

police jury will rule on proposal nov. 16

Drainage ordinance draft gets green light to move forward

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The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury's Parishwide Drainage Liaison Committee approved on Monday a draft to change the code of ordinances related to drainage, even though some residents asked for more time to work out the details.

The committee's decision sends it to the full Police Jury for final approval during the panel's meeting at 5:30 p.m. Thursday. The parish Planning and Zoning Board will hear the proposal at 5:30 p.m. today and make a recommendation to the Police Jury.

The drainage committee was presented with the fourth revision of the draft ordinance. The first draft was published June 13. The nearly 200-page document deals with the chapter of the parish's code of ordinances related to drainage.

Allen Wainwright, parish public works director, said the newest draft had very few changes. The one real change put back an existing requirement that a 6-foot embankment surround a detention pond.

Several members of the group Alliance for Positive Growth Southwest Louisiana spoke on the draft. Bart Yakupzack, APG board member, said the draft leaves "too many unknowns."

"We feel the people of Calcasieu Parish would rather know the details of what is being passed before its being passed," he said.

Michael Hankins, who also sits on the APG board, brought up several concerns, including the "fee in lieu of detention" that the Police Jury would set. The tentative amount is 22 cents per square foot of impervious area. He said single-family homes should be exempt from paying the fee if the impervious area is less than 8,000 square feet.

Hankins said other parts of the draft could slow down development or raise the cost in ways that won't help control drainage. He also expressed concerns on how the money collected by the parish would be spent.

District 7 Police Juror Chris Landry said the money collected would be spent on drainage projects "without a doubt."

Ralph Lewing, an APG board member, said he believes the revised ordinance is needed, but isn't ready to be implemented.

"I cannot say that I agree 100 percent with this ordinance in the state that it is now," he said. "I think there's still some fine points that need to be worked out."

Wainwright said the proposed parish budget for 2018 calls for \$17 million in capital improvement projects. They range from larger, regional watershed projects, to smaller street-level projects. Wainwright

said the projects could range in cost from \$100,000 to \$500,000 and are intended to solve drainage issues caused by inadequate design.

Tim Flavin, vice president and treasurer for APG, said the parish should spend more than \$17 million on capital improvements.

“We are so far behind on what we need to be doing on infrastructure,” he said.

District 13 Police Juror Francis Andrepont said the draft ordinance may have flaws, but it needs to be passed so future development doesn’t create more drainage issues in the parish.

“At some point in time we have got to take a stand and move forward,” he said. “If some of the things that are adopted are not working ... I will be one of the first to step up to the plate and say that needs to be addressed.”

Wainwright said the scheduled drainage work orders have grown annually for several years. There were just over 14,000 work orders in 2012. He said there are more than 20,000 estimated work orders for this year.

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