

# RIVER PARISHES

## TOURIST COMMISSION

### MINUTES

#### SPECIAL Board Meeting / Retreat

May 12, 2021

1811 West Airline Hwy, LaPlace, LA

Commission: Garrett Monti (Chairman), Elizabeth Joseph (Vice-Chair), Camella Landry (Secretary/Treasurer), Tracy Smith, Ricardo Smith, Paul Aucoin, Robert Taylor, Kevin Patel, Terrence Jones

I. **8:18am Call to Order / Roll Call** (6-3)

Present: TS EJ RT KP PA TJ  
Absent: GM RS CL

II. **8:19am Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance** Prayer: EJ Pledge: TJ

III. **Agenda**

IV. **Public Comment** START **8:21am** **No Comments**

Introduction to Retreat

- JR made introduction to retreat
- TS made introduction to Destrehan Plantation
- Round-robin introductions of all staff and board members

V. **8:44am Louisiana Laws Revised Statutes Title 33 Municipalities and Parishes §4574.12. River Parishes Convention, Tourist, and Visitors District; commission – RS 33:4574.12**

- Statutes are concrete, whereas bylaws can be altered at anytime
- EJ explained how legislative can make changes to the statutes
- PA explained the Attorney General's involvement in making any changes
- (Jay Robichaux (JR) the board is a 4-year term, but with no limits. The role of secretary and treasurer can be combined on the board, the allotted tax collection is within the statute, bonds are listed and states that it can be a pathway for us for funding, if needed
- PA bond money can be used as a "grant" offered by us to aid with attraction partners
- JR our budget is sent to all three parishes for their review, however their approval is not needed for the budget to be slated for the fiscal year
- EJ C1 brings to light the film industry- what is Louisiana's River Parishes (LARP) responsible for in this realm? We need to look into the verbiage listed on this line. We also need to look at how each of the 3 parishes are handling filming. How can we aid in growing more local revenue from the film industry?
- WH will be obtaining economic impact statements from all filming and will have a comprehensive list of all filming in the 3 parishes to share with the board
- JR we will not be overseeing the St. John Community Center (SJCC) for this coming year. We do need to revisit the possibility of having a local film commission to weigh if it is needed
- EJ ACTION ITEM we will look deeper into what the contact entity should be for all three parishes for film. We need to have a standardized form as a "how to" for prospecting film companies to obtain
- KP why did we sever our relationship with the St. John Center (SJC)

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- JR we did not elect to not continue our contact, St. John the Baptist Parish (SJBP) did not see the added value in our management of the center moving forward
- KP can we appeal this decision to not manage the center with the council. They need to see the benefits of utilizing it as a sound stage and see the economic impact of the center hosting film groups
- PA the center was originally designed as a sound stage and once hosted River Parishes Tourist Commission (RPTC) offices
- KP it would be best to bring this to the council
- EJ before making moves to the council, we need to collect hard data and prove the economic impact
- KP we need to obtain the full economic impact study that Willma Harvey (WH) is producing
- TS added that there is a fine line in running it as a film studio and also offering community benefits
- KP suggested that there be an expansion between REGALA gym and the library for a new proposed community center to allow for the SJCC to be for film
- JR asked that member of our board continue to work with SJBP and economic development to show added value of film
- JR B6 states that the board must meet at least once per quarter but not to exceed more than once a month for regularly scheduled meetings

### VI. **9:21am By-Laws of the River Parishes Convention, Tourist, and Visitors Commission**

- JR many of the secretary/treasurer's duties are absorbed by members of the LARP staff. The chairman signs all checks and reports in on financial decisions. July will begin our new fiscal year. Due to article 6, we will not be meeting in July 2022. The chairman has the authority to grant a pardon on missed meetings by a board member. Proposed that meetings can be held on other dates and times, should the board choose to do so.
- KP thinks that 3 absences are an acceptable amount, but does understand that extenuating circumstances to arise and the pardon is a good plan from the chairman, if it needs to be granted
- EJ ACTION ITEM we should consider revisiting the bylaws to include the pardon ruling of the chairman on absences
- JR will provide verbiage of this new line in the bylaws for next board meeting

### VII. **9:37am Vision and Mission Statements**

- JR / Kiki Mannear (KM) will be pushing out our mission statements more through media channels, once new statement is made. Board needs to evaluate current verbiage to see if it still reflects our current growth plan for the organization
- EJ we can make a committee to evaluate the vision and mission statements. She would like input from all members on what they would like to see from this. She asked that Jay present his vision as well.

### VIII. **9:42am Office Location**

- JR we have outgrown our current office space. Our lease is current 3k a month and we are also paying 60% of the building's utilities, taxes, and improvements/maintenance. If we stay and get a portable office added, it would be 25k initially for the building and our lease would increase to 5,000 a month. We should evaluate a new location on Belle Terre where rent would be 3k a

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month and would have offices for all staff members. The added costs would be for Wi-Fi, phones, and ac maintenance.

- KP where will Saint (bonfire alligator) go
- JR we can evaluate the cost to relocate him to our new facility, if approved
- TJ how long of a lease commitment will the new facility require
- JR it will be a three-year lease with some flexibility

### IX. 5-Year Outlook for the Office & Visitors Centers

10:06am LASTA

- JR money is not received on funding the LASTA project. It was approved by the house and will be headed to the Senate this week. The speaker of the House did make a motion that SJPB take the funds to distribute to Louisiana Steam Train Association (LASTA). SJPB declined to be the liaison and the funds will now source directly to LASTA. The train is still slated to be in Garyville. Port of South Louisiana cannot commit at this time fiscally to the project though their partnership will be needed. The train has been declared as Louisiana's Official Steam Train.
- EJ asked for clarity on how funds will be distributed
- JR the federal money will come to us and be distributed to LASTA through us, however the state funding will go to LASTA directly

10:18am American Cruise Lines

- JR Initially the dock project was placed on hold due to lack of financial backing. American Cruise lines reached out to LARP needing an additional dock in our region. They are on board with aiding to fund the dock and sent over impact studies for us to review. A meeting was held with St. James Parish (SJP) President and they are on board. We are hoping to secure additional funds from the state for this venture. We are looking to schedule a collective meeting with American Cruise lines to continue to talk over logistics

10:32am Visitors Centers

- JR Showed land map of potential new site for SJPB visitors center that will also become permanent home for LARP. This 2-story building will also feature interactive kiosks. He stated that we will be working on getting renderings made of the building and suggested using a company based out of St Charles Parish (SCP) for the initial rendering because of their status with government projects
- EJ we need to make an Request for Quote (RFQ) to go out for all companies to have a fair opportunity to be included in the rendering process
- JR ACTION ITEM will put together an RFQ to be sourced for the rendering project

10:51am Staffing

- JR is hoping to keep key members of staff in the new office space, to be built. Is also looking to move members of staff to each respective parish to work closely with their government staff. He hopes to add a staff member for SJP once the dock project progresses
- KP how will this work
- JR staff members will be assigned a parish to work from and will be responsible for maintaining strong partnerships with the businesses that are harbored within their assigned territory

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X. **11:05am Strategic Plan 2030**

- JR Committee is needed to evaluate the current plan and make room for additional growth opportunities
- The committee will be responsible for aiding in the tracking of the plan

XI. **11:23am Commissioners' Ideas for the Future**

- EJ we need to go home and revisit the materials presented today to have a better foundation on what we need to revise. Once revisited we need to come up with a scheduled meeting for the new committee to target progress—who should be on the committee
- Committee: KP, TJ, EJ, GM

XII. **Chairman's Report**

- Next Special Budget Committee & Regular Board Meeting – May 19, 2022

IX. **11:31am Adjourn**

APPROVE M: KP 2: TJ

TS EJ RT KP PA TJ (6-0-3)