

**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3325 GROOM ROAD, BAKER, LOUISIANA 70714
ZOOM**

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August 22, 2023 - 6:00 p.m.

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, met in regular session on August 22, 2023, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

MAYOR

Darnell Waites

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Glenda Bryant

Rochelle Dunn

Brenda G. Jackson

Dr. Charles Vincent

Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Waites presided.

The invocation was given by Council Member Vincent.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council President Robert Young.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Dunn to move item “2. Drew Cotton, PEC, to provide an update on the MoveBR Groom Road project (Mayor)” up on the agenda, so that it follows recognitions.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Jackson to move item “3. Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane (Mayor)” up on the agenda, so that it follows recognitions.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

DISPOSITION OF THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Jackson to approve the minutes of the meeting held on August 8, 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

RECOGNITIONS

1. Recognize Chief Keith Pease and the Baker Fire Department for always being supportive of the Baker City Council and their initiatives and their dedication and service to the City of Baker (Dunn)

Council Member Dunn recognized Chief Keith Pease and the Baker Fire Department for always being supportive of the Baker City Council and their initiatives and their dedication and service to the City of Baker.

2. *Drew Cotton, PEC, to provide an update on the MoveBR Groom Road project (Mayor)*

Drew Cotton, Project Manager – MoveBr Groom Road, provided an update on and highlights from the project. The project has two phases – Phase 1 McHugh Road to Plank Road with an estimated cost of \$9.5 million and Phase 2 – LA 19 to McHugh Road with an estimated cost of \$10 million. Mr. Cotton reported the planning and design study phase has been completed and the final construction plans phase is underway with 80% completion to date (Phase 1). He stated once Phase 1 is completed Groom Road will have a new roadway surface, bike and pedestrian lanes, enhanced crosswalks, handicap ramps, new school zone flashers, new CATS bus stop pads, a turn lane at McHugh Road, stormwater system enhancement and will feature beautiful landscaping as well.

3. *Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane (Mayor)*

Joshua Stutes, DOTD – District 61 Administrator, reported that not a lot has changed since last year. He cited inflation and the limited funds they receive as reasons for this. He said pre-design meetings are being held, and that the project’s goal is to rehabilitate the existing roadway, an initiative which will include a structural overlay. Mr. Stutes stated the projected start date is September 2024, and once the project is done the road transfer process will be completed.

Leon Spears, certified professional trainer, stated he is working with Perone McCastle and his PONY organization to bring resources and training to area youth. He stated they would like work with city leaders and other local organizations to host a community wellness fair. Mr. Spears said by making these programs available to students, the community is empowering them and providing much needed support.

PLANNING AND ZONING MATTERS

1. Approve Business License Request – 2023-10
Soulful Sweets, LLC
Location – 4513 Greenwood Lane, Baker, Louisiana

Discussion regarding the agenda items was held.

Council Member Jackson stated it is her understanding that separate cooking facilities are required in these situations, and as these facilities do not exist at the applicant’s address, she is unable to vote to approve the business license request at this time.

The motion was made by Council Member Bryant, seconded by Council Member Young to accept the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission and approve the business license request for Soulful Sweets, LLC.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Vincent, Young

NAYS: Jackson

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Introduce Ordinance 2023-19, an ordinance to designate and declare certain City of Baker assets to be surplus and scrap and for related matters (Mayor)

The Mayor provided an overview of the proposed ordinance.

The motion was made by Council Members Vincent/Young, seconded by Council Member Dunn to introduce Ordinance 2023-19.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Vincent, Young

NAYS: Jackson

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 4-1.

2. Drew Cotton, PEC, to provide an update on the MoveBR Groom Road project (Mayor)

This agenda item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

3. Joshua Stutes, DOTD, to provide an update on Lavey Lane (Mayor)

This agenda item was addressed earlier in the meeting.

4. Update on quality and fair housing in the City of Baker for all tenants, landlords and homeowners (Bryant)

Mission Statement

A. To provide a healthy lifestyle through community gardens and exercise availability.

B. To provide a safe environment through communication with each other & law enforcement – Police and Fire Departments.

C. To provide all neighborhoods with a sense of pride & integrity.

Council Member Bryant read the mission statement. She said exercise availability was enhanced with the newly installed equipment, and that gardening activities will resume as soon as the weather gets cooler. Council Member Bryant reminded everyone of the statewide burn ban. Council Member Bryant asked that Dr. Cordel Parris be allowed to speak. Dr. Parris stated for the record that she is the owner of 5151 Baker Boulevard, 5225 Bentley Drive, as well as the 37 acres from that point to Tristian, and despite the “For Sale” signs posted on the property; the property is not for sale. She stated she does not know who placed the signs, she simply wants to clarify the property is not for sale. Dr. Parris said she has purchased 5014 Tristian as well, giving her three points of access to her property. The three entrances are located on Bentley Drive, Scott Street and Tristian Avenue. She intends to move forward with her plans to develop the property.

5. ANNOUNCEMENT: Councilman Charles Vincent’s Mwalimu Institute project – “Help us find your house with visible municipal numbers” (Vincent)

Council Member Vincent reminded everyone that his Mwalimu Institute, in conjunction with Entergy, is implementing a city-wide program to provide visible municipal house numbers for Baker residents. He thanked the fire and police departments for their continued assistance with and support of this project. Residents can contact City Hall, their city council representative, the fire department, or police department to participate in this program. Council Member Vincent encouraged all who are in need of visible house numbers, especially the disabled and elderly, to take advantage of this program.

6. ANNOUNCEMENT: Councilman Charles Vincent’s Mwalimu Institute project – Health screening at the Baker Branch Library on Friday, September 8, 2023, from Noon to 4:00 p.m. with the Southern University School of Nursing Jag Mobile – Please come out for free screenings (Vincent)

Council Member Vincent announced another of his Mwalimu Institute’s projects. Free health screenings will be offered at the Baker Branch Library on Friday, September 8, 2023, from Noon to 4:00 p.m. with the Southern University School of Nursing Jag Mobile. Some of the screenings being offered are for BMI, cholesterol, and glucose levels. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation will also be on site offering free HIV screenings and other tests as well. Council Member Vincent assured everyone the facilities can accommodate their needs and their privacy will be respected. He encouraged everyone to come out and take advantage of this free public health screening. Council Member Vincent asked that everyone take a flyer and share the information with their churches, their neighbors, with everyone.

RESOLUTIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

1. Proclamation declaring September 2023 Prostate Cancer Awareness Month in the City of Baker (Vincent)

City Attorney Fabre read the proclamation.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Member Bryant to accept the proclamation.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

2. Proclamation declaring September 2023 Sickle Cell Anemia Awareness Month in the City of Baker (Vincent)

City Attorney Fabre read the proclamation.

Council Member Vincent announced Ryan's Run/Walk Race for Sickle Cell Disease, a fundraiser hosted by Ryan Clark, is being held Saturday, September 16, 2023, at Galvez Plaza, 238 North Boulevard, Suite 200. Registration opens at 6:30 a.m. and the race begins at 8:00 a.m. He encouraged everyone to participate and support this worthy cause.

The motion was made by Council Member Vincent, seconded by Council Members Dunn/Jackson to accept the proclamation.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

PUBLIC MEETING

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Council Member Vincent announced the library is conducting a community survey to determine public opinion on the library and the services they provide. He asked that everyone participate. He asked about the status of city-parish ditches in the city and suggested that they be cleaned in preparation for the upcoming storm season. He said both the City of Baker and City-Parish are working to ensure ditches are maintained, as they are concerned with residents' safety and well-being. He thanked the Mayor and his staff for their efforts which resulted in allowing retirees to keep their dental coverage. He announced the Labor Day Parade will be held Saturday, September 2, 2023. Council Member Vincent said they hope to have a city-wide cleanup sometime in November and asked everyone to join him every third Saturday to pick up trash in their neighborhoods and throughout the city.

Council Member Dunn thanked Council Member Vincent for his proclamations. She asked the Mayor about the possibility of having roses or other colorful flowers planted along Highway 19 as part of the beautification efforts. She also asked that the Public Works Department be more conscientious when cutting the grass around bridges. She thanked the Public Works Department for their hard work on Hovey, Chamberlain, and College. She said she wanted to acknowledge and encourage them because they are young, and these things help reinforce dedication to their jobs. She stated part of the problem with property maintenance in the city is often young people don't have the initiative of older people. She said the younger generations do not have the same sense of pride in or responsibility for their property that older generations exhibited. Council Member Dunn stated she is excited about the plans for the Baker Civic Center and the park.

Council Member Bryant reminded everyone to get their COVID vaccine update. She thanked the Public Works Department for the grass cutting they have done in District 3, saying it is greatly appreciated. She reminded everyone of the work session to discuss Airbnb scheduled for Thursday, August 31, 2023, and stated council members will receive information regarding this subject prior to the work session. She sent condolences to New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell on the loss of her husband Jason Cantrell. Council Member Bryant asked for an update on Millennial Park subdivision.

Discussion regarding Millennial Park subdivision and the remaining conditions to be met by the developer in order to move forward with construction was held.

Council Member Young proposed that the city have back-up equipment available to the Public Works Department so that if one piece of machinery goes down, work can continue.

Council Member Dunn was in full agreement and stated the city should purchase more equipment for such eventualities.

Council Member Jackson thanked Council Member Vincent for reminding everyone of hurricane season and the need to maintain canals and ditches. She asked the Mayor to check the canals and ditches in Parc Chaleur and Meadows of Chaleur subdivisions to ensure they are being maintained. She thanked Mr. Anthony Douglas for answering her call in a timely fashion and addressing her concerns regarding the situation at the corner of Rue Splendeur and Chaleur. She stated the council is a mature body and are capable of doing the invocation and pledge at council meetings. She said it is her opinion that this practice should remain in place. Council Member Jackson said to the people who take time out to give her words of encouragement and support, it means so much to her, thank you.

BIDS AND PROPOSALS

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

CONDEMNATIONS

ANNEXATIONS

REPORTS ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

1. Planning and Zoning Commission
2. Annexation Review Committee
3. Economic Development Team
4. Heritage Museum/Related Committees
5. ABC Board
6. Other Special Committees
 - a. Buffalo Festival
 - b. Prayer Breakfast
 - c. Strategic Planning Committee
 - d. Citizens Advisory Board to Law Enforcement
 - e. Main Street District Committee

Council Member Bryant suggested the city look into Ollie's and have someone reach out to them, as they would be a good fit for our community. She said Buc-ee's is also an organization that should be contacted about the possibility of opening a location in the City of Baker. She asked if the Benny's project is moving forward, and the Mayor responded that it is progressing.

Council Member Vincent asked about the condemned property on Blairstown, and the Mayor stated it is an adjudicated property, therefore the city cannot touch it. Council Member Vincent asked about the condemned property on Wedgewood, and the Mayor said the city is working on it. The Mayor reported that the structure at 4341 Burgess has been demolished.

ADJOURN

The motion was made by Council Member Jackson, seconded by Council Member Vincent to adjourn.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

**CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana held on August 22, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HILLCREST MEMORIAL GARDENS
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
3325 GROOM ROAD
BAKER, LA 70714
August 22, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for Hillcrest Memorial Gardens, met in regular session on August 22, 2023, with the following members in attendance at the meeting:

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Bryant
Rochelle Dunn
Brenda G. Jackson
Dr. Charles Vincent
Darnell Waites
Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Commissioner Waites presided.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting was called to order and the motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to approve the minutes of the meeting held on August 8, 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER NECESSARY BUSINESS

1. Monthly Business Report
2. Other Reports
3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

There was no other business to come before the commission. The motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned.

**CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners for the Hillcrest Memorial Gardens held on August 22, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BAKER CONSOLIDATED UTILITIES SYSTEM
CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA
3325 GROOM ROAD
BAKER, LA 70714
August 22, 2023**

The City Council of the City of Baker, Louisiana, sitting as the Board of Commissioners for the Baker Consolidated Utilities System, met in regular session on August 22, 2023, with the following members attending:

COMMISSIONERS

Glenda Bryant
Rochelle Dunn
Brenda G. Jackson
Dr. Charles Vincent
Darnell Waites
Robert Young

CALL TO ORDER – Commissioner Waites presided.

DISPOSITION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The meeting was called to order and the motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to approve the minutes of the meeting held on August 8, 2023.

YEAS: Bryant, Dunn, Jackson, Vincent, Waites, Young

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion passed by a vote of 6-0.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER NECESSARY BUSINESS

1. Monthly Business Report
2. Other Reports
3. Items Requiring Action

ADJOURN

There was no other business to come before the commission. The motion was made by Commissioner Waites, seconded by Commissioner Jackson to adjourn.

Commissioner Vincent thanked the Mayor and his staff for keeping utility bills reasonable.

The meeting was adjourned.

**CITY OF BAKER
PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE
STATE OF LOUISIANA**

I, Angela Canady Wall, certify that I am Clerk of the Council for the City of Baker, Louisiana, and that the above and foregoing is a copy of the minutes of a regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Baker Consolidated Utility System held on August 22, 2023.

Angela Canady Wall, LCMC
Clerk of Council