



An Open Letter to the Community

The England Economic and Industrial Development District (EEIDD) welcomes public discussion of its actions and decisions. As a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, transparency and accountability are fundamental responsibilities. We also recognize and value the critical role of a free and independent press in informing the public.

Public confidence depends not only on transparency from government, but also on accuracy in reporting about government. For those same reasons, the public deserves reporting that is complete, balanced, and grounded in verifiable facts.

In recent months, *The Town Talk* has published multiple articles and videos concerning the EEIDD, including "Activists to Continue Fight Against Alexandria Migrant Family Center" (July 30, 2026); "England Authority in Alexandria Seeks to Curb Public Protests" (July 27, 2026); and "Alexandria Residents Question Proposed Migrant Family Facility" (March 31, 2026). In each instance, the EEIDD was not contacted for comment before publication, and in one case, the reporting relied primarily on selected comments from public meetings without seeking clarification from District officials.

The EEIDD conducts its business in public. Regular board and committee meetings are scheduled at the beginning of each year, and meeting agendas are published on englandairpark.org at least 24 hours in advance in accordance with Louisiana law, providing citizens and the media notice of matters scheduled for discussion and an opportunity to attend, observe, and participate in the process. In addition, board and committee meetings are livestreamed and recorded, providing those who are unable to attend the meeting an opportunity to observe the meetings at their convenience. Public meetings are intended to foster discussion, not simply ratify predetermined decisions. Commissioners routinely ask questions, request legal guidance, consider alternatives, and debate proposals before taking final action. Reporting isolated comments without presenting the broader context can leave readers with an incomplete—and sometimes inaccurate—understanding of the issues before the board.

The recent article concerning the proposed ordinance governing demonstrations illustrates this concern. While the article headline states that the EEIDD "seeks to curb public protests," the proposed ordinance expressly recognizes the constitutional rights of free speech, peaceful assembly, and petitioning government. It further requires that any regulations be applied without regard to the content, viewpoint, political affiliation, religion, or purpose of a demonstration.

The proposed ordinance was drafted at the request of the Rapides Parish Sheriff's Office and the Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office to establish clear, content-neutral policies and procedures that protect constitutional rights, while allowing the EEIDD to fulfill its responsibilities for public safety, airport security, emergency access, traffic management, and the protection of businesses, residents, employees, and visitors throughout the District. Policies governing the time, place, and manner of demonstrations are common among municipalities, airports, universities, and other governmental entities. They are intended to balance First Amendment rights with the safe and orderly use of public property, not to suppress any particular viewpoint or cause.

Reasonable people may disagree about specific provisions of the proposal. In fact, commissioners publicly stated in the July 23, 2026, board meeting that the ordinance remains under review and welcomed public input before any final vote. That is precisely how the legislative process is intended to work.

Recent reporting has also blurred important distinctions regarding federal immigration operations occurring on property leased by the EEIDD. The EEIDD owns property that is leased to numerous private businesses, governmental agencies, educational institutions, manufacturers, aviation operators, and other organizations. Like any landlord, the EEIDD does not manage the day-to-day operations of its tenants, nor does it establish or administer federal immigration policy.

Facilities associated with Immigration and Customs Enforcement are operated by independent entities under federal oversight, not by the EEIDD. Likewise, the proposed self-deporting migrant family processing center would be operated by an independent tenant. According to information provided by the prospective operator, the facility is intended to function as a short-term processing center, not a prison, as some have incorrectly claimed. It is designed to provide temporary accommodations and humanitarian services such as meals, medical and behavioral health care, recreation, and other support while travel arrangements are coordinated with the appropriate governmental authorities. The EEIDD neither establishes nor administers those operational policies. It is important that public discussion accurately distinguish between the District's responsibilities as landlord and those of its tenants and the federal government.

Recent articles have also repeated allegations regarding environmental contamination at the proposed site without identifying evidence that the property is unsuitable for its authorized use or that the EEIDD has failed to meet any legal or regulatory obligation. Allegations should not be confused with verified facts.

The EEIDD welcomes public dialogue, even when it involves difficult issues or differing opinions, and we value thoughtful, fact-based journalism. Transparency is not simply making information available; it is ensuring the public has the context necessary to understand it. Our executive director, commissioners, legal counsel, and staff remain committed to answering questions, providing public records, explaining board actions, and engaging openly with both the media and the public. We encourage our community to review public documents, attend or stream our meetings, ask questions, and evaluate the facts firsthand. An informed public is essential to good government, and we remain committed to earning that trust through openness, respectful dialogue, and responsible stewardship of the District we are privileged to serve.