



SHELLY HORTON JR
MAYOR

STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/ TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON
LOUISIANA

PUBLIC HEARING
MINUTES
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN
TOWN OF BENTON
105 SIBLEY STREET, BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LOUISIANA
MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023, 6:00 PM

The Town of Benton Council met in regular and legal session on the 9th day of October 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, Benton, Louisiana. The Mayor, Shelly Horton, called the Public Hearing to order. The invocation was given by Alderman Manning, and the pledge of allegiance was led by Alderman Jones. Mrs. Stephanie Collier, called the roll, with all members present as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	- Absent
Alderman Tiffany Manning	- Present
Alderman Ron Jones	- Present
Alderman James Friday	- Present
Alderman Wayne Cathcart	- Present

Others present were Stephanie Collier, Attorney Neil Erwin, Chief Collier, and several members of the public.

The mayor did not call for a motion for approval of the agenda.

Public Hearing items:

Mayor Horton explained that anyone who is here to comment on Ordinance 854 the zoning change of the property on Hwy 3 and Red River Street will need to sign in first.

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1. ORDINANCE 854 of 2023

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, convened in regular session that Chapter 130-Zoning, Article 7-Zoning Amendments, Section 130-182 be amended to reflect the Zoning Classification of a tract of land being 2.77 acres, more or less, from R-1 (One Family Resident District) to a B-3 (Community Business and Central Business District) Located in Section 30, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, Louisiana (Town Council District 3) (Police Jury District 3).

Mayor Horton called for public comments:

Mrs. Dawn Bushnell stated that she opposes this zoning change that will allow a Dollar Tree to be constructed in the place they have designated. Mrs. Bushnell commented that she agrees with Benton growing and new businesses coming in but not Dollar Trees at that location. Overall, she expressed her concerns with the increase in bigger box truck traffic, litter, and debris accumulating on and around the property as seen at other Dollar Tree locations. She expressed that this type of business so close to residential property will be more likely to disrupt the small-town charm and peaceful atmosphere of the surrounding residential property owners. She spoke to the council about how she and her husband have raised their children and now grandchildren in Benton and love the community. She explained that Benton is the perfect place to come home after a busy day and relax in a peaceful small-town setting.

Mayor Horton called for any other public comments:

Mr. Chirs Redford expressed the same concerns about truck traffic and litter. He also stated that the original plans had no curb cut on Red River but now there is a change in plans for a curb cut on both Red River and Cleveland Street.

Mayor Horton stated that the Benton Fire District 3 Chief is here, and he can explain that change in the plans. Chief Wallace explained that additional cub cuts are necessary for safety of people turning in and out of traffic on Hwy 3 but also for access to both properties for Fire trucks if there were a structure fire at that location.

Mr. Redford stated that generally surrounding property values are reduced by 20 % when this type of business is built close to residential areas. Also, that the two lots behind the property most likely never sell now because no one would want to live that close to a Dollar Tree and Auto Zone.

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Alderman Manning asked about the Dollar Tree and Auto Zone being at the same location and if they are going to be one building? Mayor Horton explained that.

Alderman Cathcart: First, thanked Dawn Bushnell for her years of heading the volunteer committee who organize our annual Christmas festival. Alderman Cathcart stated that the item on the agenda is a zoning change only it has nothing to do with approving a specific business.

Mayor Horton adjourned the Public Hearing.

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**REGULAR SESSION
MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023, 6:00 PM**

The Town of Benton Council met in regular and legal session on the 9th day of October 2023, at 6:00 p.m., in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, Benton, Louisiana. The Mayor, Shelly Horton, called the Regular Session meeting to order. The following members were present:

Alderman Jackie Carr - Absent
Alderman Tiffany Manning - Present
Alderman Ron Jones - Present
Alderman James Friday - Present
Alderman Wayne Cathcart - Present

Others present were Stephanie Collier, Attorney Neil Erwin, Chief Collier, and several members of the public.

A motion was made by Alderman Friday and seconded by Alderman Manning to approve the regular session agenda. The mayor called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

A motion was made by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Friday to approve the minutes of the September Meeting. The mayor called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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OLD BUSINESS

1. ORDINANCE 854 of 2023 final vote for adoption

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, convened in regular session that Chapter 130-Zoning, Article 7-Zoning Amendments, Section 130-182 be amended to reflect the Zoning Classification of a tract of land being 2.77 acres, more or less, from R-1 (One Family Resident District) to a B-3 (Community Business and Central Business District) Located in Section 30, Township 20 North, Range 13 West, Bossier Parish, Louisiana (Town Council District 3) (Police Jury District 3).

Mayor Horton stated that an agreement was made to amend the ordinance from a R-1 to a B-2 district with restricts businesses from operating 24 hours. This will limit the times a business can be open.

Alderman Jones made a motion to amend Ordinance 854 of 2023 to reflect the zoning classification of a tract of land being 2.77 acres, more or less, from a R-1 (One Family Resident District) to a B-2 (Business District). Alderman Cathcart seconded the motion. Mayor Horton called for public comments:

Mrs. Bushnell stated that there is already enough to deal with when it comes to all the traffic during ball games and asked for this not to be approved.

Mayor Horton called for any other comments: There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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A motion made by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Ordinance 854 as amended. Mayor called for public comments: There being none. Motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Alderman Jones

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

NEW BUSINESS

Mark Crouch spoke to council members about a property on Simpson Street that was recently torn down by the property owner. The next step is getting the debris removed from the property. Mr. Crouch provided photographs of the debris and stated that he has talked with the property owner on the phone, and he is aware of the urgency to clean up the debris. Alderman Cathcart asked the mayor what the hole was for? Mr. Crouch said that the man dug the hole with the intentions of pushing the debris into the hole and then burning it. The owner told Mr. Crouch that he was approved to burn it by someone at the Fire District over a year ago but did not remember the name of the person who approved it. Alderman Cathcart asked what are the large containers for. Mr. Crouch stated that when he first inspected the property that those containers were full of diesel fuel. Mr. Crouch stated that since then the owner has removed the fuel from the containers. Mayor Horton stated that we have already gotten two bids from local contractors for removal of the debris.

Alderman Cathcart made a motion to accept the lowest bid to remove the debris. Alderman Manning seconded. Mayor Horton called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Horton stated that he spoke with the Police Jury about the agreement between the Town of Benton and the Police Jury back with the subdivision was first developed. And they agreed that the responsibility falls on the Town. The mayor stated he has gotten quotes on work that will resolve the drainage problem for both sides. He asked for approval to spend \$4,900.00 and fix the problem on the

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agreement that the property owner knows will be a one-time fix that after that the town will not be responsible.

Motion made by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to approve 4900.00 to be spent on repairing the drainage problem outside McKenzie Subdivision. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

Mayor Called up Mrs. Cassandra Lewis: Mrs. Lewis requested that an overgrowth issue be addressed on the side of her property. There is a fence between her and her neighbor that is overrun with vines and branches. She has asked for the property owner behind her to clean it up but was told that they didn't feel it needed cleaning. The homeowner is handicapped and unable to do it himself and has no one that will do it for him. Council members asked Mr. Crouch to reach out to the property owner and try to resolve the issue.

Mayor Horton stated that we will be holding a Budget Workshop on October 26th at 6pm to review the budgets.

Stephaie Collier spoke to the council about the upcoming millage renewal election and requested the council decide on what rate they wish to put on the ballot. The 4.90 millage is the rate set by the last reassessment, and the 4.96 mills is the rate approved in the last election. Alderman Cathcart asked what the difference in dollars collected. Mrs. Collier stated that it is less than one thousand dollars.

Alderman Cathcart made a motion seconded by Alderman Jones to approve the rate to be 4.90 mills to be added to the ballot in the April election. Mayor Called for comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

Motion made by Alderman Friday seconded by Alderman Manning to approve 4900.00 to be spent on repairing the drainage problem outside McKenzie Subdivision. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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Mayor Horton requested authorization to purchase a skidder for the sewer department. The equipment is needed to spread rock and dirt when repairing levees at both the treatment plants. Also, we have a mowing attachment, and it can be used to bushhog around both treatment plants. Alderman Cathcart asked what we normally pay someone to do all that work in a single year. Mayor Horton stated that usually we can pay somewhere around two to three thousand per month.

A motion made by Alderman Jones seconded by Alderman Manning to approve the purchase of the equipment. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

A motion made by Alderman Cathcart seconded by Alderman Manning to approve the month to date budget and monthly financials. Mayor called for public comments: There being none. Motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

A motion made by Alderman Cathcart seconded by Alderman Manning to adjourn the meeting. The Mayor called for public comments: There being none. Motion carried with the following votes:

YEAS: Alderman Manning, Alderman Jones, Alderman Friday, and Alderman Cathcart.

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Carr

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