

**St. John the Baptist Parish  
(EDC) Economic Development Committee**  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
December 12, 2016

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Present:**

Peggy Joseph  
Tomy Acosta  
Leroy Mitchell  
Robert Taylor  
Evin Stein  
Elizabeth Joseph

**Absent:**

Michelle Jenkins  
James Oubre, Jr.

**Staff:**

Natalie Robottom  
LaVerne Toombs  
Jerry W. Jones Jr.  
Denise Burrell  
Jean Stewart  
Annette Duhe

**Guest:**

Wayne Aucoin  
Jo Banner  
Joy Banner  
Bruno Burrell, Jr.  
Kimmie Carlos  
Steven Fraker  
Lois Frank  
Penelope Freeman  
Lucien Gauff, III  
Kevin George  
Patrick Gordon  
Gregory Joseph

Phyllis Madere  
Amanda Martin  
Chassity McComack  
Geraldine Millet  
Aspen Murphy  
Rodney B. Nicholas  
Linda Prudhomme  
Megan Ryburn  
Larry Snyder  
Mala Taylor  
Angela Walker

- I. Call to Order**
  - Chairwoman Peggy Joseph called meeting to order at 12:15 p.m.
- II. Roll Call**
  - Six (6) Committee members were present. Quorum was met.
- III. Opening Prayer/ Pledge of Allegiance**
  - Larry Snyder led the opening prayer.
  - Robert Taylor led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Public Comment (3 minutes)**
  - Parish President Natalie Robottom Address
- V. Adoption of Minutes**
  - Motion from Tomy Acosta and seconded by Robert Taylor to adopt the minutes of the November 7, 2016 EDC Monthly Meeting with no changes or corrections.
- VI. Director's Report – Monthly EDC Update**
  - Express thanks and gratitude to Parish President Robottom and the EDC Committee.
  - Recap of 2016
- VII. Old Business**
  - Buxton and TIFF Recap
- VIII. New Business**
  - State of Louisiana and District 57 – State Representative Randal L. Gaines - Address
- IX. Community Partner(s) Report**
  - Entergy Louisiana – Kerry Jones (Absent)
  - Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) – Wayne Aucoin
    - Graduated the 6<sup>th</sup> Fast Trac class on November 28, 2017
    - Next class will start the second week of March - March 9<sup>th</sup>
    - Upcoming meeting with Jerry Jones to discuss a more aggressive training program for the parish
    - 60% of our last Fast Trac students/business owners were recommended by other graduates of Fast Trac (confirming that the program works)
    - Currently, there is (5) five prospective persons interested in joining the program in March.

- Port of South Louisiana – Linda Prudhomme
  - At the Port Terminal, there is ongoing Capital Improvements at \$56million this year; much of the funding has come through state legislature through the capital outlay projects
  - In the last 30days, the Port has received 6 projects with no inquiries...Industrial prospects increased heavily after Thanksgiving. The projects range from 300 million to a billion dollars...2017 outlook looks really good.
  - Invitation to obtain information offered to anyone interested in learning more about the Port of South Louisiana
- River Parishes Tourist Commission – Jo Banner
  - Tourism
    1. Jo Banner, Megan Rayburn (co-worker), Joy Banner (Whitney Plantation) represented our area at the World Travel Market in London – received a lot of interest internationally and domestically (very popular) and are following up with the leads.
    2. Participated in a social media type press trip throughout three different parishes with journalists. It was very popular and worked out well. Trended on Twitter for ½ an hour and were the #2 and #3 tweets trending during that time that we made it in the top #10 list. Earned media for that one hour was \$15,000. Hope to continue in the future to boost visibility on social media.
  - St. John Community Center – Soundstage
    1. (2) two inquiries from production companies. More productions are looking back to Louisiana. There has been an interest of ABC shooting a pilot. Also, Sony and Fox has showed interest.
    2. Queen Sugar is again looking in the area to start their new season.
    3. Queen Sugar was a lot of dollars for local businesses. They were spending 1 million per episode. A great reason why it is important to get episodes filming in the parish.
    4. Private events: bookings have been for birthday parties, wedding reception, Mardi Gras balls, parish meetings and events.
- River Region Chamber of Commerce (RRCC) – Chassity McComack
  - Thank you for being supportive throughout the year.
  - The River Region Chamber of Commerce was named “2016 Chamber of the Year”.
  - December 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Chamber Board went to its Annual Board Retreat – one of the top priorities is to continue to develop programs that will enhance collaborative workforce development for the region.
  - December 7<sup>th</sup>, held a Workforce Development Summit with almost 70 persons in attendance all walks of business. 3 questions were asked to give one word answers.
    1. How can we promote more local hiring?
    2. How can we make sure our businesses hire more local?
    3. How can we ensure our local people have the skills they need to ensure livelihood.
      - LaVerne Toombs added the government Community would like to work closer in 2017; Chassity: possible forums to address the parish’s concerns.
- South Central Louisiana Technical College (SCL) – Penny Freeman
  - New Classes is open to begin January 17<sup>th</sup> to serve another 800 students
  - Thanks to Planning and Zoning new building is underway to provide Welding Program.
  - Industrial Electrical Program in progress
  - ESJ Dual Enrollment in progress
- South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) – Patrick Gordon
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- St. John Business Association – Steven Fraker / Phyllis Madere
  - 14 applicant approved at \$9000
  - EDA Grant assisted SCL Technical College – represented 7district parish reviewing and inspecting business plans in St. John Parish.
  - December 14<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party – 6-8pm

- St. John the Baptist Parish School Board – Kevin George
  - ¼ cent sales tax approved
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Consecutive year as a B School System
  - Lake Ponchartrain Elementary scheduled to open in January 2018
  - ESJE will be completed in August 2018
- Workforce Development Board – Tommy Scott (Absent)

**X. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Elizabeth Joseph and seconded by Tomy Acosta. Meeting was adjourned at 1:30p.m.