

Marty Dean statement concerning River Oaks streets presented at the Street Information meeting on May 19, 2016

Hello Jim and residents of River Oaks. I apologize profusely for not being able to attend tonight. After Jim and I had scheduled this event tonight, I received an invitation to a "Pinning" ceremony at my son's college tonight at 6pm in Baton Rouge. Needless to say I couldn't get out of that. So, I'm hoping to let you know what I was coming to talk about, and should anyone have any questions, please call me at 985-789-7444, and I will be glad to discuss with you further.

I understand some of you all would like to take your subdivision from private to public. I would like to tell you the pros and cons of both. It doesn't matter to me either way. I believe you probably know the pros. You all actually own everything within your fences. No government owns anything unless there is a right of way in there for utilities, etc. But for all intents and purposes, you all own what's in your walls.

When a private subdivision wants to come into our system, the Parish must be assured that we are not being saddled with a lot of problems we have to fix. So we want the roads and drainage systems to be brought up to our standards. That is to say that we don't want substandard road beds that we have to go in and spend a lot of money to repair right off the bat. So, there is a lot of work that needs to be done prior to the application. I believe you all have been through this process and are aware of the assessments needed, etc. I know Jim is and he can report to you very well what has happened and needs to happen.

I'd like to explain the way the Parish works and how we allocate funds for road work.

There is a .02 sales tax on each dollar you spend in the Parish that goes directly to fund our Public Works Department. That money is split at the end of each year throughout the 14 different districts in the Parish according to the miles of roads and drainage canals. There are some of the funds the Parish President keeps at her discretion that she spends on bigger projects. For example, Brewster road from Perilloux road west to Hwy 1085 is in a mess. I didn't have enough in my yearly allocation to totally repair it, so she gave me some out of her funds.

Keep in mind there are 14 different districts that have to split this road/drainage money up. District 6 makes up about 1/3 of the Parish. It's huge, but with not many residents. It gets probably close to a million dollars every year. I get anywhere from 400k to 600k/yr. depending on the Sales Tax results.

Each District Councilman gets with the Dept of Public works every year and finds out how much we have to spend for that year. We then discuss at that meeting which roads we have had the most patch work done, the most complaints about, the most labor intensive drainage or road work we've had to do, and we place them on a list. I ask the guys on the roads everyday with public works what their thoughts are. I also ride my district weekly and assess the situations constantly. That list is then placed in terms of priority. Of course, if a danger exists, that road or drainage projects is placed high on the list. Right now, I probably have over 8 to 10 on my next year and 5-year list. If a road is in bad shape, but doesn't have many residents on it, it gets behind a well-traveled road such as Brewster. The same goes for drainage that comes out of the same pot of money. For example, Timber Branch subdivision over the years has had multiple drainage problems where people's yards were washing away. I had to spend a good bit of my money on sub surface drainage in that subdivision. Not fair, I know, but it is to them.

So what I'm telling you is that your roads and drainage will be taken care of – probably just not as quickly as you would like them to. As a private entity, you can do your own repairs without the wait. There will be probably a 2 to 3 year wait; maybe shorter since you all have many residents in your subdivision. I just can't predict because it is so dependent on what else is in the list of priorities.

Being private is safe and secure. You know who is coming in and out of your roads. One down side to that is that as in the case of Katrina, the Parish or anyone doing cleanup will have to have a signed agreement allowing us to go into your neighborhood to do any work. Your place is private and there are very strict state laws prohibiting public funds being spent in private neighborhoods.

So, that is a quick run down on my thoughts and what I was going to say tonight. If you'd like, you can go to the Parish's website stpgov.org and look under Public Works and see the work that is being done. That is also the place you can place a work order in should you need assistance.

Please call me at the above number if you all have any questions. I will be glad to schedule another time to come out to talk about anything you'd like.

Sincerely,

Marty Dean
District One