

I am respectfully writing this letter so that the people of Ascension Parish fully understand the issues related to the news stories and controversy regarding the recent release of a taped recording where my name was repeatedly mentioned.

The taped conversation made it appear as if I was part of this conversation and that I was being chastised by a supporter on how I should handle a personnel issue within parish government. It was, no doubt, unflattering, and I can readily see why upon hearing this taped conversation people were angry. I, too, remain upset by this.

I knew nothing at all about this taped conversation and was **not a part of it in any way**. I now know it was a telephone conversation between a supporter, Mr. Pendarvis, and I am told the other party was a supporter of my opponent who saw fit to tape record the conversation.

The first I knew of any of this was when the tape was released to the public via a local blog. Obviously then I began receiving many messages and media inquiries. In an effort to offer an explanation, I granted a request for a telephone interview with WBRZ and those of you who heard it I'm sure will agree with me that it raised more questions than answers. Frankly, I did a terrible job explaining.

I apologize for not being as articulate as I should have been during the TV interview. I will never win an award for public speaking, but that should not imply a lack of integrity in my leadership.

The decision to dismiss the Planning Director was indeed mine and I stand behind it. No doubt, there were those that were pleased with his dismissal and those that were not. I would offer this: virtually every new administration of an elected official has at least some turnover and those affected know that this is always a possible scenario when they get a new boss.

As noted in my campaign finance reports, Mr. Pendarvis did donate \$500 to my campaign. There were many who donated to my campaign and I thank them for it. I assure you if you take the time, you will find a similar situation with the other candidates for Parish President. It is public record and easy to query.

Just like my opponents, I have people of all walks of life supporting me. Yes, some were developers, many were friends and family, and some even contributed to more than one candidate. All were assured of one thing during my campaign: that I would move Ascension Parish forward.

At no time, **no time**, did I commit to a donor to dismiss an employee. I heard from many supporters who had opinions on personnel and daily operations in parish government. At the end of the day, I make decisions as best I can in order to produce a more efficient and effective administration.

The issue of this administration being particularly “cozy” with developers is not true and I have evidence from my short five months as Parish President to refute that assertion. Here are just three examples of changes I pushed forward in order to provide greater stability, fairness, and transparency in the Planning Department.

- 1) We needed impact fees 20 years ago. Within the first weeks of taking office, and with strong opposition from developers, we enacted some of the toughest impact fees in the state. Finally, growth is paying for the cost of growth.
- 2) The Planning Department tolerated the submittal of bad subdivision plans and parish employees would expend hours reviewing plans five or six times. Now, I am in the process of hiring an outside engineering review agency to eliminate favoritism in the design process. Developers get two attempts to submit good plans. If they submit shoddy work, then they will be required to pay the outside review agency's hourly rate until they submit quality plans.
- 3) For years, the Planning Commission operated without a clear direction on its discretionary authority. While parish legal advisors warned of the liability incurred by the denial of subdivision plans that met all code requirements, planning personnel would push for denials that were not legally sound. I asked for an Attorney General's opinion to clear up the matter. The Attorney General's opinion confirmed our legal counsel's interpretation and we can now proceed with clear direction.

In retrospect, I could have handled Mr. Compton's dismissal with greater sensitivity. Even though we had real differences regarding the management of growth, he was an eight-year employee and deserved a direct conversation from me. I regret that I was not personally involved. Upon reflection, I realized that and allowed him to resign.

So, despite an attempt to discredit me by those so preoccupied with left-over political agendas that they would use a telephone conversation taped by someone still hiding behind the curtain and as yet unidentified, and conjure it up to be some kind of indication of who I am and what I stand for: I am still the same Kenny, admittedly imperfect but always willing to listen, willing to take on the hard challenges, **independent** and committed to serve you.