

ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION COUNCIL SERIES NO: C-6775

COUNCIL SPONSOR: MR. FITZGERALD

PROVIDED BY: COUNCIL STAFF

RESOLUTION TO CONVENE AN INVESTIGATION AND REVIEW
INTO THE MANNER IN WHICH THE PROPOSED COVINGTON TRACE
RIDGE APARTMENTS DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN PROCESSED

WHEREAS, a meeting was hosted by President Mike Cooper last week at which Parish Councilman David Fitzgerald was notified of a project in his district identified as “Covington Trace Ridge Apartments” located at State Highway 21 at the entrance to the City of Covington;

WHEREAS, at no time prior to said meeting was any member of the Parish Council or its staff informed by President Cooper, or any member of his Administration, that permits had been requested, submitted and approved regarding said project;

WHEREAS, a letter was sent to the Council, dated October 3, 2022, from an outside firm stating that the St. Tammany Parish Government intended to utilize Community Development Block Grant funds for the “Covington Trace Ridge Apartments” project and provided a location map; no additional information was provided by the outside firm or the Administration since October;

WHEREAS, despite promises of transparency and accountability by the Administration this project has been processed behind closed doors since last year;

WHEREAS, the site location of the project calls into question many issues that must be appropriately addressed in a public hearing related to the existing traffic issues at the proposed site considering the numerous intersecting State Highways and serious history of traffic accidents which have injured many of our citizens;

WHEREAS, public review of environmental considerations must occur based upon the past usage of the property in question and the possible adverse effects on said area caused by the amount of fill required for construction and considering the past significant flooding of the intersection and surrounding properties, most recently in March of 2016;

WHEREAS, the Bogue Falaya Scenic River abuts the project location and the effects of constructing a multi-unit residential project on the preservation of that waterway must be reviewed;

WHEREAS, the zoning for the proposed project is HC-2 under which a permissible use is lodging of up to 100 units;

WHEREAS, the term “lodging” as used in the St. Tammany Parish Unified Development Code is not defined per se but references to said term clearly indicate an intent of transient housing;

WHEREAS, the term “lodging” is defined as “apartments, or sleeping quarters in a hotel, motel, inn, public lodging house, rooming house, or manufactured or mobile home which is tangible personal property, or in a tourist court, or in any place where sleeping accommodations are furnished to transient guests for rent, whether with or without meals”. See, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/lodging>;

WHEREAS, the construction of a 100 unit residential development is permanent housing and does not fall within the generally accepted legal definition of “lodging”; and

WHEREAS, be it resolved that the St. Tammany Parish Council calls for an Investigation and Review of the manner in which this project has been processed pursuant to Home Rule Charter Sec. 2-08.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the St. Tammany Parish Council convenes an investigation into the actions of parish government and the related conduct of any parish official, officer, employee, department, office or agency with regard to the processing of the proposed Covington Trace Ridge Apartments development considering the traffic, environmental and public health concerns along with the improper application of the current zoning on the property;

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, for the purpose of the investigation into the processing of the proposed Covington Trace Ridge Apartments development the Council may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and require the production of evidence in accordance with Home Rule Charter Sec. 2-08.

RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE, THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS FOLLOWS:

MOVED FOR ADOPTION BY:

SECONDED BY:

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED ADOPTED ON THE 18TH DAY OF MAY, 2023, AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERS BEING PRESENT AND VOTING.

JACOB "JAKE" A. AIREY, COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

KATRINA L. BUCKLEY, CLERK OF COUNCIL