

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS TAKEN OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN AT A SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2018 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE ARNAUDVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER, 271 GUIDROZ STREET, ARNAUDVILLE, LA 70512**

**RE:** Discuss Intergovernmental Agreement with St. Martin Parish Government (Blighted Property/Permits)—Mr. Chester Cedars

**Present:** Mayor, Kathy M. Richard

**Aldermen:** Annette Bramlett, Jamie Huval, Todd Meche, Louis Stelly, Jr., Suzanne Stelly

**Town Clerk:** Dolores R. Quebedeaux

**Town Attorney:** Katie Ryan (Absent)

**Town Engineer:** Kenny Boagni (Absent)

**Called to Order:** Mayor Richard

**Prayer:** Suzanne Stelly

**Pledge:** All

Mayor Richard turned the meeting over to Mr. Cedars. Mr. Cedars explained the importance of taking care of blighted properties. He explained that these properties cause fire hazards, drug havens, and etc. This is a state wide problem that affects everyone. Abandon properties cause's home owners to lose value of their property due to blighted property.

Mr. Cedars explained that St. Martin Parish has a program in place that helps located the owners of such properties. There are guide lines that have to be followed in order to clean up blighted properties. He also explained what adjudicated property meant, which is property up for sheriff sale due to unpaid property taxes.

The first thing that was done in St. Martin Parish was define nuisance property which includes blighted property, applies to properties where junk is stored. He stated that littering applies only to property with junk, the accumulation of junk materials, salvaged materials, unused cars, refrigerators on someone's own property. Littering is described as not keeping up your own property free and clear of debris. There is a statute in place that gives the Justice of the Peace the authority to issue citations for littering. Under state law local authority can give the Justices of the Peace that jurisdiction. This allows the Justice to criminalize the individual; if someone is hit in the pocket book their reaction is quicker. The Justices of Peace system not only has the authority to issue citations for littering, they can issue littering citations anywhere in the Parish and Municipalities as long as this problem is within the JP's ward.

The constable issues the citations and goes in front of the Justice of the Peace and the offender pays the fine. The fine is substantial because it includes the cost to remediate and the JP is given a certain percentage of all fines collected as well as the constables to encourage them to look for these properties, they are usually told where the properties are located. He feels this will encourage individuals to clean their properties.

By using the Justices of the Peace he feels this will help with the nuisance property.

St. Martin has appointed two attorneys to be Hearing Officers; the offender of the blighted property goes in front of the hearing officer not the council. This system expedites the procedure and omits the politics.

Mayor Richard asked for a motion to open the meeting to the public, Todd Meche moved to open the meeting to the public seconded by Jamie Huval, unanimously carried.

Perry Jones asked if people had the right to erect a fence around their trash and how does that work.

Mr. Cedars stated that there is a public safety issues in this case that is inherent with this such as rodents and etc. He stated that the fence does not resolve the problem.

Mayor Richard asked for a motion to close the meeting to the public, Todd Meche moved to close the meeting to the public seconded by Jamie Huval, unanimously carried.

Mayor Richard asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Town Meeting. Todd Meche and Jamie Huval moved to adjourn the Regular Town Meeting seconded by Suzanne Stelly.

**Attest**

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Dolores R. Quebedeaux, Town Clerk

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Kathy M. Richard, Mayor