

Parish President (Vetoed Ord. v. Res. 02); P+Z (Dept of); Bingo; z-z - Off-Track Wagering

2007-0360
RE: 2007-0314, 0376, 0373, 0307



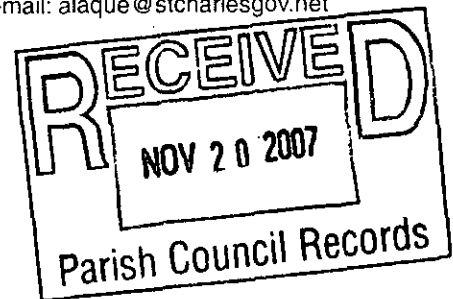
ST. CHARLES PARISH

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

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ALBERT D. LAQUE
PARISH PRESIDENT

November 9, 2007



Councilman April Black
Chairman
St. Charles Parish Council
P.O. Box 302
Hahnville, LA 70057

Dear Chairman Black:

On Monday, November 5, 2007, the St. Charles Parish Council adopted Ordinance No. 07-11-4. This Ordinance, as adopted by the Council, attempts to prohibit the use of "electronic video bingo machines" in St. Charles Parish. After much consideration, and for the reasons hereafter stated, I have decided to exercise the veto authority given to me as Parish President by Article IV Section C of the St. Charles Parish Home Rule Charter. My reasons for this action follow.

In the 1980's, St. Charles Parish adopted regulations and code provisions which govern the permitting and operation of charitable gaming. Pursuant to these, one such charitable gaming venue has located and operated in our Parish for several years. It has been, and will continue to be, a very important member of our corporate community. Its operation benefits several local charities, and hopefully will continue to do so for years to come.

In the spring of this year, a second entity commenced the process of opening a charitable gaming venue in our Parish. It identified and acquired appropriately zoned property; it commenced the permitting process, and in fact, obtained all permits required by all levels of government; it outfitted its building with costly improvements and equipment; and it recently opened its doors to the public. Its representative stated at Monday's Council meeting that it made a substantial business commitment and financial investment here in St. Charles Parish.

Much of the discussion at the Council meeting focused on this business' location. Specifically, many citizens voiced concern about this business being located in or near their neighborhood. I share their concern. However, the fact of the matter is that this business is located in a C-2 zoning district that has been in place for many years. The C-2 zoning district is an appropriate one for this business. Fortunately, our Zoning Code has now been amended to require special use permits for video bingo parlors, and these permits are only issued by council


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action after a duly advertised public hearing and review by the Planning and Zoning Commission. This new regulation, placed in effect only last month, will provide the public with input on where this type of business locates in our Parish.

If this Ordinance is allowed to stand, this business, which opened only after it complied with every rule, law and regulation in place when it chose to locate here, could be forced to close its doors. This would send the absolute wrong message to the existing businesses in our community, as well as to the ones we hope to bring to our community in the future. My administration has been about bringing new businesses to St. Charles Parish, and this after-the-fact regulation flies in the face of the positive message we have sent to the business community for nearly eight years now.

For these reasons I have vetoed Ordinance No. 07-11-04, and I respectfully request that you sustain it.

Sincerely,


Albert D. Laque
Parish President