

By Alice Dowty The Livingston Parish News

LIVINGSTON - District Attorney Scott Perrilloux ordered parish councilmen Thursday to start obeying both parish and state road laws.

Councilmen are to abide by the full set of ordinances governing the eligibility of roads for parish maintenance, not just a section adopted in 2007 requiring two addressable units, Perrilloux said.

"My opinion is that those (prior) ordinances still apply," Perrilloux said Thursday night.

None of the roads on the 2008 overlay list would have been accepted into the maintenance program if councilmen had been following their own ordinances.

Perrilloux also told councilmen to follow state requirements for prioritizing road work.

"It needs to be done; I expect it to be done," Perrilloux said.

The District Attorney reminded councilmen that he "wears two hats."

Perrilloux is the Council's official legal adviser, but he also files charges against elected officials who break the law.

Perrilloux said there was a "fine line" between his client/attorney relationship with the Council and his duties as a prosecutor.

Perrilloux said his preferred course of action would be to work with the Council in a positive way.

"I want this parish government to succeed," Perrilloux said, "but I have a job to do."

The 2007 audit cited the Council for failing to follow the state's Parish Transportation Act. The Council's response was to try to fire CPA Roy Chustz, but the state Legislative Auditor prevented that.

Council Chairman Jimmie McCoy, who suggested and endorsed departures from state and local law, did not argue with Perrilloux. He did not express complete agreement, either.

"If the ordinance needs to be addressed, it will," McCoy said Thursday. The Council is going to be "looking at things more stringently."

Perrilloux had said previously that he did not think any new resolution was required for the Council to change course on its road policies.

"I don't think you need a motion; I think this is the law," Perrilloux said.

The audience applauded.

McCoy has previously shown no inclination to disavow his road policies, including the paving of parking lots which was recently judged to be illegal by the Attorney General's Office.

Councilman Cindy Wale noted June 11 that the Council majority cannot find funds for Eden Church Road which is at the top of the priority list, but found money in the general fund for parking lots.

"My taxpayers were happy with the school parking lot" in Watson, McCoy told Wale, and added that not all "are happy about you."

Perrilloux referred to a presentation made by Legislative Auditor Steve Theriot and his staff Wednesday.

"Theriot made good comments about the need for open lines of communication and advised you to put personal and political differences aside," Perrilloux said. "Good communication is critical."

Perrilloux echoed Theriot when he said that although each councilman represents a district, as a body they are supposed to legislate for the good of the parish as a whole.

McCoy called attention to the fact that no roads were on Thursday's agenda to be adopted into the maintenance system.

Councilmen did approve a petition Thursday to assign the name Norma Jean Lane to a previously unnamed road in District 1, represented by one of McCoy's supporters, Randy Rushing. Rushing was absent