecting the audit to be completed by June 30. Mr. Rhorer also asked about the fund balances and Mr. Hutchison stated that they would be reviewed during the July committee meeting.

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Rhorer for the Planning and Park Resources Advisory Committee report. Mr. Rhorer asked Reed Richard to give the construction update.

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Tatman for the Zoo Advisory Committee report. Mr. Tatman thanked Mr. Walker for chairing the meeting in his absence. Mr. Tatman stated that Phil Frost and his team do a great job and are a first-rate team.

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Benson stated that the next item of business on the agenda is to hold public hearing and adopt an ordinance to levy the ad valorem tax millages for the 2017 parish-wide assessment roll for Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge for general operations and capital improvements. Mr. Benson opened the public hearing and asked if anyone would like to speak, hearing none, he closed the public hearing. Mr. Tatman moved that the ordinance be adopted. The motion to adopt the ordinance was seconded by Mr. Walker.

The ordinance provides as follows:

### **ORDINANCE Ad Valorem Tax Levy**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (the "Commission"), in legal session convened, as follows:

There are hereby levied in the Parish of East Baton Rouge, the following described ad valorem tax millages on the 2017 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge:

a tax authorized by the electorate in a special election conducted October 28, 1947, under the authority of Article 14, Section 3(b) of the 1921 Louisiana Constitution; ratified by Article 6, Section 31; for operations and maintenance; and **0.63** mills

a tax authorized by the electorate in a special election conducted June 22, 1954, under the authority of Article 14, Section 3(b) of the 1921 Louisiana Constitution; ratified by Article 6, Section 31; for operations and maintenance; and **0.42** mills

a tax authorized by the electorate in a special election conducted November 2, 2004, under the authority of Section 4570.4 B of Title 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended; to purchase, acquire, construct, develop, improve, operate and maintain public parks, playgrounds and recreational properties and facilities; and **3.253** mills

a tax authorized by the electorate in a special election conducted April 5, 2014, for operations and maintenance and capital improvements; and **4.10** Mills

a tax authorized by the electorate in a special election conducted April 5, 2014, to provide funds for maintaining and operating its public parks, recreational properties, and facilities and making available funds for the operating budget; and **2.10** mills

a tax authorized by the electorate in an election conducted November 8, 2016, to provide funds for maintaining and operating the public parks, recreational properties, and facilities and making available funds for the operating budget; and **3.96** mills

the foregoing making a total tax of fourteen and four hundred sixty three one-thousandths (**14.463**) mills on the dollar of assessed valuation to meet the established liabilities and expenses of the Commission used in acquiring, developing, maintaining and operating the public parks and recreational properties and facilities of the Commission and in making available funds for the operating budget, all as provided for in the respective propositions approved by the voters in the special tax elections above referred to.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that the proper administrative officials of the Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, be and they are hereby empowered, authorized, and directed to spread said taxes, as hereinabove set forth, upon the assessment roll of said Parish for the year 2017, and to make the collection of the taxes imposed for and on behalf of the taxing authority, according to law, and that the taxes herein levied shall become a permanent lien and

privilege on all property subject to taxation as herein set forth, and collection thereof shall be enforceable in the manner provided by law.

The above and foregoing ordinance was submitted to a roll call vote for adoption, and the ordinance was adopted by the following votes:

YEAS: 9 Mr. Benson, Ms. Davis, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Pointer, Mr. Rhorer, Mr. Selders,  
Mr. Tatman, Mr. Walker, Mr. Washington

NAYS: 0

ABSTAINED: 0

ABSENT: 0

The foregoing ordinance was signed and approved by the Chairman, attested by the Superintendent and Ex-Officio Secretary and declared to be adopted on this the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 2017.

Attest:

/s/ Lloyd H. Benson II  
Lloyd H. Benson II, Chairman

/s/ Carolyn McKnight  
Carolyn McKnight  
Superintendent and Ex-Officio Secretary

The Chairman recognized Mr. Selders who asked Phil Frost to come to the podium to answer some questions regarding how Audubon Zoo is funded. Mr. Selders asked Mr. Frost if Audubon Zoo received money from the legislature and if we have sought funding from the legislature. Mr. Frost stated that BREC has received small amount from the state in the past. Mr. Selders asked how other zoos are funded. Mr. Frost responded that there are many different funding options.

Mr. Benson recognized Mr. Dixon who directed a question to Murphy Foster, legal counsel, regarding whether the Commission could formulate a letter to send to our state representatives asking them to provide Baton Rouge Zoo with same kind of financial support that they provide Audubon Zoo. Mr. Foster stated it was possible to make such a request. Mr. Selders asked if other cities could donate money for the Zoo. Mr. Foster stated that it would require a valid cooperative endeavor agreement. Mr. Dixon indicated that he would like the Commission to formulate such a letter.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Davis made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Rhorer seconded, and Mr. Benson adjourned the meeting without objection at 7:12 p.m.

Carolyn McKnight, Superintendent  
and Ex-Officio Secretary

Lloyd H. Benson II, Chairman