



JAMES FRIDAY
MAYOR

STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/ TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON

LOUISIANA

PUBLIC HEARING

MINUTES

TOWN OF BENTON

MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025, 6:30 PM

The Town of Benton Council met in a regular session on the 14th day of July 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor James Friday called the Public Hearing to order. Stephanie Collier called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	PRESENT
Alderman Tiffany Manning	ABSENT
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT
Alderman Arshundae Perry	PRESENT
Alderman Terry Lawrence	ABSENT

Attorney Neil Erwin gave the invocation and Alderman Perry led the pledge. Others present were Stephanie Collier, Debbie Rios, Greg Redford, Officer Cesar Mora and members of the public.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Perry to approve the Public Hearing agenda. Mayor Friday called for public comments; there being none, the following votes were recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Alderman Manning, Alderman Lawrence

PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

ORDINANCE 604 of 2025:

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 20, SOLID WASTE, BY ADDING SECTION 2 ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR BULK ITEMS AND RELATED SERVICES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, Town of Benton, does hereby amend Chapter 20, to add section 2 to read as follows:

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context indicates a different meaning:

Section [: Definitions

Additional container means an additional container beyond the first container provided to each customer.

Authorized commercial establishments are any establishments that do not generate enough solid waste for a dumpster. Upon approval from the town, they may receive a container for solid waste collection service contracted by the town.

Bulk Items refer to stoves, refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, sofas, tables, and similar items with a weight or volume exceeding the limits allowed for containers. No other separately defined waste types will be considered bulk waste.

Preparation for collection means containers placed curbside on the evening before the designated collection day. For public safety, appliance doors must be removed prior to being placed curbside. Yard waste must be bagged and limbs stacked curbside.

Commercial establishment means any location within the town wherein a person or organization of any kind conducts or is engaged in any business or trade, whether such business or trade is for profit, nonprofit or charitable purposes, or wholesale stores, nursing homes, hospitals, apartments and apartment complexes, government housing projects, schools and churches.

Curbside means that area immediately adjacent to the edge of the thoroughfare, not to exceed four feet from the edge of the street or curb, bordering the front property line. Specifically excluded are alleyways, regardless of the property owner's definition of the front property line.

Excluded waste includes tires, hazardous waste, paint /paint cans, industrial, chemicals, and any material such as lumber, brick, plaster, broken concrete, gutters, roofing materials or other substances accumulated as a result of repairs or additions to existing buildings, construction of new buildings or demolition of existing structures.

Household Garbage means all normal and usual household waste products placed in approved containers for collection purposes, such as organic waste from food preparation and consumption, wrapping and packaging materials, metal, glass, and plastic containers, and other items.

Occupant means any person occupying or using any building, house, structure, or grounds.

Offal waste and dead animals refer to dead animals and animal matter (land or marine) from hunting/ fishing and establishments such as butcher shops, slaughterhouses, food processing and packing plants, and taxidermy facilities.

105 Sibley Street/PO Box 1390
Benton, Louisiana 71006
(318) 965-2781 / (318)965-2577 fax
www.townofbentonlouisiana.webs.com website

A person with a disability who requires assistance with accommodations or an auxiliary aid or service such as an assistive listening device or a sign language interpreter, to participate in a public meeting should contact the Stephanie Collier at (318) 965-2781 as far in advance as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.

Owner means anyone with a recorded title to any building, house, structure, or grounds.

Private solid waste collectors mean any person or entity engaged in the collection, transportation, and disposal of materials listed under the definition of household garbage.

Residence means a person's home location within the municipal boundary of the Town of Benton.

Yard waste means tree and shrubbery trimmings or other waste usually created as refuse in the case of trees and bushes. Individual tree limbs are not to exceed six feet in length, eight inches in diameter, and/or 65 pounds in weight. Waste accumulated from cutting grass and dry leaf rakings. Yard waste must be bagged and free of dirt, rocks, large branches, and bulky or noncombustible materials.

Section 2: Weekly collection and disposal by private solid waste collector:

(a) The town contracts with a private solid waste collector to collect and dispose of household waste. The collector provides containers for distribution to each residential property who have an established water/sewer account. The collector is required to collect and dispose of containerized household waste once per week on Wednesday. Additional containers are available for ten dollars (\$10) per container upon request by the occupant and/or owner.

(b) Commercial establishments are not included in the Town collection contract; therefore, they are responsible for obtaining commercial solid waste services for their establishment.

(c) The private solid waste collector shall not collect any excluded or offal waste (see section I: definitions of excluded waste), and customers shall not place these materials curbside.

Section 3: Monthly bulk items and weekly yard waste collections by the Town of Benton:

(a) The town provides weekly yard waste collection, every Wednesday, to residents at no additional cost. All yard waste must be securely bagged and placed curbside once weekly on the evening before (Wednesday) collection day.

(b) The town provides monthly bulk item collections on the first Tuesday of each month. A twenty-five-dollar (\$25) fee must be prepaid to be placed on the pickup list. on the first Monday of the month. The twenty-five-dollar (\$25) fee covers up to five bulk items. Six (6) to ten (10) items will be an additional twenty-five dollars (\$25). Residents must prepay bulk item fees and be placed on the list for pickup. Special pickups outside of the designated day of the month will be considered. Special pickup fees of one hundred dollars (\$100) for up to five (5) items shall be paid no later than 24 hours prior to the date requested for pickup.

(c) The town shall not pick up any excluded or offal waste (see section I: definitions of excluded waste), and customers shall not place these materials curbside.

Section 4: Penalties

105 Sibley Street/PO Box 1390
Benton, Louisiana 71006
(318) 965-2781 / (318) 965-2577 fax
www.townofbentonlouisiana.webs.com website

A person with a disability who requires assistance with accommodations or an auxiliary aid or service such as an assistive listening device or a sign language interpreter, to participate in a public meeting should contact the Stephanie Collier at (318) 965-2781 as far in advance as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.

(a) Any person in possession of and using a container not issued to their address will be charged a tampering fee of one hundred fifty dollars (\$150).

(b) No person shall place containers, bagged yard waste, limbs, and bulk items curbside on any day other than the days specified in section 2(a), 3(a), and 3(b) of this chapter. A ten-dollar fee will be assessed for every day the items remain on the curb.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED All other ordinances of the town or portions thereof that are in conflict or inconsistent with any of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict or inconsistency.

Mayor Friday called for any comments:

Donna Bushnell 523 Lee Street. "My first comment is on the payment upfront. Just a suggestion, because I asked how the City of Bossier handle their bulk pick-up, once the customer is scheduled, it is billed on their water bill."

Mayor: "We are not going to do that. We prefer that they come in and describe the bulk items and pay ahead of pick-up." Mayor Friday, added "we are finally adding some rules."

Ms. Bushnell: "For twenty-nine years, garbage pickup was on Mondays, and everyone put everything on the street, and still do. Although it was a blessing and we appreciated it, people got the scrap metal out and went through the trash at 3 AM creating a mess." Ms. Bushnell's concern was about the \$10 per day fee and said, "Saturdays are usually my day to be in the yard and two or three times a year I clean up and do mulch. I've got bags lined up on the curb till they pick up. I don't have anywhere to put my bags except on the curb. That is where they will be till pickup. I just feel like this is penalizing the ones who actually clean up their yard and do some work. I just don't agree with it."

Mayor: "The fee applies if it is only after Wednesday and suggested that Gregory Redford, the property standards official, step forward and answer questions."

Greg Redford stepped to the podium and stated, "Can I just say the biggest concern with this is maybe not the yard waste. It is the sofas or a desk that end up on the side of the street." Because he is in contact with places like Christ Fit and several "junk removers", he offers citizens flyers, phone numbers, business cards and advised, "I take the time to speak with them so I'm not just giving people the penalties." He added, "As someone who lives in Benton Proper, I don't like looking at a sofa on Friday night knowing it's going to stay in the ditch or side of the street until Wednesday; that is unsightly. My neighbors shouldn't have to look at it and I shouldn't have to look at it. That is what I think this is more geared toward. I understand the yard waste-just sticks and things-but not whole sets of furniture on the side of the road. So, if I see a couch on the side of the road I don't knock on your door right away because I know there are people that drive around looking and will take it. And I also know on Wednesday mornings you get the people that drive out before the garbage truck comes. I'm not worried about stuff like that the pickers will get. It's if your sofa is laying in your yard come Friday and it's been out there since Wednesday, that's when I'm going to have to say something and we are going to have to schedule a pickup. We are going to be reasonable with this but we've got to have some foundation, some guidelines."

Alderman Carr: "How will residents know when this is in affect?"

□

The mayor replied regarding the manner of advising citizens of this new change, the pickup opportunity and the penalty fees by saying we could add it to the town website, put it on the door ,maybe get door tags, or add a note to the water bill.

Stephanie Collier asked Attorney Erwin, "In order to amend that particular item off the penalty area did we need to resubmit the ordinance amended or do we amend it now."

Mr. Erwin: "You could amend it tonight." (Removing the words "bagged yard waste, limbs" from Section 4: Penalties (b).) Per Neil it will be amended in the Agenda tonight.

ORDINANCE 605 OF 2025: T-5-25 -D. GATES

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, convened in Special Session, does hereby amend Chapter 130-Zoning, Article 7-Zoning Amendments, Section 130-182 of the Town of Benton Code of Ordinances to reflect the Zoning Classification of a tract of land being 1.67 acres more or less, from B-2 (Neighborhood Business District) to a B-3 (Community Business and Central Business District) located in Section 30, Township 20, Range 13 West for a proposed Retails Sales and Self-Storage facility located at 6500 Hwy 3, Benton, Louisiana. (Town of Benton Council District 3) (Police Jury District 4)

ORDINANCE 606 OF 2025: T-6-25 P. MASSEY

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, convened in Special Session, does hereby amend Chapter 130-Zoning, Article 7-Zoning Amendments, Section 130-182 of the Town of Benton Code of Ordinances to reflect the Zoning Classification of a tract of land being 0.964 acres, more or less, from B-1 (Transition Business District) to a R-2 (Multiple-Family Residence District) located in Section 29, Township 20, Range 13 West for a proposed apartment complex located at 134 3rd Street, Benton, Louisiana. (Benton Council District 1) (Police Jury District 4)

Alderman Carr: "In our last meeting when I brought up about this being an apartment you corrected me and said it was a hotel." Mayor said he did not say that. Ms. Carr said he did. Mayor explained the way he understood it from Mr. Massey that it was going to be an apartment complex for the sawmill and other people that may come in and lease the property when they come to do business with the sawmill and that company." He asked if Mr. Massey was here tonight and he was not.

Ms. Carr: "That really doesn't make sense. What you are saying just doesn't make sense."

Mayor said that was what he was told and he had read where it had recently been bought out by a Japanese company,

105 Sibley Street/PO Box 1390
Benton, Louisiana 71006
(318) 965-2781 / (318) 965-2577 fax
www.townofbentonlouisiana.webs.com website

A person with a disability who requires assistance with accommodations or an auxiliary aid or service such as an assistive listening device or a sign language interpreter, to participate in a public meeting should contact the Stephanie Collier at (318) 965-2781 as far in advance as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.

Majority Interest?

Ms. Carr: "On the paperwork the MPC sent to me it doesn't say anything like what you are saying so [I'm just confused." Summarizing the mayor he said he wasn't sure either, that this was just the public meeting, the MPC hasn't approved anything for us to follow up on.

Ms. Brunson asked if this was apartments to which the mayor said no, it was just one long building.

Greg Redford asked if he could speak and said he thought it was "executive housing". He explained, "Basically it's not a motel and they do it all the time in big cities. It's an apartment complex owned by a company and when ever people like a contractor for a couple of months that is where they will stay. That way they aren't paying a hotel rate. That's probably what they might mean.."

Ms Carr: "I understand that but the paperwork that I received from the MPC says apartments. They even go as far as to say how much the rent will be on the apartment. They also send me lots of pictures. I went through them all and there is nothing in there-not anything sectioned off." Mayor asked if she requested that because he had not received any of that. Ms Carr said it was on the website minutes but they actually send her a packet because it is in her district. She also told the mayor and Greg it was nothing like what either one of them was saying.

Ms. Perry: "On the MPC website it described it as 'multi-family residence'. But if it's executive housing, I'm familiar with how that works and I wonder if it comes with a contract? Mayor said we would just have to see how this turns out.

No further comments.

ORDINANCE 607 OF 2025: T-9-25 -T. FOSHEE (GREENTREE VENTURES 2 LLC)
AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE
TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, convened in Special Session, does hereby amend Chapter 130-Zoning, Article 7-Zoning Amendments, Section 130-182 of the Town of Benton Code of Ordinances to reflect the Zoning Classification of a tract of land being 2.888 acres more or less, from R-1 (Residence One Family District) to a B-1 (Transition Business District) located in Section 32, Township 20, Range 13 West located at the intersection of Palmetto Road and North Lost River Drive, Benton, Louisiana for future commercial development. (Town of Benton Council District 5) (Police Jury District 3) contingent PUD approval and consideration of B-2 zoning, pending site plans, and environmental impact study.

Michael Kels h with Raley & Associates approached the podium to advise he and the owner were here if there were any questions. The mayor asked if they had decided what they were going to put there and he answered they did not. He said it was going to be in rezoning so they could begin marketing and selling. Ideas mentioned at the MPC include offices or a dental office.

No other comments.

www.townofbentonlouisiana.webs.com website

A person with a disability who requires assistance with accommodations or an auxiliary aid or service such as an assistive listening device or a sign language interpreter, to participate in a public meeting should contact the Stephanie Collier at (318) 965-2781 as far in advance as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.

ORDINANCE 608 of 2025: Introduced and set for public hearing on July 14

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 14, NUISANCES, ARTICLE 3, WEEDS AND YARD VEGITATION, SECTION 14-50

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Louisiana, that the Benton code Chapter 14, Article 3, Section 14-50 be amended to read as follows:

Section 14-50: Owners are required to keep cut or remove noxious weeds or grass.

Current Law:

All owners of any lot, place or area within the corporate limits of the town are hereby required to keep cut, destroyed or removed from all lots, places or areas within the corporate limits of the town, noxious weeds or grass or other deleterious, unhealthful or noxious growths on their property within the corporate limits of the town.

Amended Law:

All owners of any lot, place or area within the corporate limits of the town are hereby required to keep cut, destroyed or removed from all lots, places or areas including ditches of the front property line, within the corporate limits of the town, noxious weeds or grass or other deleterious, unhealthful or noxious growths on their property within the corporate limits of the town.

Ms. Perry: "So including ditches in front of the property line-I think that it was previously discussed that the property line was part of the town's property. What are we identifying including ditches in front of the property line? Is that outside of one's property line?"

Mayor: "One's property line runs perpendicular to the road. So, that ditch is within the perimeter of the property line and is their responsibility. We as a town, it is our responsibility to make sure that they stay clean and that the flow of water can go thru there. It's the responsibility of the owners to take care of those pieces of property. There is not an ordinance that says we have to mow the yards, nor one that says we can mow the yards. There is no ordinance on that at all. We are just making this clarified."

Ms. Carr: "Mr. Friday, let's try and clear up some confusion, like for instance, the town workers. They normally come out and mow the ditches. They been doing that for years. So I guess I'm just a little bit confused. Is mowing the ditches part of what they supposed to do?"

Attorney Erwin: "No ma'am."

Mayor: "The reason he said no ma'am is because I had him check with the clerk and the clerk says at one time, under another mayor, they deemed a ditch be mowed (before her time) and it just continued to be done. It will on a case-by-case basis if someone needs some help or something done for their yard."

Ms. Carr: "OK. So you're saying that when they come around and mow the ditches, that's not something that they are required to do. Like the ditches are the town's responsibility."

Mayor: "Our responsibility is to maintain the flow of water." He asked the attorney, "Am I not correct on that?"

Mr. Erwin: "There is no universal rule, based on our search, across the state. Therefore, it depends on what the municipal ordinance says. And this one makes it clear that the responsibility for mowing the property ... I think that the mayor's saying, if someone needs help, they can request someone... " The mayor finished the sentence with "we can go out and investigate and see what needs to be done." Neil: "Stephanie, thanks for clarifying in terms of the cleaning ditches of the front property line but does that include any ditch portion within the front property line? Is that kind of what we're talking about Mayor and Stephanie? I mean, if there's a ditch that's within the right-of-way, and some of it is within the front yard of somebody's property, is the property owner going to be responsible for the portion within theirs or are they also going to be responsible for the portion that's in the right-of-way?"

Ms. Perry: "That would be under the ownership of the town. That's my question."

Mr. Erwin: "I don't know about that one."

Mayor: "But we have said, and we've researched other towns, unless it's a specific ordinance that says you mow the ditches, the town is not required to mow the ditches. The owner of the property and the articles that we've read state that depending on the individual's circumstances, like if they take pride in their yard, are able to do it or have financial ability to pay and get it mowed then it is their responsibility. The only time we step in is if tree limbs fall in there and such then we come clean it up."

Erwin: "Well my research does show that just what you said which is that the town's responsibility for that drainage servitude is chiefly to have waterflow. So I'm just trying to understand from the practical standpoint, 'can' property owners, and I'm asking cause I don't know, can property owners reach both sides of the drainage ditch, that is the portion within their own property as well as the one that might be within the street-right-of-way because this ordinance can say they're responsible for that property within the street-right-of-way. I'm just trying to understand it from a practical standpoint."

The mayor gave an example of his yard, property and ditch and ended with, "The definition the way I understand it is it goes all the way to the curb of the street."

Perry: "So you're stating all owners, but if I don't own what belongs to the city, I'm not responsible for that."

Mayor: "Yes ma'am."

Perry: "And then financially, you cannot determine what somebody can or cannot pay."

Mayor: "Well I cannot. But if they're out there mowing flat-like your house-go all the way to the curb. Unless there's devastation where the ditch is so steep you can't mow, can't weed eat or can't find anybody to do it"... Ms. Perry interrupted, "I just don't think it's fair to everyone in the community. I understand you do it but not everybody is able to do it."

Greg: "May I speak on this Mr. Mayor?"

Ms. Perry: "I'm not done. Everybody is not financially able to do that. So, that's just my opinion."

Mayor: "There are also organizations that help people to also. Greg did you have something to say?"

Greg: Summarizing-he explained 92% of Benton mows their ditch. He drives around every day and knows the people who have extremely steep ditches and the ones who are unable. He also knows the ones that mow their yard but call in asking when are we going to mow their flat ditch. That's the ones we are talking about.

Ms. Bushnell: "From a pride point of the town and what the town looks like I just feel like it's www.townofbentonlouisiana.webs.com website"

A person with a disability who requires assistance with accommodations or an auxiliary aid or service such as an assistive listening device or a sign language interpreter, to participate in a public meeting should contact the Stephanie Collier at (318) 965-2781 as far in advance as possible, but no later than forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.

The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.

in the best interest of the town to continue to mow the easements to keep it looking nice. That's just my opinion. It just bothers me that we can only mow so far and then you've got the ugliness between the easement and then the tracks. I mean we've got spots, I've even got a ginormous jungle of a drainage ditch beside my house. I mean there's stuff you just can't do anything about, but you try to do the best you can about the situations. When you roll into town this is the first impression people have of the town. It just doesn't ever get touched unless the railroad system decides to spray. It's a reflection of the town." Mayor: "The twenty-five feet on either side of the track, we can't go up there anymore." Ms. Bushnell: "I understand. I'm just saying individuals in the general public don't understand that. It's always been my big thing about beautification and trying to figure out what we can do."

Mayor: We do have the incarcerated folks come and weed eat along Hwy 3 and it looks great when they do"

Attorney Erwin: "OK I have one point on this, Stephanie you can correct me, Ordinance 608 that we've just been talking about is stated to be introduced and set to be in the public hearing as it has been. And then on the agenda it says final vote. So I believe this is just the introduction tonight?"

Stephanie: "No, this is the public hearing tonight."

Neil: "I know but how can you have an ordinance adopted after only one reading?"

Stephanie: "This was on last months agenda. It was introduced last month.. It was for public hearing July 14th."

Neil: "OK good so it's in position to be adopted."

Stephanie: "In the regular session yes."

Mayor asked for any other comments and their were none.

ADJOURN PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Friday adjourned the meeting

105 Sibley Street *IP* O Box 1390
Benton, Louisiana 71006
(318) 965-2781 / (318)965