



These minutes are from the meetings of the Public Committees on January 2, 2018. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper called the meeting to order.

GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE: Alderman Berrigan moved to open the Governmental Committee Meeting and to accept the December 2017 minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper. Alderman Berrigan yielded to Alderman Curtis for a discussion of weapons on Town property. Alderman Curtis expressed his concern regarding whether the Town is “covered legally” by Town ordinances when someone working for the Town is carrying a weapon, whether permitted or not, and questioned whether they should be doing so while working for the Town. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper commented that the issue has been raised before and that the Town Attorney Edward Deano was asked to prepare something. The Mayor Pro Tem explained that she has been approached with questions related to the carrying of weapons at certain places, whether it be the Town Hall or the park. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper directed conversation toward Mr. Deano relating to whether all of Town property is an extension of the governmental main building and referred to Alderman Curtis mentioning not only residents but employees also. She added that she has received several comments from the public about carrying of weapons. Mr. Deano responded with his opinion saying that it seems that the state laws, strictly on the point about Town property, allow a Town to adopt ordinances dealing with the possession of firearms on Town property. Alderman Curtis asked the attorney if his understanding regarding a Town’s ability to make a stricter law is correct. Mr. Deano responded that the statute preempts local law on firearms and creates a specific exception for regulating the possession of firearms on Town property. The Mayor Pro Tem asked the Counselor for his recommendation regarding the next step and enumerated options such as further discussion of a possible ordinance or would a posting be adequate. Mr. Deano clarified stating that an ordinance would be necessary. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper summarized certain liberties Louisiana residents possess including open carry of firearms and informed attendees that this is not something she takes lightly adding that “the right to bear arms is your right.” Alderman Curtis turned the discussion back to Town employees and current policy related to Town property. Committee Chair Berrigan asked Mr. Deano to draft an ordinance stating that the Town’s property including the Park, Town Hall, and Maintenance Barn, shall be a weapons free zone and excepted the Sheriff’s Office. He followed up with a question to the Board asking, “is that where we’re going?”. Alderman Curtis said his biggest concern is employees. Mr. Deano recommended that someone author it; after that the proposal could then be brought to committee for discussion. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper advised that while doing research she found an East Baton Rouge Parish ordinance which she offered to access. Alderman Curtis agreed to work on something to present. Aldermen Curtis, Berrigan, Mr. Deano and Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick Harper discussed points the ordinance might include. Alderman Curtis commented that it would be more general than a prohibition on carry by employees. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper added that the Town’s law would prohibit carry in governmental zones except by peace officers. Communicating with Alderman Curtis the Mayor Pro Tem confirmed that he would work on something with Mr. Deano to present for consideration at the February Public Committee Meeting for further discussion. Alderman Curtis agreed. With a call for public comment, Lee Barrios reminded the Board that this is a constitutional issue and is nuanced, asking what is the definition of “town property.” Mike Norman addressed the Board quoting from the Louisiana State Constitution, saying that the right to keep and bear arms is fundamental and any law or ordinance seeking to infringe upon that right, will be held to strict scrutiny. Mr. Norman added that it is likely that any ordinance passed will be challenged in court and would be a burden to the Town financially.

Alderman Berrigan invited Alderman Curtis to discuss stand-ins in the event of committee member absence. Alderman Curtis yielded to Mr. Deano for an explanation. Mr. Deano said that the Town’s ordinance is silent as far as filling in for an absent member. The law could be amended or be made more specific, possibly assigning alternate members. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper said that her role as the Chair of the Public Committee Meeting allows her to choose who fills in for the absent member. Mr. Deano said that the Mayor Pro Tem shall determine committee composition with the approval of the Board of Aldermen. Mr. Deano explained that an ad-hoc member could be assigned and confirmed and that it should be handled by the Committee of the Whole. He added that the law specifies any subject might be brought before a committee as a recommendation for new ordinances. Mr. Deano suggested the aforesaid specificity related to “new ordinances” might be deleted. The Committee agreed. Mr. Deano was asked to prepare the ordinance for introduction at the January meeting.

Alderman Berrigan advised that based on a request by the purchaser/developer of the Quail Farm property INSTRUMENT 2017-010 AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE REZONING OF 44.37 ACRES SITUATED IN SECTIONS 29 AND 38, TOWNSHIP 6 SOUTH, RANGE 12 EAST, ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LOUISIANA, AS A PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS (QUAIL FARM TRACE) would be deferred. Alderman Berrigan moved to close the committee meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE:

Alderman Murphy moved to open the Infrastructure Committee Meeting and to accept the December 2017 minutes, seconded by Alderman Berrigan. Alderman Murphy opened discussion of a resolution to make appointments to the Louisiana Municipal Gas Authority Board. Alderman Murphy requested information regarding the frequency of the appointments. It was noted that they are made every four years and that the Mayor is interested in appointing Johnny Clay as an Alternate Director, in part, to bring about continued growth in his position. Alderman Murphy and Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick- Harper asked if two alternates could be assigned. It was decided to have further discussion at the February meeting. Alderman Murphy moved to close the committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to open the Finance Committee Meeting and to accept the December 2017 minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper. With no new business to discuss, Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to close the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Alderman Curtis moved to open the Economic Development Committee Meeting and to accept the December 2017 minutes, seconded by Alderman Murphy. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper asked if welcome packages are given to new businesses. Town Clerk Kathy Armand confirmed that new businesses receive a package. The Mayor Pro Tem reported that she has begun researching information related to short-term rental business and asked the Aldermen to keep the topic in mind. Responding to public comment Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper reported that the Board is not yet prepared to move forward with formation of a committee to discuss regulation of short-term rentals. Alderman Curtis in response to a question from the public stated that a committee related to the Farmer's Market was delayed due to the holidays. He added that he has four or five people who are interested in participating and things should move forward with the new year. Edward Deano addressed whether the committee meetings would be conducted as public meetings and confirmed that certain aspects of the open meetings law do apply. Alderman Curtis moved to close the meeting, seconded by Alderman Murphy.

Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to close the meeting of the Public Committees, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

MEETING ADJOURNED
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 2nd DAY OF JANUARY 2018.

Kathy Armand, Town Clerk

Greg Lemons, Mayor