

**St. Tammany Parish Development District  
Board of Commissioners Meeting  
Minutes | August 17, 2023**

**Present:** Joan Coffman, Scott Day, Mimi G. Dossett, Mike Gambrell, Albert M. Hamauei, Ross Lagarde, Mike Tillman, Dr. William Wainwright

**Absent:** Bruce Javery, Bill Newton, Eric Schouest

**Staff:** Chris Masingill, Timothy Billiot, Kyle Buckley, Vincenzo Caronna, Sharon DeLong, Keith Espadron, Elizabeth Lee, Ashley Llewellyn, Kate Moore, Todd Whalley

**Counsel:** Mark Balkin | Hardy Carey Chautin & Balkin; Phil Sherman | Adams & Reese

**Guests:** Jake Nickens | SumIt Credits; Jason Lake for Project Link | Cushman & Wakefield; Dr. Tara Lopez | Dean, College of Business, SELU; Donna O’Daniels | St. Tammany Parish Tourist Commission; Suzanne Krieger & Glen Ledet | St. Tammany Levee Board; DaSean Spencer

President Wainwright called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Commissioners present established quorum.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No public comment on any agenda item.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

With no other modifications, the Consent Agenda, which consisted of the YTD Financial Statements; July BOC meeting minutes; and August Finance Committee minutes; was approved. *Mike Gambrell, seconded by Joan Coffman, motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION | GRADUATE FELLOW DASEAN SPENCER**

Masingill stated that STC was one of seven economic development organizations awarded the IEDC Equity Fellow Program this Spring, and we were fortunate to have been partnered with DaSean Spencer. Spencer, a Tulane graduate with a major in political science and the Chinese language. During the eight-week program, Spencer added value to the economic development team on several projects and provided support to strategic initiatives. Masingill read the Resolution of Appreciation into the record and presented Spencer with a framed copy. Dr. Wainwright expressed his gratitude for Spencer’s work with the organization.

**PRELIMINARY RESOLUTION | PROJECT LINK**

Masingill provided background and general information regarding Project Link and its official request for an economic development PILOT. This is a major, multi-national advanced manufacturing project. The Finance Committee provided a recommendation for approval of the preliminary resolution for a PILOT with an eighty percent abatement for 10 years, based on estimated capital investment and new jobs created. Masingill noted the PILOT is competitive with other state programs nationally and provides both accountability and predictability as the company completes their due diligence period. Jake Nickens described Project Link as a manufacturing company considering the construction of a 350,000 square foot facility that will serve as an anchor to the Gulf South Commerce Park. The \$121 million project will result in the creation of seventy new full-time jobs with compensation averaging over \$71,000 per job (well above the parish’s average), resulting in over \$5 million of total new annual payroll and a cost benefit ratio of 1.38. A full impact analysis was emailed to Commissioners. Nickens also relayed information on the potential ten- and fifteen-year impacts on property tax and sales tax revenues for the Parish. He, Masingill, and Jason Lake, representative for Project Link, fielded Commissioner’s questions about the project. *Albert Hamauei, seconded by Ross Lagarde, motioned to approve the preliminary resolution for the project. A roll call vote was taken. All Commissioners present voted in favor of the approval. Motion passed.*

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**PRESENTATIONS**

**Dr. Tara Lopez, Dean of the College of Business at Southeastern Louisiana University**

Dr. Wainwright introduced Dr. Lopez, who shared the vision of the new College of Business at SELU. Lopez shared her background and presented facts about the College of Business, which indicated a 25% enrollment of students from St. Tammany Parish. She gave a presentation including a look at competitive business colleges throughout the broader southeastern region and laid the groundwork for stakeholder participation in a feasibility study. Wainwright stated to be competitive within the region, thought leaders were challenged to idealize a new college of business at SELU. With a target of acquiring \$150,000-\$200,000 for the study, he indicated pledges for \$150,000 had been received. Masingill noted STC's ongoing work with the Small Business Development Center at SELU and anticipation of future collaboration with the College of Business

**Donna O'Daniels, St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Conventions Commission**

O'Daniels shared a presentation entitled "Visit the Northshore, Louisiana's Easy Escape" in which she detailed the organization's new brand and its economic impact. Their mission is to market and promote St. Tammany Parish as a highly desirable destination for visitors and to increase the economic impact of tourism on the area. She detailed economic impacts including 11,500 tourism industry related jobs, 2.9 million visitors annually with \$1.03 billion in visitor spending, \$107 million in state and local tax collections, which saves each household in the parish \$1,228 per year in taxes. The new brand markets the Northshore as captivating, classy, forward-thinking, adventurous, and vibrant community through the website, digital ads, social media, e-blasts, a visitor's guide, print ads, outdoor billboards, and marketing to special interest groups, such as sports organizations, weddings, and family reunions.

**Suzanne Krieger & Glen Ledet, St. Tammany Levee Board**

Krieger and Ledet outlined the need for a feasibility study on coastal protection and restoration in St. Tammany Parish. The goal of the feasibility study is to reduce the severity of flood damage and risk to public health and safety, caused by heavy rainfall, riverine flooding, tropical storms, and hurricanes.

Providing risk reduction for the Northshore is a key component of the 2023 Coastal Master Plan. To date, approximately \$55.5M of state and local funding has been committed to Flood Risk Reduction efforts in St. Tammany Parish. The 2023 Coastal Master Plan includes the Slidell Levee project, which is related to USACE's St. Tammany Parish Feasibility Study Tentatively Selected Plan. Such efforts have the potential to further reduce risk for over 2,100 homes.

Krieger requested the District Board or CEO provide a letter of support for the Authorization of the St. Tammany Parish, LA Feasibility Study during the next Water Resources Development Act.

**OLD BUSINESS – None**

**EXECUTIVE UPDATE**

**Administrative & Operational**

Masingill introduced our newest hire Timothy Billiot, Economic Development Specialist for Marketing, Research, and Strategic Initiatives.

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The staff in-service day is slated for Friday, September 8, 2023, at The Venue in Olde Towne Slidell.

**Strategic Initiatives**

Masingill shared that St. Tammany Corporation took home our first ever Top Performer in the American South for Communications Award from the SEDC Annual Conference; STartUP Northshore's website, [www.startupnorthshore.com](http://www.startupnorthshore.com), won Best in Class for the Large Population Division. Masingill congratulated Vincenzo Caronna, Entrepreneur in Residence and Program Manager for his work in building the award-winning website platform.

He announced the NSpire Slam Pitch Competition slated for November 3, 2023. This regional competition will be held at the Columbia Theatre in Hammond and has a \$50,000 prize value. Masingill emphasized the importance of our partnership with SELU, the Tangipahoa Economic Development organization, and Washington Parish. He urged the group to share the information with contacts in these areas.

**Economic Development**

Significant progress has been made on Project Frozen Tiger, which is exploring a potential location in east St. Tammany Parish. The project has increased to a \$46.4 million Capex, and we are engaged with Louisiana Economic Development to further the project. Finance Committee members will consider terms for a preliminary PILOT approval in the coming weeks.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The financial audit is scheduled to begin in September.
- The next Board of Commissioners Meeting is scheduled for 3pm-5pm, Thursday, September 21, 2023, at our office on Koop Drive.

**ADJOURN**

*The meeting adjourned at 5:33 pm. on a motion by Scott Day, seconded by Mike Gambell. All were in favor. Motion passed.*

Minutes reviewed and submitted by the STC Staff.