St. Martin Parish Police Jury Talks About Bar Closure Law Once Again

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ST. MARTINVILLE — Larry Duplantis of District 1 tried to motivate the St. Martin Police Jury into voting on the bar curfew at last night’s meeting. The Jury could not reach an agreement but seemed determined to make a decision at their next meeting.

Duplantis made a motion that the Jury go along with a curfew that prohibits selling alcohol after 2 a.m. and closes bars at 2:30 a.m.

Mike Trahan of District 8 voiced opposition to voting on the issue last night. He said that “the city should do their homework,” meaning the City of St. Martinville should vote first.

“What if we add that we will support the curfew only if the City approves it?” questioned Duplantis.

President Lloyd “Red” Higginbotham went on record as a supporter of a 3 a.m. curfew, but not a 2 a.m. one.

“I have three lounges and I will be frank with you, it is difficult for the lounges to make a living. It’s hard for me to pay the rent,” said Higginbotham.

Simon Angelle of District 9 said that the curfew would “cut down the liberties of the people.”

Duplantis said “I know what is good for the people. If we had a vote tomorrow the majority of the people would vote for the curfew. We can’t push it off.”

Roland Chevalier of District 7 said “We are being manipulated by the City Council of St. Martinville. They were presented with the problem and they dumped it on our laps. If we adopt an ordinance we should specify that it will not go into effect until one goes in effect in the municipality.”

“We should take the initiative to resolve it at the next meeting,” he added.

In other action, Tony Perot, from the Evangeline Economic Planning District, presented a plan to help encourage businesses to move into economically disadvantaged areas of the parish.

The Enterprise Zone Program, sponsored by the Louisiana State Commerce and Industry, offers tax breaks to businesses who are currently in the disadvantaged zones as well as new businesses entering the area.

If the St. Martin Police Jury decides to enter the program, their responsibility will be to endorse the businesses, meaning investigating what type of business they have and deciding whether it’s satisfactory to the area. After the endorsement, the business will go to the Louisiana Commerce and Industry for the tax breaks.

The tax breaks includes exemption from sales tax for improvements to buildings, and a $2,500 tax credit per net new employee as determined by the company’s average annual employment.

Also at last night’s meeting the jury approved a 10 percent raise for employees effective Sept. 27.