



# TOWN OF PEARL RIVER

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VIRGIL R. PHILLIP

LORA CUTRER

DAVID McGREGOR

KATHRYN WALSH

Aldermen

DAVID McQUEEN

Mayor

BRIDGETT BENNETT

Mayor Pro Tempore

CARLA O. BENELLI

Town Clerk

TIMOTHY MATHISON

Town Attorney

MATHIEU E. DAIGLE

Assistant Town Attorney

The following minutes were taken at the regular monthly meeting of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen on January 17, 2017 at the Town Hall in Pearl River. Mayor McQueen called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

Alderman Phillips gave the invocation; the pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor McQueen.

## ROLL CALL:

Aldermen Bennett, Phillips, Walsh, Cutrer and McGregor were present. Also present were Attorney Tim Mathison, Chief Jennings, and the Town Clerk, Carla Benelli.

Mayor McQueen called for approval of the minutes from the Special Council Meeting held on December 8, and for Council Meeting held on December 20, 2017. Alderman Cutrer asked that her additional comments about raises be added to the December 20<sup>th</sup> minutes. Alderman Walsh made the motion to pass the December 8<sup>th</sup> minutes, seconded by Alderman Phillips.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Alderman Walsh made the motion to accept the December 20<sup>th</sup> with the additional changes made, seconded by Alderman Cutrer.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

## SPECIAL COMMENTS:

Mayor McQueen congratulated Alderman Bennett for being invited to the presidential inauguration in Washington for President Trump.

## PUBLIC HEARING:

## OLD BUSINESS:

The mayor spoke with Jeff Breland and he said that The Oaks at Taylor Farms is more than one year away and he would like to be invited to the next Planning and Zoning Meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor McQueen introduced Ordinance #16-16-08 "Commercial Renovation Permits". The mayor called for a motion to introduce, motion made by Alderman Bennett, seconded by Alderman Walsh.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen called for a motion to introduce Ordinance #207-12-16 "Building Permits" which will replace Ordinance #207-A. Motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman Bennett.

**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen called for a motion to introduce Ordinance #01-03-A "Mobile Homes/Trailers". Motion made by Alderman Walsh, seconded by Alderman Phillips.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen called for a motion to introduce Ordinance #174-A "Sewer and Water Ordinance". The mayor explained the State of LA Safe Drinking Water Fee increase. Motion made by Alderman Walsh and seconded by Alderman Bennett.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Mayor McQueen called for a motion to introduce Ordinance #17-17-01 "Schedule for Credit Card Fees". Motion made by Alderman Walsh and seconded by Alderman Cutrer.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

Alderman Phillips asked the council to please check their calendars to see if they could have a Special Meeting to discuss these Ordinances on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup> at 10am.

Mayor called for a motion to have St. Tammany Farmers as the town's official journal. Motion made by Alderman Walsh and seconded by Alderman Bennett.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

#### **COMMENTS & REPORTS:**

Alderman Bennett announced and reminded everyone about the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Run the River 5k. She also gave an update on the Honey Island Swamp Festival for June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Alderman Bennett asked Chief Jennings about accounting procedures along with Credit Card procedures for the police department. Chief said that the police department doesn't have a credit card policy in place and that he also doesn't think its fair that he should have to sign out the credit card for purchases. The Chief explained his reasons for doing what he does for the police department, for more details listen to the CD. Alderman Bennett expressed her concerns about the chief's spending and lack of following the policies; she is concerned that any issues will fall back on the mayor and the clerk.

Alderman Walsh asked that the chief, the mayor and the attorney sit down to discuss the police department spending and the policies that are in place. She wants them to get back with the council on any decision made or changes to be made to policies. Mayor McQueen stated that they had been working with the chief on the policies and that he is only asking the chief to do what the legislative auditor and the town ordinances say or suggest.

Attorney Mathison explained to the council that the Credit Card does not belong to the police department but to the Town of Pearl River and the mayor has the right to put policies in place to regulate the use of that credit card. He also said that he shares Alderman Bennett's concerns about some of the purchasing procedures that the town has implemented and are not being followed by the police department. He would like to meet with the mayor and the chief to come up with a purchasing protocol for the police department. Alderman Walsh asked that if there is a development after the meeting to please bring it to the Work Shop on Monday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. There was further discussion on this matter, to hear more please obtain a CD from Town Hall.

Alderman Bennett announced a benefit for Dana Bourgeois at the Honey Island Fish House; all of the proceeds go to Dana. There is also an upcoming benefit at Sonic in Pearl River.

Alderman Cutrer discussed the Pearl River Park and the Facebook page. She asked the mayor for his blessing and permission to keep the Park page that she is Administrator of. Mayor McQueen stated that he was told that this page was under Ms. Gauley's name, he also stated that because the town already had its own official Facebook page that includes all of the information and updates on the park he asked the town clerk to ask Ms. Gauley to please remove and shut down the page. He stated that Ms. Gauley was not running the page anymore and had no problem shutting it down. The mayor said that he is tempted to take down the Town Page because of the issues, he stated that he approves what goes on the town page and only he can say what is posted.

Alderman Cutrer said that she thinks her park page is great because so many people from Picayune, New Orleans and all over look for parks and her page is there for them. Alderman Bennett said that all of those out of towners are the ones who don't respect our park and trash it on the weekends. She also said that she as an Alderman didn't even know that the page existed and most of the town didn't know it existed. This page is putting the town up for a law suit. Alderman Walsh said that she thinks the page shouldn't be removed. Colleen Seeley commented and quoted Facebook Official Rules. Sierra Holloway commented about the Park & Pearl River Park FB page. To get details, CD available at Town Hall.

Attorney Mathison announced that we follow Town laws, not Facebook laws and when Alderman Cutrer became associated with the Park page she was a private citizen but now that she is an official of the Town of Pearl River, her involvement with that page needs to end. She should not be an administrator on that page from now on. He also said that the Pearl River Playground page needs to announce that they are not an official Pearl River page.

Alderman Cutrer gave an update on the Keep America Beautiful Program and the training/meeting that was held on Saturday. Meetings will be the last Monday of each month in the conference room. Alderman Bennett asked about the cost of the affiliation which Alderman Cutrer stated was \$1,000 for the first year and \$50 annually after that. Alderman Bennett stated that the Pearl River businesses give donations for our beautification program and the money used for the training should have been used for the flower beds. The aldermen hope that they can work together on all of the beautification programs.

Alderman Walsh thanked the citizens that decorated during Christmas.

#### **CHIEF OF POLICE:**

Chief Jennings talked about improvements that were made in 2016. He talked about citations and arrests. He stated that they also worked with the DEA on a case where a pharmacy was robbed. The police department had two officers go to the hospital for on the job injuries. He thanked all of the police officers for helping to keep the town safe. He asked that anyone who had questions to please come to the source. Chief announced how safe Saw Mill Creek is, that they are patrolling it often. He also talked about the increase in the budget and how that money is being spent; he said that the police department is now self-sufficient and has more equipment than ever before. Chief said that anyone who wanted to report a problem with an officer should come in or call, it will be kept confidential.

Chief Jennings announced that the police department had approximately 4,600 traffic stops in 2016 with only about 1,500 citations being issued with only about 100 of those being from the 70452 zip code.

Addendum added on February 21, 2017 by Alderman Bennett; actual numbers were quoted incorrectly by Chief Jennings, there were 2795 citations issued in 2016 with 398 of those being for the 70452 zip code.

Alderman Bennett announced that in the past sixteen school days her bus arms had been run by thirty one cars. She stated that the police department should be community policing and not on the interstate giving tickets. Chief said that bus drivers can also get the license plate numbers of offenders.

#### **MAYOR:**

Mayor McQueen told the council that the Town owes Global Disaster Recovery approximately \$58,000 for the work done in November and December 2016. He will need to get with the council to amend the budget for that payment.

#### **PARISH COUNCIL:**

None

#### **RECREATION DISTRICT #5:**

None

**FIRE DISTRICT 11:**

None

**PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:**

Ms. Lola passed out the January meeting minutes to the council and the mayor. She indicated that they discussed the annexation fees and suggested that fees go from \$25.00 to \$50.00. The ordinance will have to be amended. Alderman Walsh suggested that the town register with the Clerk of Courts Office and share the password with the Alderman and Planning & Zoning. The cost would be \$50.00 access fee, \$50.00 per month and .35 per page to print documents. The LMA convention was also discussed; Ms. Lola would like to send the Planning Commission to some of the conventions that included courses that would help them.

**SCHOOL BOARD:**

Ms. Seeley spoke about Creekside Jr. High School improvements and expansions to the parking area. She also spoke about the construction at Pearl River High School. To hear more, obtain CD from Town Hall.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Pamela King – Raises or lack of, for Chief from December 2016 meeting  
Jay Wylie – Disappointed with town meetings & aldermen, gave praise to the Mayor  
Crystal Bennett – Praised Alderman Bennett's efforts with transparency  
Ronnie Marshall – Expressed outrage over PR police department and citations  
Gene Montz – Flyer handed out in Sawmill Creek, praised PRPD  
Sam Marshall – Police Officers parking in emergency lanes with no lights  
To get details, CD available at Town Hall.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The mayor asked for a motion to go into executive session; Motion was made by Alderman Walsh and seconded by Alderman McGregor. Executive Session began at 9:32p.m.

Alderman Bennett made the motion to authorize Attorney Mathison to pursue the Adams case as discussed in the confines of the Executive Session, seconded by Alderman Phillips.  
**All in Favor. So Moved.**

MEETING ADJOURNED  
AT 10:00 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 17<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JANUARY 2017.

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Carla Benelli, Town Clerk

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Honorable Clarence McQueen, Mayor