

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: November 4, 2019

STATEMENT OF MARY OLIVE PIERSON, BRETT FURR and LARRY BANKSTON, Attorneys for plaintiffs in "Mayor Sharon Weston Broome, Lewis O. Unglesby and M. E. Cormier vs. Defendants Norman Browning and Chris Rials," 19<sup>th</sup> JDC, Parish of East Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, to challenge the incorporation of the City of St. George.

This lawsuit is filed pursuant to the very same statutes that allowed the organizers of the petition to incorporate St. George to convince 3.8% of the population of East Baton Rouge Parish to vote to incorporate their proposed town. The remaining 97.2% or 432,500 residents either voted NO or, if registered to vote, were not allowed to vote. This challenge is specifically provided for in the statutes which allow the incorporation of St. George and is for the purpose of testing the authenticity, credibility and feasibility of their numerous campaign promises to create, organize, finance and operate a city which would become the fifth largest in Louisiana. The statutes are designed to protect both the citizens of Baton Rouge and the citizens of St. George. In addition, the evidence will show that the organizers are ill-prepared to operate a city as well as the adverse impact on the City of Baton Rouge and citizens who live outside the arbitrary boundaries of the proposed City of St. George.

The time for promises, speculative ideas and criticism of Baton Rouge and the rest of the parish is over, done. The time has come for their unelected organizers to prove that (1) they have the capacity (money) and ability to provide the needed services for a town of over 86,000 people AND (2) they can provide the needed services within a reasonable period of time. It is past the time to move on to a *real plan*, and not just unspecified ideas for how they "might" provide these 86,000 people with the services they demand and are entitled to.

One of their attorneys has said that the meeting they requested and was held last week was only for "introduction" and they were not expecting to get into the "nitty gritty" on real issues like dividing up drainage canals and roadways. They have been working on this project for years and the election was over three weeks ago. They should have already prepared, months or even years ago, a specific plan for the delivery of the so-called "nitty gritty" details. Forming and operating a city of 86,000 residents is serious business for serious, dedicated administrators, city planners and financial advisors. Where are they? It is not about unspecified, unrealistic and unachievable campaign promises. So, just when do the organizers plan to disclose to the 86,000 residents and the rest of the parish the details of their so-far non-existent plan. Long before the meeting, the Mayor asked the defendants to send her the list of services they want to provide in their new town and the ones they want Baton Rouge to keep providing. She also asked for identification of the contracts they have publicly stated they may want to cancel. They were unable to even prepare that list with over two weeks notice. They only created an agenda for the meeting 20 minutes after it started.

This case and the trial of the issues will prove that the incorporation of St. George will have a significant adverse impact on the remaining 364,000 residents of the parish. In the end, we are legally asking the court to protect the entire parish and deny the incorporation because, if allowed to incorporate, it will drive the proposed town of St. George to suicide by bankruptcy.