Council tackles crime problem

By MARTY HEINTZ
Sports Editor

The Ville Platte City Council Tuesday night agreed to meet with Police Chief James Bordelon and citizens concerned about recent crimes, as well as litter problems, to try and work out a solution.

Mayor Fontenot suggested the council's police committee meet with the chief after a concerned citizen, Chad Soleau, spoke to the council about the crime and litter problems.

The recent reported rapes have made the citizens of Ville Platte notice the crime problem, Soleau said, "but we had a crime problem before and will after the rapes are solved."

He noted his own home had been broken into eight times and that police had responded quickly each time and had done what they could. But, he added, crime is still a problem the residents of Ville Platte have to face and is compelling more and more residents to seek homes outside the city limits.

He also noted problems with residents of rental property failing to maintain yards and with disturbing the peace.

"If the council doesn't tackle the problems, in the future you will lose quality people," he told council members.

Soleau suggested the council seek a day-to-day report on crimes committed in the city from Bordelon, adding that people would be shocked by the sheer number of crimes committed.

The council agreed and councilman Curley Dosman said the police committee would be happy to meet with concerned citizens before they talk to the chief or the citizens could attend the meeting with the committee.

In a related issue, City Attorney Gaynor Soleau told council members that a curfew affecting all citizens would be unconstitutional. He said a curfew is legal when it pertains to minors only, but the only time a curfew can be enforced to pertain to the general population is in times of civil strife (riots, etc.).

However, he did tell council members that loitering on city streets is illegal and can be enforced. People have to have a reason to be out on the streets and can be picked up for hanging around on street corners, he told Dosman.

Dosman agreed that the loitering statutes should be enforced and that the city's nuisance ordinances should also be enforced and possibly strengthened by the council.

"We have to let people know that they have to clean up the town, not just at Cleanest City time," Dosman said in reference to the city's yearly clean-up effort for the state contest.

Councilman Bennet Bequet has been looking into the Lafayette Crime Stoppers' Program for possible implementation in Ville Platte. He said the Lafayette department has used it successfully.

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