

FELLOW FLAMINGO HEADS AND ESTEEMED FRIENDS OF THE SPANISH TOWN MARDI GRAS FESTIVITIES:

Be advised that the City Administrators, in their infinite wisdom, are about to rain on our parade. They want to boot the parade off of Spanish Town Road and off of Third Street, too. As residents of Spanish Town, we are fighting mad and very much need your show of support!

Councilman Darryl Ourso has put together a draft Parade Ordinance which is scheduled to go before the Metro Council in August, 2006. We don't have much time. The SPLM Board opposes this Ordinance in its entirety because if implemented it threatens to impact not just the Spanish Town Parade but all parades in our city. That said, when you have an event of the size, scope, and popularity of our parade, the largest and most unifying in the city, one should tread carefully before making such fundamental changes. The opinion of the SPLM Board is, "*If it ain't broke-don't fix it*".

The Spanish Town Parade is one of the safest in the city. For the past twenty-seven years, our parade has successfully negotiated both Spanish Town Road and Third Street without injury to anyone. The only serious injuries in the history of the parade have occurred on streets other than Spanish Town or Third Street. Accordingly, there has been no need demonstrated to change the route. The burden should be upon those advocating change.

The SPLM Board over the years has responsibly executed its mission to amuse and entertain friends, neighbors, and tourists alike while providing for their safety and security on this one special day of the year. Spanish Town pioneered as one of the first parades in the country to designate alcohol-free zones. We have purchased over \$15,000.00 worth of barricades and donated them to the city to be used to promote safety in all parades. Each year, our parade donates proceeds to local charities throughout the city.

Another gem in the proposed draft ordinance is equally threatening to the very life of our parade, i.e. there is a requirement that each float carry a policy of liability insurance with limits of **\$1 million/\$3 million**. This requirement could increase the insurance premiums so drastically as to place them out of reach of some krewes. In that event, our parade might become insured out of existence.

So, what's really going on here? Are our Mayor and your councilmen aware of the big picture here? Are any of your tax dollars being wasted? What would be the economic impact of destroying the home grown Mardi Gras season in Baton Rouge and causing our residents to go elsewhere to watch parades? If this legislation kills the Spanish Town Parade, who will be to blame? Finally, do we want city government to micro-manage our parade into extinction like they did with Bon Fete, the Blues Festival and Fest For All?

Parades pay their own way in this city by keeping our party money here, not in New Orleans or Lafayette. The Spanish Town Parade attracts people from all over the country who spend their money on hotels, food, drink, and other attractions which generate revenues to the city. The costs of police overtime, sanitation, and clean up are more than offset through the revenues generated by the various parade krewes and the public's exuberant participation.

Downtown Baton Rouge is presently undergoing a renaissance which is welcomed by the entire community. The downtown merchants will fight to keep the parades on Third Street. Police and DPW officials have suggested removing the parade from Spanish Town Road and Third Street on the grounds of "*security*", yet they have failed to produce evidence that theirs is the only solution. Actually, they are unwilling to work out a compromise which would preserve current routes and provide parade security. After twenty-seven years of safe and successful parading, we submit that they should be asking for our suggestions, not dictating our routes.

What can **YOU** do to help? Please write, email or telephone, the Mayor and/or your individual City Councilman to express your disapproval of this draft Parade Ordinance and ask that they vote against it in its entirety. The names, telephone numbers, and email addresses of your elected officials are found below.

Keep the Flamingos parading on their established routes (Spanish Town Road and Third Street)!

List of EBR Metro Council members:

City Parish Website: <http://brgov.com/dept/council/default.asp>

Council District 1 - Wayne Carter 389-5170 council-dist1@brgov.com

Council District 2 - Ulysses 'Bones' Addison 389-4699 council-dist2@brgov.com

Council District 3 - Pat Culbertson 389-5162 council-dist3@brgov.com

Council District 4 - Joe Greco, Mayor Pro-Tempore 389-5166 council-dist4@brgov.com

Council District 5 - Charles Kelly 389-5166 council-dist5@brgov.com

Council District 6 - Martha Jane Tassin 389-5165 council-dist6@brgov.com

Council District 7 - Byron Sharper 389-7624 council-dist7@brgov.com

Council District 8 - Mike Walker 389-5168 council-dist8@brgov.com

Council District 9 - Darrell Ourso 389-4688 council-dist9@brgov.com

Council District 10 - Lorri Burgess 389-5140 council-dist10@brgov.com

Council District 11 - David Boneno 389-5169 council-dist11@brgov.com

Council District 12 - Mickey Skyring 389-4697 council-dist12@brgov.com

Please go to www.spanishtownmardigras.com for more information and use the forum to voice your opinions.

SPANISH TOWN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
AND
SPLL BOARD OF DIRECTORS