



**SULPHUR PARKS AND RECREATION (SPAR)
Special Board of Commissioners Meeting
Held at the SPAR Recreation and Aquatic Center Multipurpose Room
933 W Parish Road, Sulphur, Louisiana 70663
Thursday, May 19, 2022, 5:30 pm**

The Board of Commissioners of Sulphur Parks and Recreation (SPAR) met at 5:30 pm on Thursday, May 19, 2022, in the multipurpose room at SPAR Recreation and Aquatic Center in Sulphur, Louisiana for the special called board meeting. The meeting was called to order and a roll call was taken. Board members present were Doug Como, Mitch Bowers, and David Couvillon. David Devall and Mike Boyette were absent.

The first agenda item was to open discussion and take action on special in-district accommodation due to the closure of Center Circle Pool for the 2022 season. Mr. Bowers opened the conversation by asking the first public commenter to share her thought. Ms. Suzanne Robinson addressed the board with the following comments:

"My name is Suzanne Robinson. My address is 307 Juniper Road. I'm here today to address the manner of, this my first time, now I won't talk as far as closing the center circle pool, which leaves us with the SPAR pool outside and the aquatic center. My issue as a single parent with children of sensory issues with the crowd and all that is at the waterpark. The park itself is three times as much to enter as it was as at Center Circle. Also at center circle, I do not swim, so it was free for me to go in and attend to my kid while he got in the water and played. As with others who have special needs that cannot get in the water, we have to pay the same \$8 to go in just to sit on the side to make sure that our children aren't unsupervised. Then there's other issues with the park but I know we're not here for that but with the language and all of that, but it's a teen center. These parents drop their kids off, they don't come in with their kids. It's just a free for all for the kids. The teens when the lifeguards do call the kids out because of their language and stuff, they turn around and there right back at it. Whereas at a family-oriented place I can look at a kid and be like hey language and they're like oh yes ma'am. Here you say hey language and they shoot you the finger you know. It's just not really fair that y'all take our pool at the opening of the season. All year my child has been looking forward to going to school every day and making sure that he's good in class and all so that he can attend the pool every day. Just to be told that hey, Mama can't afford to take you to the pool. I get that that's y'all's revenue and that with people coming in from outside of Sulphur. That's a lot of your revenue too. I feel like accommodations should be made for those of us who live here. If you pull it up, which they don't have it, but if they had like a scantron at Center Circle Pool you would see that every day my card was scanned every day. And it's just not fair to have to tell my kid you can't go to the park."

Mr. Bowers asked several follow up questions including what suggestions Ms. Robinson had for accommodations. She requested that Rec & Aquatic Center pool and Waterpark admissions receive a price reduction for in-district residents to provide the same affordability that existed at Center Circle.

Mr. Bowers welcomed the next speaker, Ms. Katie Pleasant. Her comments were as follows:

"Okay, so I would like to speak in support of in-district reduced rates for swimming at the SPAR indoor facility while Center Circle is under construction. In-district rates should match the cost of swimming at the Center Circle Pool. In addition, I would like to recommend the addition of resident only days each week at both the SPAR waterpark

and indoor swimming pool with reduced rates. While I understand that the board will have to consider revenue, I do believe that residents of Sulphur would greatly benefit from smaller crowds and allow us to feel that our tax dollars are going towards something that builds a strong community. I believe Sulphur only days would increase resident attendance to the park by Sulphur residents. This act will build community relationships and show residents that SPAR board is interested in the community at large. While I am obviously disappointed in the board's decision to close the Center Circle Pool for the 2022 season. I am hopeful that you will consider these options that will benefit the community for this summer season. Thank you”

Mr. Bowers thanked Ms. Pleasant for her comments. The next recognized speaker was Ms. Amanda Byrd. Her comments were as follows:

“Hello, good evening. My name is Amanda Berta, live at 313 South Stamford Street. I would like to thank the board for honoring us and allowing us to speak on my concerns. I first would like to say a prayer if that's okay. Will everybody bow their heads. Dear Heavenly Father, we want to thank you for gathering us here today. We want to thank you for our protection and our safety as we go forward. We ask that you open all our minds and all of our hearts as we listen to each other's various opinions, and that you allow us to all be very mature in our speaking in our words, and that you keep us safe, and you protect Mr. Couvillon's crew. In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Okay, so my stance has been very clear. Since day one. I am not a fan of closing the Center Circle. I understand that it's been done, and we are squashing it. So, we are done. Now we have to think about what we are going to do moving forward. And so, I am going to echo the sentiment of the ladies behind me when I say that the cost difference is just not reasonable whatsoever. Especially what Suzanne said, you if you have children, you can't drive past this park, and then explain to them Oh, no, you're going inside. And that's where you're going to play. And then what if you go on a Tuesday at 8:30 in the morning, and they've got water aerobics. And that section of the pool is going to be closed off. My daughter and I are members here, we do enjoy SPAR's facilities, I think what you guys do is great. I think that it is a beautiful thing to be able to butt heads sometimes with our leadership, because it hurts to grow. And so, I'm, you know, I'm thankful for that opportunity to speak today. That being said, we came last night to swim and most of the lanes in the Olympic sized pool were closed. And it was for good reason. They were practicing swimming, and they were looking fantastic. While they were doing it, it was great. But there was also just a couple of people there. Now we're talking about cramming, one community and we're all Sulphur, let me make that clear. I'm going to speak like we're sectors, because that's how we're divided. But we're not divided. We're all one community. I'm from the Frasch district, and I'm speaking out for the Maplewood district just out of support, because I really want to see good things happen there. Because we're all one town. But that being said, we're going to move all these people from here to here. And I'm from there originally. So, I can say this word, poche town, we got poche town people, we've got Frasch people, we've got some Carlyss people. And then we think about the out-of-town people that come because summer is coming, and the waterpark has been a fairly big attraction for Sulphur. So that being said, there's going to be a lot of people. And to be honest, what if everybody shows up at once? What is the fire marshal going to do? So I move to have reduced rates like the other ladies have already said. And I also think that if you take a loss this year on the waterpark, you take a loss, but I think it needs to be opened as well. So, it needs to be all inclusive, and extremely fair, reasonable price. And children have the access to choose if they want to be indoors or outdoors. And I also have a piece here that I'm just going to quickly go over and I'm more than happy to provide the link to anyone by email, if you would like to see what I'm about to read. But it's from Medical News Today. And it states how researchers state various proven facts as to why sunlight exposure makes people mentally and physically feel better. The sunlight specifically supports vitamin D production in the body, which supports healthy bones reducing inflammation, and it just supports the entire immune system overall. So we know sunlight is healthy for us. And so, to take the only outdoor waterpark that I'm aware of, in sulphur to take that and close it for a season, and then expect everybody just to stay indoors just really doesn't seem very fair. And then on top of that, let us pay three times the price, or you know, you pick the number. So, until you know, a reasonable price is found I will not be satisfied. I define as reasonable if you are going to include the waterpark as

well, maximum \$3, because we're talking about something that was \$1.75. And then gas is over \$4 a gallon. So with those valid points, I don't think it's unfair for me to say \$3, a Sulphur resident, and you know what, you can spin it any way you want. I'm good at marketing, you could say hey, we just want to say thank you Sulphur for being amazing. We're cutting prices down to \$3 a person and then make people completely forget about Center Circle until it's time to hopefully unveil next year a beautiful park. That's all inclusive, master plan. And I know that unfortunately it hurts to wait. And that's a painful thing. Nobody wants to wait for what they want. We live in a very instant world. I want I want to microwave this dinner. I want it in three minutes. I want this park built I want it done tomorrow. You know, another thing that I have a concern about. And I don't mean to lose faith in you guys. But that building that all of you have said is so dangerous. It's still standing two years later, why hasn't that been demolished yet? You know, that's, I know I'm getting off topic. And I don't mean to, but that's something that I wish I would have voiced at the last meeting that I attended. But that's all I have. I appreciate your time. Thank you, guys, very much."

Mr. Bowers recognized the final speaker, Mr. Randy Hebert. His comments were as follows:

"Randy Hebert. 706 Live Oak Street, Sulphur, Louisiana. I've been involved watching government work for extremely long time. Now the gentleman back there is really close at hand. And so, what I have noticed in government from this level, all the way up to President is we don't get the representation that we deserve. What am I talking about? People come out to you all and talk to you all about tearing the pool down. And there was a cost factor, that makes it a good argument. Because you're going to lose money if you do this this way. But I understand that the golf course loses about \$700,000 a year, according to your own budget. And money is what I follow, I look at the money. I don't need to come on here, talk to you all preach to y'all. All we want is good representation, people who respond to the public. And I am kind of glad that this last meeting y'all had, it went like it did. Because a very important person to me, got to experience how being the bottom of the totem pole works. And that's not the way it works. You guys are based underneath the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury. And when you look at their structure, their organization structure, these voters are number one. When you all act on this board, you should be acting on the behalf of the people who comes to you. Now, if we do not come to you, hey, you make your own mind. But when the public comes to you all, you need to be responsive to what the public wants. If you can, if you see some reason you cannot deliver, then you need to explain to them why you can't. And I understand it is always about of money, always about the money. So, you know, I feel like your kind of hidden financially, because I went to the website. I didn't see, I just look kind of a brief I didn't dig deep. But I didn't see anything about your budget, although I know there is one because someone told me about it. Do you know what the CAFR is? Comprehensive Annual Financial Report? That's to make sure you booked your balance. And I know what it is. There's an auditor that, that looks at your comprehensive annual financial report. And believe me, it's not a very comprehensive, comprehensible, it's very comprehensive, and it's hard to read. But I am pretty sure y'all we're underneath the Police Jury. And so, I think what the public is probably going to do is get energized and take this to the next level up, because they want to be heard. Whatever happens to the pool, I understand, good things are coming. I'm not totally in the dark about all that. I do talk to people in the know. And I am excited to see what's coming. But I really do think that Sulphur needs a free splashpad for the kids to go play on. And that is something they don't have right now. Is it two years too late one year too late? Right now, too late. It's hard to say. But just try to be more responsive to what the public wants. And if you cannot deliver, please tell us why. And don't lean about money because everything SPAR does loses money."

Following public input, the board entered discussion with staff to determine acceptable accommodations. After several exchanges, the board approved the following accommodations: Sulphur Residents are to receive \$3 dollar entry for the last 2 hours of every day at the Waterpark for the 2022 season; Resident spectators (non-participants) are to be granted entry at no charge to both the Waterpark and the Indoor pool; Indoor aquatic participants will be extended a resident only rate of \$2 (swimming only) through August 7, 2022; on a motion by Mr. Couvillon, seconded by Mr. Como, and carried.

On a motion by Mr. Couvillon, seconded by Mr. Como, and carried, Director was granted permission to enter into a professional services agreement with Duplantis Design Group to facilitate the demolition of Center Circle Pool House, Pool, and associated components.

On a motion by Mr. Como, seconded by Mr. Couvillon, and carried, Director was granted permission to Quote, Receive, and Award Contract for the demolition of Center Circle Pool House, Pool, and associated components.

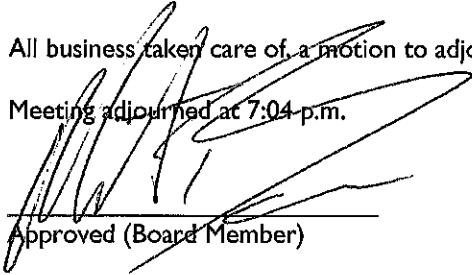
A motion was made by Mr. Couvillon, seconded by Mr. Como, and carried to table setting a meeting date for Board to review resumes received and select applicants for interview to fill the Executive Director position.

Notifications -

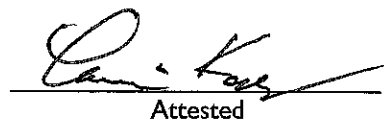
- Correspondence received from Duplantis Design Group of proposed schedules for the Master Plan work at Center Circle Park.

All business taken care of, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Couvillon, seconded by Mr. Como, and carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Approved (Board Member)



Attested