

Mr. Gibbs: First item on the agenda is PZR-2015-17 requested by Joshua & Mariangelis Billings for a change in zoning classification from R-1AM to R-1M at 316 Canal Street, Luling, (Lot BY-1), Council District 7. Ms. Stein.

Ms. Stein: Thank you Mr. Chair. This case was before you 2 months ago. The applicants requested to table it because of a low turnout from the Commissioners, the second month they requested for it to remain on the table so it does have to be acted upon tonight. I just want to reiterate that the work here is a second recommendation to the parish council so if the vote is not unanimous it does not mean that the application stops, it means it goes forward to the parish council with a recommendation for denial. The Department went over our technical review of the request which we can repeat if you'd like, please let me know, or we can state that we didn't do much further work except to connect the applicant to the Department of Wastewater to talk about sewer installation and I did talk to the Wastewater Department today and they said that conversation is under way and did not raise any concerns. The applicant did some work on turn radius in the area and that is in your agenda on pages 10 and 11. Just let me know if you would like us to review our recommendation which was for denial on the basis that the request doesn't comply with the Future Land Use Map and would constitute a spot zone.

Mr. Gibbs: So the changes or upgrades that they've done since then would not have any bearing on the decision?

Ms. Stein: No.

Mr. Gibbs: Ok. Commission members would you like her to read this again or are we all up to speed on it? Is the applicant here? This is a public hearing for PZR-2015-17 is there anyone in the audience that would care to speak in favor or against?

Good Evening, I'm Joshua Billings at 316 Canal St. in Luling. I've prepared a brief statement to be clear and concise on the facts of what we are trying to do and why I think it's a good project for the area. I'll read through this as quickly as possible and if you have any questions or concerns after we can discuss and hopefully this clears up any questions that you might have. So we bought this property solely for the purpose of making an RV Park. Before we bought the property we went to Planning & Zoning to discuss our intentions just to get an idea about how everyone felt about it. We all seemed to agree that the area was in need of investors and economic stimulus. I knew the ultimate decision would depend on a vote, but just from our conversations at Planning & Zoning we didn't foresee any opposition from within Planning & Zoning. We also spoke to some of the neighbors, there are a couple of residential properties that are adjacent to mine, the neighbors didn't have a problem with the plan. So we didn't foresee a whole lot of opposition. We submitted our application and preliminary plan, we were told that we would be contacted if there were any questions or concerns. We didn't hear anything for a month or 2 months up until the hearing and that day we heard that Planning & Zoning was recommending denial. So based on the report, it seems that I would have to meet one of the 3 criteria for zoning. I will basically focus on the second test which is to see if the property is appropriate for the surrounding zoning classification. Basically the report states that we should not qualify for a rezoning because an RV Park is not compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood. First of all, I would like to state that many RV Parks in the parish are situated amongst residential neighborhoods and with proper management they can be very residential friendly. The majority of the people staying in these parks work at the plants and refineries working 7 days a week, 12 hours a day, some work days, some work nights. So the majority of them just want a safe place to park their RV while working in town. I believe my property is an ideal location and has an ideal layout for an RV Park. My property is surrounded by Mr. Gassen's wooded property which you can see on the map to the west side of the property, a cemetery to the rear of the property, a string of rental trailers along the east of the property and there is a residential property to the front corner and there's a church across the street. The majority of Canal Street is commercial property. There is a church across the street as stated, a car wash and body shop, a pool chemical company and Mr. Jerry Segura's metal building that contains multiple small businesses. With only 101 ft. of Canal Street frontage, my property will perfectly accommodate a driveway with parking for a 40 ft. RV and 25 ft. of

green space behind the RV. Which you can tell the front of the property is very narrow. It can accommodate the RV's, it would be too narrow to make a residential street and housing in that area without buying one of the properties next to mine and combining the properties. Our plan incorporates a lot of the natural features we love about it including oak trees and fruit trees. We plan to have designated green space bordering the property on the west side, 25 ft. x 700 ft. on Mr. Gassen side, the wooded area, would be designated green area as well as 80 ft. x 500 ft. along the rental trailers. Basically that whole squared off property, you can see is all trees and it will be designated green space. Our goal is to create a serene park with a natural ambience that our guest will thoroughly enjoy. Bamboo and pampas grass is already planted in some places along the property line and we would like to also have a 6-8 ft. wooden fence to give our guest a sense of security and privacy. From what I've read in the Paul Maillard Revitalization Plan it seems like Planning & Zoning have plans for my property which Ms. Marny stated it's part of their future map. Having been made aware of this prior to buying the property, I probably would not be here challenging that today just because I couldn't afford to take the risk and I thought that it was low risk at the time I made the decision. I agree the area needs revitalization and there are many aspects of the current plan that I would love to see realized. However, even the greatest plan will fail without adequate means to bring it to fruition. Unfortunately the Paul Maillard area has been suffering and seems to be in a steady decline over the last several years. I will state that I grew up in the area and am very familiar with the Paul Maillard area. Many of the businesses that were in the area 10 years ago have shut their doors including Winn Dixie, Capital One, the auto body shop near the corner of Canal Street as well as Mr. Jerry's Gold Gallery to name a few. The current revitalization plan calls for 8 homes per acre on my property. First of all, I haven't received any offers to buy my property unless the parish plans on taking the land from me, I don't see how that's going to happen. The previous owner of my property, Mr. Jerry Segura, had been trying to sell the property since May of 2012. He finally reduced the asking price by 20% in January and the property still sat on the market for 3 months before he received my offer. If someone else was interested in developing it, they had plenty of opportunity to buy it. My wife and I purchased this property and we would like to use it efficiently in a neighbor friendly way that would benefit many people. We took a big risk investing in this particular area and will have to invest even more to salvage this park. Quite frankly without this approval, we'll be stuck with a large mortgage payment for a property that apparently no one wants and over 4.5 acres of yard to maintain. Approving this plan would not only be a turning point for this area but for my family as well. I'd like to point out the key similarities and differences between the current revitalization plan and my plan. For the revitalization plan, 8 homes per acre would equate to 37 homes on my property. These homes can be, it states in the plan, that they can be manufactured homes which could in turn potentially be rental trailers similar to what is on Paul Frederick today. The parish would be responsible for enforcing ordinance violations and law enforcement for 37 individual homes. Neighboring properties would have to be purchased and combined with mine to make a subdivision. There is currently no developer willing to invest in this plan. My plan includes my existing home plus 38 RV sites for travelling plant workers which would be strictly managed by my wife and me personally. My wife and I are here today willing to invest everything that we have into this plan and are confident that the outcome will disappoint no one. I was raised by my grandparents in their RV Park in Paradis. We know the business and we know that there is a need for quality RV Parks in the area. We have personally witnessed workers being forced to rent RV sites outside of the parish either because of all of the parks in the area being full or because they couldn't find a park in the area that they would be comfortable staying in. We want to create a park that will show our guest how great this area can be and keep them looking forward to coming back to Luling. The plants and refineries are significant sources of income for this parish and many of their projects require bringing in workers for time periods averaging in range from 6 months to 2 years. It is my understanding that the report does not weigh the financial benefits of this development which I believe is a major factor that should be considered. Just to give an idea, according to simplyhire.com, the average turn around worker in the area earns \$110,000 per year. With approximately 40 RV's in our park all I see is direct injection of economic stimulus into an area that desperately needs it. I don't see demand for RV sites diminishing any time soon. In fact in July, Monsanto announced preliminary plans for a potential \$1 billion plus expansion project at its Luling Plant that would take 3-5 years. A final

investment decision is expected by them in early 2016. The project would create 95 direct jobs and Monsanto estimates the development of the project would generate 1000 construction jobs at peak building activity. Also a Chinese company recently purchased 13 river front acres in St. James Parish and proposed a \$1.85 billion methynol complex that is expected to create 400 jobs over the next 6 years. I hope you see this for the tremendous opportunity that it is and thank you for your time.

Mr. Gibbs: Mr. Billings I appreciate you taking the time to do that, it's well written, well spoken. I'm all about entrepreneurship, I'm all about expansion, revenues to the parish. I think the timing, unfortunately right now is not a good one for you because there is a focal attention on the revitalization plan on Paul Maillard. There is so much that they want to do to clean that up. What you're doing is not going to diminish it by any means, but it's in an area that I know that many people are looking at to revitalize. With everything, timing is of the essence, so it's a very difficult situation.

Mr. Billings: I'm not the average developer coming in town. I do have sentimental as well as physical ties to the area. Also since I do have those sentimental ties I would like to see the area revitalized and I believe this project could be a stepping stone. Once income is coming in, I can definitely help revitalize the area when blighted properties come available, I would have no problem committing capital towards the revitalization plan and helping the parish in that way. There is actually one property that I already have a formal agreement on if this RV Park is approved. It's one of the blighted properties adjacent to mine, if this plan is approved then I will be purchasing this property and doing what I can to revitalize.

Mr. Gibbs: Mr. Billings like I said, I'm in a difficult situation right now. I hear what you are saying. I like what I'm hearing but I also know what's coming down the line and it's in the area where they are focusing so much attention. Again, well written, well spoken, I appreciate everything you said and I'm taking it into consideration.

Mr. Billings: Thank you.

Mr. Gibbs: Does the Commission have any other questions?

Mr. Frangella: I have one or a couple really. One is what is the limit of people per site? I work in a plant and I know how turnarounds are and they cram as many people into them and they really don't spend a whole lot of money. Most of them come out of Texas and other areas and they are here to take the money home with them. So I was just wondering how many adult people would be at each site during this time or if there would be a limit that you were going to place on them.

Mr. Billings: At my grandparent's park we don't generally have a limit, usually it's just one person. It's very rare that there will be more than one person.

Mr. Frangella: One person per trailer?

Mr. Billings: Yes.

Mr. Gibbs: Thank you Mr. Billings. State your name and address for the record.

My name is Elaine Billings, 136 Billings Lane, Paradis. Yes we own an RV Park and I've owned it for several years. Most of the times it's a man by himself, sometimes you have a wife that comes along, but that is very seldom that there is more than 2 people in a trailer. People are looking for a safe place, they love where I at and they know that I'm going to look out for them and that's what they need. Because they are more than willing to come and work but they don't want everything they got taken away. I recommend that he put this in and I wish that yall would vote on it because we need it.

Mr. Gibbs: Thank you Ms. Billings. This is a public hearing for PZR-2015-17 is there anyone in the audience to speak for or against? Any questions? Cast your vote.

YEAS: Gibbs, Loupe

NAYS: Frangella, Galliano

ABSENT: Pierre, Booth

Mr. Gibbs: Mr. Billings unfortunately that did not pass, however, it's just our recommendation. It does go in front of the parish council on September 21<sup>st</sup>. I wish you good luck and maybe you can do the same presentation in front of them and we'll see what happens.