

Town of Lockport
Lockport, Louisiana

Minutes of Special Meeting October 4, 2011

The Mayor and Council met in special session on Tuesday, October 4, 2011, at 7:00 P.M., at the Lockport Town Hall Complex.

A. Call to Order, B. Opening Prayer, C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Richard Champagne called the meeting to order. The opening prayer was offered by Town Clerk Gerard Leonard, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Champagne.

D. Roll Call

The roll was called with the following present: Mayor Richard Champagne, Councilmen Paul Champagne, Rodney Hartman, Craig Rogers, and Weldon Triche. Absent: Donovan Barker. Also present were Town Attorney Mitch Theriot and Police Chief Warren Vedros.

E. Discuss and Consider Subdividing the Property located at 411 and 415 Seventh Street in Lockport

Mayor Champagne asked Mr. Lawrence Cabirac to explain his plans for the property. Mr. Cabirac introduced himself to everyone in attendance. He explained that he purchased the property with the intention to build three separate homes with the purpose of renting the homes out, but learned due to the 3500 sq ft per lot requirement. When he applied for a permit, he learned that he could only build two homes, but was not told he needed to subdivide the property. Mr. Cabirac made it clear that he would not do anything to lower the property value in Lockport, because he would not want his name associated with anything like that. Mr. Cabirac plans on renting one of the homes to an employee of his and the other to a company for executive housing.

Citizen Chris Williams, 310 Eighth Street, asked Mr. Cabirac if the properties were a short term or long term investment. Mr. Cabirac responded that he is not looking to flip the property; it is a long term investment.

Citizen Tommy Trant, 410 Seventh Street, asked if Mr. Cabirac was told the zoning is R-1 when he purchased the property. Mr. Cabirac replied he was not, but before he purchased the property, he asked the Town if he could build two homes on the property. He added that he would not have purchased the property if he could only build one home on it. Mr. Trant asked who issued the permit. Clerk Leonard answered that Ms. Elaine issued the permit. Mr. Trant asked who authorized Ms. Elaine to issue the permit. Mr. Leonard answered that she issues all permits. Mr. Trant asked if she needed to bring the issue to anyone's attention. Mr. Leonard responded that she will bring it to someone's attention if there is a problem or if she has a question. Mr. Trant then asked if Mr. Cabirac did not know he could not build the homes because he was told the property was commercial property. Mr. Leonard answered that Mr. Cabirac was not told the property is Commercial; Mr. Cabirac's plans qualifies for R-1. Mr. Trant asked the definition of R-1 and Mr. Leonard read the definition of R-1. Mr. Trant asked if this issue should have been brought before the Zoning Board before the permit was issued. Mr. Leonard replied that matters involving variances or zoning changes are brought before the Board, and this is neither. Mr. Williams asked what the purpose of tonight's meeting is, if this is neither. Councilman Hartman replied that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to give Mr. Cabirac authorization to subdivide the property.

Citizen Cynthia Trant expressed her concerns regarding future tenants/occupants of the home. Mrs. Trant added that she wished the Zoning Board would look further into things before permits are issued. Councilman Hartman added that Mr. Cabirac is investing a lot of money in this town, and if he did sell it in six months, whoever purchased the property would likewise be investing a lot of money in the Town. Mr. Williams said that he would like the Town to have higher standards and to hold the citizens to higher standards, including rental properties, apartments, and derelict properties. He would like the Town to pass a law requiring residents to keep their

properties to a certain standard or get fined. Mayor Champagne answered that there is a limit to what we (the Town) can regulate.

Citizen Hank Holland, 512 Barrilleaux Street, said he likes what Mr. Cabirac is doing, but he agrees with Mr. Williams that he would like to see the Town raise the standards. Councilman Rogers added that the Town has taken action against a lot of blighted properties. Some property owners have taken action. There is a lot of expense in condemning a property and the Town has to be careful with how much expenses it incurs, so as not to exceed the value of the property in question. Councilman Rogers added that there are certain private property rights that the Town has no control over. Councilman Triche stated that it is hard to develop an old town and it is a plus for the Town to have something new. Councilman Rogers said Mr. Cabirac needs to discuss sidelines and rear-lines of the property because they are out of zoning. Councilman Rogers stated the paperwork he has before him shows a 3' rear-line that should be 5' and the staircase is on the property line. Mr. Cabirac answered that the staircase has been reversed so it no longer impedes the property line and the property was surveyed a few days ago and the rear-line is 5.5'. Councilman Rogers added that the sideline measures from the overhang, not the sidewall, so he needs clarification. Councilman Rogers said if all the conditions (noted above) are met, nothing can stop Mr. Cabirac from building the homes on the properties.

Mr. Trant asked if any of the Councilmen had an investment in the property and the answer was no.

Citizen Ralph Sapia, 310 Fourth Street, introduced himself and stated that he comes to all the Town meetings on the third Tuesday of the month with only himself and maybe one other citizen in the audience. He urged the citizens in attendance to come to the Town meetings because it is good to have involvement. Mr. Sapia also noted he is Chairman of the Lafourche Parish Planning Commission and whenever anyone subdivides a piece of property, a meeting is held.

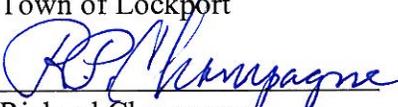
Councilman Rogers asked if the permit was issued for both homes or if anything needed to be done regarding the permit that was issued. Town Attorney Mitch Theriot answered that the current permit can be applied towards either structure, but Mr. Cabirac would need another permit because there are two lots with two developments, so, in total- two permits are needed. Mr. Theriot suggested that before the next Town meeting, Mr. Cabirac shows the survey results that indicate the set-offs, the side and the back, are in compliance with zoning requirements. Councilman Rogers submitted a copy of the legal description of the land that he acquired from the Tax Assessor's office to be put with the minutes from tonight's meeting. Mr. Cabirac will need to get a new property description of both properties recorded.

Councilman Triche moved and Councilman Hartman seconded a motion to grant Mr. Cabirac permission to subdivide the property located at 411 and 415 Seventh Street into two 60' x 60' lots. The motion carried unanimously.

F. Adjourn

The next scheduled town meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 18, 2011. There being no further business to come before the Council, a motion by Councilman Rogers to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Councilman Triche and carried unanimously at 7:52 P.M.


Gerard Leonard
Town Clerk

Town of Lockport

Richard Champagne
Mayor