

Council (Persons to Address the Council); Floods, Norco, Town of
PETITION TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

2004-0207
St. Charles Parish Council Chairman
P. O. Box 302
Hahnville, LA 70057
(985) 783-5000

Today's Date: 5/17/04

Dear Chairman:

Please place my name to address the Council on:

DATE: June 7, 2004

SPECIFIC TOPIC: NORCO HOME FLOODS 5/25/04 & 5/25/04

one subject only

(*see specific guidelines on reverse and refer to Parish Charter- Article VII., Sec. I.)

DOCUMENTS, IF ANY: YES / NO

NAME: PATRICK R. LAMBERT

ADDRESS: 630 Spruce St
NORCO, LA 70079

PHONE: 985-764-7903

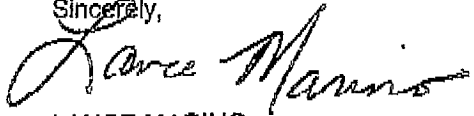
SIGNATURE: Patrick R. Lambert

Dear Constituent:

Thank you for your active participation. Your views and comments will be considered by the Council in making our decisions. The Council has a considerable amount of business to conduct in a limited amount of time, therefore, please note the following items that are expected of you:

- The Home Rule Charter provides for citizens to address the Council. It makes no provision for initiating debate, discussion, or question and answer sessions with Councilmembers or Administration Officials. Your right is also guaranteed to examine public documents as you prepare your presentation. Should you have any questions for Councilmembers and/or Department Heads as you prepare, please forward such inquiries to the Council Office to insure a timely response. Should you wish to speak to any Official or Department personally, a complete list of contact information will be furnished at your request.
- Please be brief and limit your comments to the specific subject matter on which you have requested to address the Council.
- Please forward supporting documents to the Council Secretary for distribution to the Parish Council before your scheduled appearance in order for the Council to prepare themselves, if necessary.
- Upon completion of your allotted time to address the Council, please respect the time given to Councilmembers to respond to your comments by not interrupting or interjecting remarks.
- **Slanderous remarks and comments will not be tolerated.** If slanderous remarks or comments are made, your opportunity to address the Council will end, regardless of the remaining time left to address the Council.
- Repetitious comments and subject matter will be strictly limited.

A confirmation letter will follow when your name is placed on the agenda.

Sincerely,

LANCE MARINO
COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

(OVER)

Mr. President and Council Members – My name is Patrick Robert Lambert. I reside at 630 Spruce St. in Norco.

My wife and I have lived at this address for the past thirty five years and we are both lifelong residents of St. Charles Parish.

On April 25, 2004, our home was one of the approximately two hundred and fifty which flooded in Norco. This represents many thousands of dollars damage of each home and a lot of inconveniences.

On May 15, 2004, a few homes were again flooded. I believe another major flood was narrowly averted by the fact that my wife and I were monitoring the canals and ditches in Norco. We alerted Councilman Duhe to what we were observing.

All of these times are approximate but accurate to within a few minutes.

5:30 AM Rain started

7:30 AM Many ditches were filled after two hours of continuous rain. Only one of the electric pumps was working at the pumping station north of Airline Highway.

8:15 AM Ditches overflowing – only one pump working north of Airline. Called Councilman Duhe to report what we observed.

8:30 AM Engineers' Canal started to overflow
Called Councilman Duhe again. He said that the EOC had assured him all pumps were running.

8:45 AM Canal between Airline Hwy. and pumping station about to overflow. Parish employees left the pump house – still only one pump running. Both pumps at end of West Pine & Spruce St. were running.

In all of our traveling around Norco, this was the only parish employee we saw.

The water at this time covered the street in front of our home on Spruce St. It was about five inches deep in the street.

9:30 AM Pumps running at pumping station north of Airline Hwy. included two electric pumps, one diesel and temporary portable pumps.

As I see it, it took three and one half to four hours for all pumps to be turned on after this heavy rain started. Mr. Duhe told me that he had to call for a parish employee to bring a key to unlock the gate for the diesel pump to be turned on about 9 AM.

At about noon the water had receded into the rainwater drains.

I find this inexcusable and wonder if this is an indication of what happened on April 25th. On the 25th the water around our home was like a mirror -- no movement as you should see if the pumps were running. I have observed all three pumps running during heavy rains on numerous occasions.

I have listed my qualification on the paper I gave out. I will say here that during my thirty eight years at Shell Oil, I have had lots of experience with pumps and mechanical equipment and I am very knowledgeable in the field. Also, after fighting fires at Shell for many years, I **did not** and **do not** get hysterical as someone in the St. Charles Parish Public Works Department suggested to Mr. Duhe.

I believe it is necessary to have a storm drainage system that is adequately and responsibly manned to protect all of the residents of St. Charles Parish.

I **do not** think the present system in place -- the telemetry, the callout system, the manning system, etc. is adequate and needs to be addressed.

Even though improvements have been made in storm water drainage, this has been a chronic problem in Norco for years, but it still appears more is needed. Residents who never flooded before are now being flooded.

At the last council meeting, Councilman Fauchaux stated the the new Bayou Trepanier pumping station will have something less than three times the capacity of the present one but still may not stop flooding.

I agree and I think for this new system to be effective we will need a new system of accountability and responsibility but let's not wait for a new pumping station to implement changes to improve the system.

Therefore, I would like to offer my time and services – free of charge, after my house is repaired, to set up a system to inspect and log happenings to the mechanical equipment that is part of the drainage system throughout the parish.

This would also include systematic inspection of major drainage canals throughout the parish to be duly logged and signed by the inspecting parish employee. These records would become part of a permanent file on each item inspected or repaired.

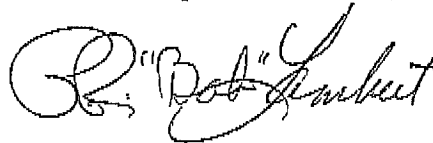
Also, I would like to volunteer to be on any task force to address these issues.

Finally, I cannot fully express my feelings of displeasure and disappointment at the events I have observed.

I respectfully request this Council and the Department of Public Works to address this issue immediately. Do not wait until the residents of St. Charles Parish, your constituents, flood again.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Thank you for your time
and listening to my concerns,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P.R. 'Bob' Lambert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "L".

P.R. "Bob" Lambert
630 Spruce Street
Norco, LA 70079
Phone: 985-764-7923
Cell: 504-234-0498

Enclosures (3)

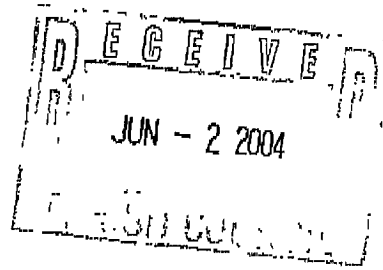
Enclosures are pictures of the main drainage canals north of Airline Hwy. 61 known as the Engineers' Canal.

Qualifications:

I, Patrick Robert "Bob" Lambert have worked for Shell Oil Refinery for thirty-eight years and over thirty years of this time was spent maintaining, inspecting, and keeping records of mechanical equipment which included many types of pumps.

Since my retirement in 1985, I have continued my work in the mechanical equipment field doing projects for Shell Oil and Orion Refineries and I also taught classes for mechanics at the Dow Chemical installation in Taft for craftsmen workers employed by contractors.

June 1, 2004



Dear Barbara,

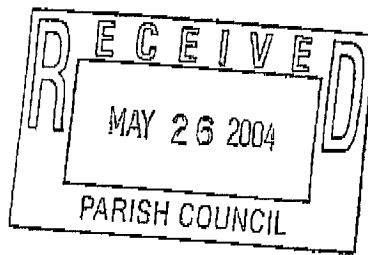
In addition to the questions I sent to you on May 25, 2004, I would like for you to submit the following questions to the Council and Department of Public Works for appropriate answers.

As a result of the Norco Civic Association Meeting held in Norco on May 27, 2004, several questions have arisen.

1. When was the temporary levee between the hurricane protection levee and Highway 61, as mentioned by Pontchartrain Levee District Chairman, Steve Wilson, proposed and by whom? Was this proposed by the Parish Council, Department of Public Works, Corps of Engineers or whom? When will this temporary levee be built and who will build it? Will it be built soon to coincide with the current hurricane season?
2. How does the Department of Public Works explain the approximate three and one half hours from the time it started raining, 5:30 a.m., to approximately 9:00 a.m. to get all five major and temporary pumps running?
3. Councilman-at-Large Marino stated that he requests yearly that the Wildlife and Fisheries Department spray Clayton's Pond for the water lilies that cause drainage problems. Why doesn't the Department of Public Works do this?
4. Will the Department of Public Works also address the waterlilies in the canal along Highway 61? These also create drainage problems.

Thank you for your time,

P.R. "Bob" Lambert
630 Spruce St.
Norco, LA 70079
985-764-7923
(cell) 504-234-0498



May 25, 2004

Dear Barbara,

In reference to our telephone conversation yesterday, please see if you can have the following questions answered.

1. When did the Public Works Department become aware that the culvert under Highway 61 in Norco was damaged?
2. How often are the major canals/ditches leading to the pumping stations throughout the parish inspected and by whom? Are records kept, dated, and signed by a parish employee?
3. The parish has about 30 people with beepers/cell phones that are supposed to be on call for emergencies. This was stated by Mr. Bush-head of Public Works, at the council meeting on May 17, 2004. How many are assigned to the different pumping stations?
4. Who does the calling when an emergency arises?
5. Who calls and how long after a storm begins, do the calls go out to man the pumping stations?
6. If a pump cannot be started how is this handled-and when?
7. Are all pumps on an automatic level control switch to start when water levels rise?
8. When does the parish employee override the start-auto switch and manually start the pumps not starting by the water level switches?
9. What role does the EOC group play in the overall monitoring of drainage pumps being started or monitored? Is their only way of telling whether a pump is running is by a light on an instrument board or what?
10. What is done to check pumping stations after a rainstorm has passed and water has gone down in the canals to ensure that the pumps are stopped and are ready for the next incident? Are records kept and signed by a parish