

Council committee to discuss shooting ranges

BY WILLIAM JOHNSON • WJOHNSON@DAILYWORLD.COM • JULY 6, 2008

Laws and their enforcement - or more specifically a lack of enforcement - will be discussed at 6 p.m. Monday at the meeting of the Public Works Committee of the St. Landry Parish Council.

The law in question is a 2007 ordinance that establish rules and regulations for shooting ranges in the unincorporated parts of the parish.

In 2006 the parish debated setting rules concerning hunting in the parish, but backed off in the face of massive protests from guns rights advocates.

While nothing about the proposed ordinance would have limited a person's right own a gun or hunt, it did propose banning the discharge of weapons within 500 feet of an occupied home.

In the end, the council only succeeded in passing an ordinance setting out minimum standards for shooting ranges.

District 8 Councilwoman Pam Gautreau has complained that even that limited ordinance is not being enforced by the St. Landry Parish Sheriff' Office, which is the enforcement arm of parish government.

She has called on council legal advisor Andrea West to seek an attorney general's opinion on how council can force the sheriff to act.

Newly elected Council Chairman Hurlin Dupre said he only wants to familiarize the council with the existing law. The current 13 member council contains only five members who, like himself, were present during the original debate.

"I just want the council to know what we've got," Dupre said.

The agenda also calls for a discussion of the parish's permitting ordinance, which sets a minimum fee for permit applications.

Council members have argued the fee is fine for large projects such as houses or businesses, but is too high for small structures such as sheds.

Another item on the agenda is:

Discussion of a proposed intergovernmental agreement with the Village of Cankton to assist with the maintenance of roadways and ditches.