

## CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2010

705 W. University Avenue, Council Auditorium

**Commission members in attendance:** Odon Bacque, Dale Bourgeois, Karen Carson, Bruce M Conque, George A. Lewis, Greg Manual, D. Keith Miller, Stephen J. Oats, Aaron Walker

**Absent:** None

**Charter staff members in attendance:** Vivian Neumann (Assistant City-Parish Attorney) and Veronica L. Williams (Charter Commission Clerk)

**Council Members/Staff in attendance:** Chair Jay Castille, Keith Patin, Kenneth Boudreaux, Council Clerk Norma Dugas

**Administration staff in attendance:** Chief Financial Officer Becky Lalumia, Traffic & Transportation Department Director Tony Tramel, Planning, Zoning & Codes Director Eleanor Bouy and Parks and Recreation Director Gerald Boudreaux

(5:30 p.m.) AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to order  
Chair George Lewis called the meeting to order.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance  
Commissioner Greg Manuel was called upon to deliver the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Comments/Announcements from Commission Members  
There were no comments and/or announcements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Recognized Lafayette Consolidated Government Departments:

### ● **Traffic & Transportation Department – Director Tony Tramel**

Tramel stated that the department was created 12 years ago in 1998 and did not exist in the Charter. The department consisted of 90 total employees, most of which were carved out of the Public Works and Planning, Zoning & Codes Departments. The total budget was \$8.6 million from the General Fund and \$1.2 million in capital appropriations. Traffic & Transportation provided Planning for the entire parish.

Tramel provided the following information on the various Divisions within the Department:

- Traffic Engineering's mission was to provide for safe, convenient and efficient movement of persons and goods. The Section had a staff of 11;
- Traffic Engineering Maintenance's mission was to provide for maintenance and operations of roadways, a 24 hour/7day a week function. The Section had a staff of 12;
- Traffic Signal Maintenance's mission to provide for maintenance and operations of Traffic Signals, a 24 hour/7 day function. The Section had a staff of 7;
- Transit's mission was to operate a Public Transit System (with two million boardings per year) and a Para-Transit Service (with 35,000 boardings per year). The Section had a staff of 37 and had the largest budget in the department. Fares collected represented 11% of the cost of the operations;
- Parking's mission was to administer a convenient /efficient public parking program. The Section had a staff including 12 authorized and 15 assigned positions;

- Planning's mission was to provide long range planning for LCG and the Metropolitan Planning Area for Transportation facilities. Also, this Section was responsible for the Lafayette-In-the-Next-Century (LINC) planning. The Section included a staff of 13 authorized and 23 assigned positions;
- The Boards & Commissions administered through the Department were as follow:
  - ◊ Citizen Advisory Committee
  - ◊ Transportation Technical Committee
  - ◊ Transportation Policy Committee
  - ◊ I-49 Connector Volunteer Technical Advisory Committee
  - ◊MPO Human Services Provider Committee
  - ◊Acadiana Transportation Safety Coalition
  - ◊Comprehensive Plan Citizen Committee LINC-CC (Planning Collaboration Ordinance – CAC)
  - ◊Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee LINC-IC
  - ◊Total of 4 LINC Designated Coteries
  - ◊Planning Commission
  - ◊Freetown – Port Rico
  - ◊McComb – Veazey
  - ◊Le Centre
  - ◊Northeast

Finally, Tramel provided a map to the Commissioners of the Lafayette Transportation Study Area, which included the parish as well as areas outside the parish boundaries.

*How Consolidation affected your operations/department?* Tramel noted that pre-consolidation, the services for Traffic and Transportation were not of the same standard. Post-consolidation citizens enjoy the same level of services for both the city and parish.

*In your department, what were the benefits of Consolidation?* The function of the department was consolidated, which he felt to be more of a benefit to rural than city residents. MPO Planning was taking place, not only inside the parish but outside the parish.

*In your department, what parts of consolidation would you change?* The department, in its current form, ran more efficiently and effectively; thus, Tramel noted that there was no recommendation to change the way the department functioned.

Referring to the Charter, Tramel noted that he would be forwarding to the Clerk of the Commission suggested amendments to the Charter that impacted his department.

Carson asked for clarification on the comment that the service area on the map would get larger. Tramel explained that new population data would soon be presented, when the census count is complete. This would provide for a larger coverage area. The census results may impact funding allotments, with old money going away and new funding being available to LCG based on the new data.

Conque noted that a proposal up for approval by the Council would provide funding to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan and asked which department would oversee this process, Traffic or PZC and Tramel stated that he was unsure.

When referring to Planning, Lewis questioned whether the department was referring to transportation or land use and Tramel responded that his area primarily addressed the transportation aspect of Planning. Lewis then asked if the department provided assistance to the smaller municipalities and Tramel responded negatively, but added that the staff worked closely with the mayors to provide information and comments on their proposals, similar to that of a consultant.

Conque asked if the term “comprehensive plan” referred only to the areas of the City of Lafayette and unincorporated parish and Tramel responded affirmatively. The small municipalities developed their own plans based on what Lafayette Consolidated Government approved. The mayors then took that information and applied it to the needs of their respective communities. Tramel reminded that the municipalities had their own governments and adopted their own plans.

**●Planning, Zoning & Codes Department – Director Eleanor Bouy**

Bouy stated that there were a total of 49 employees in the department. When Consolidation occurred in 1996, it combined an already City established Zoning Department and two external agencies (Planning & Codes). The budget consisted of \$1.8 million in grant funds, \$2.2 million in projected revenues from the Codes Fund and \$1 million from the General Fund for a total budget of \$5 million.

The Planning & Development Division performed Planning in two parts: current planning administration and long range planning, which focused more on a visionary plan.

In the Zoning Division, staff focused on Zoning only inside the City as there was no Zoning in the unincorporated parish. The Zoning staff did not work in the small municipalities.

Bouy provided a hardcopy of her presentation to the Commission and gave an overview as follows:

- Planning/Development's mission was to administer City and Parish Subdivision Regulations for new developments as well as assist with parish addressing and street naming. The Division had a staff of 6. The Board/Commission that fell under this area of service was the Planning & Zoning Commission, which had a five (5) member board;
- Zoning's mission was to administer the: City Zoning Ordinance, Annexation Program, “Good Neighbor” Land Use Regulations and, finally, Historic Preservation Program. The Division had a staff of 9. The Boards/Commissions that fell under this area of service were the Planning & Zoning Commission (5 member board), the Board of Zoning Adjustment-BOZA (5 regular members/2 alternates); and the Preservation Commission (7 members);
- Code's mission was to: administer the Louisiana Construction Codes (building, mechanical, electrical and plumbing), issue all residential/commercial building permits, provide for housing code enforcement/condemnation, manage the floodplain/FEMA Maps, manage the hazard mitigation grants and manage department finances. The Division had a staff of 31. There was no Commission that fell under this area of service.

*In your department, what were the benefits of Consolidation?* Citizens enjoyed a one-stop-shop for the services provided by the department; there was more information and organization for plats, permits, streets, subdivision, etc; the parish land use regulation was coordinated in one area, there was advancement of technology; and there was an elimination of one director.

*In your department, what parts of consolidation would you change?* Referring to the Planning & Zoning Commission, Bouy recommended that the membership be changed from 5 to 7 members. Further, it was recommended that a separate Zoning Commission be created, consisting of 5 City residents to be appointed by the City-Parish Council.

Conque reminded that the City of Carencro had recently adopted a land use ordinance for their municipality.

Should the Planning & Zoning Commission be split into two boards, Oats asked if a potential problem could occur if the two boards reached inconsistent decisions/recommendations. Bouy clarified that in a majority of the rezoning cases, 60-70% did not include a subdivision component. Further, Bouy reminded that there once existed two separate Commissions and, in her opinion, they coordinated their decisions well. Oats questioned why a 7-member board was being recommended, in lieu of a 9-member plus Commission and Bouy explained that the current 5-member board was too small and a 9-member board was thought to be too large.

Of the 5-commission member; Walker asked the number of commissioners that resided in the City and Bouy responded that three members resided in the City and two in the Parish. Walker expressed concern that Parish residents were on a Commission that considered zoning decisions only applicable to properties in the City of Lafayette. Bouy noted that this was a reason for the recommendation to have a separate Zoning Commission. Bacque asked if the Board's makeup, with both city and parish members, was problematic for the department and Bouy responded that it was not.

Lewis asked the service area for the Codes Division and Bouy responded that it was the City and unincorporated parish.

On Boards/Commissions, Bouy suggested that the term length (maximum) for the Planning & Zoning Commission and BOZA be reviewed. Bourgeois asked how appeals for BOZA were handled and Bouy stated that appeals went through the District Court. It was stated that BOZA was not identified in the Charter, as it was established by State law.

On the recommendation by PZC that a Council member be appointed to the Planning & Zoning Commission, Bourgeois expressed concern that such an appointment may be prohibited by the Charter.

Manuel asked whether the 5-year term of members on the Planning & Zoning Commission and BOZA should be shortened and Bouy stated that the 5-year term limit was adequate, as she thought that it would take time for a board member to learn the long process. Bouy noted that her concern was with the 12 year maximum for the two boards.

An issue with the meetings was the fact that there were problems getting three members to attend a meeting. Manuel reminded that a majority (3 out of 5) was required to have a meeting, with all three being required to vote favorably to approve an item, when only 3 members attended. Otherwise, the item would fail or have to be tabled. Bouy added that agenda items had to be rescheduled for these reasons.

Conque asked that the department reassess the recommendation to split the current board into two separate commissions, as it may be prohibited due to the approval of an act by the State legislature in 1992.

#### ●Parks & Recreation Department – Director Gerald Boudreaux

Boudreaux introduced the management staff for the department and provided the Commissioners with a copy of the:

- ◇ *Annual Report* – for 2009, including a detailed breakdown of the services and programs the department provided;
- ◇ *Guide* – provided information on the department in more general terms for new residents of Lafayette Parish/participants to the programs;
- ◇ *Budget for the department* –identified a total staff of 118 employees. The current City recreation millage was set at 1.92 mills, which generated approximately \$2.2 million in 2010. Boudreaux stated that the

millage was only collected in the City and parks in the unincorporated area did not receive money from the millage. The total budget for the department was \$11.8 million. The department was subsidized by general fund dollars, due to a shortfall of dollars as there was no millage for parks outside the City.

◇ *Lafayette City-Parish Recreation Advisory Commission* – including list of the members, their terms and the appointing authority.

*How Consolidation affected your operations/department?* Boudreaux stated that when Consolidation occurred, the department had already merged. Since this time, the merger of the parks function had always been positive.

*In your department, what parts of consolidation would you change?* The department did not recommend changes, given the function ran well as consolidated.

Lewis asked if the department maintained parks in other municipalities and Boudreaux responded affirmatively, which was paid through the Parish General Fund. Manuel asked where the rest of the funds came from and Lalumia responded the City's General Fund and fees collected through various programs within the department. Boudreaux reminded that the City of Carencro had a sales tax for Receptions and contributed funding to LCG that went towards maintenance and upkeep of their park.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Next Meeting Date

Lewis stated that the next meeting would be held on September 20, 2010 for a presentation by various public safety departments/offices.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Comments from the public on the above referenced agenda items

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.