

Oliver Jenkins
Shreveport City Council
505 Travis Street
Shreveport, Louisiana 71101

July 17, 2013

Mr. Jenkins,

This letter is in response to the upcoming variance hearing regarding the ornamental pond located at 442 Ontario Street, Shreveport, Louisiana. It is our understanding that there has been no opposition presented to members of the city council regarding proposed variance. As residents of the 400 block of Ontario Street, our contention would be that no one has directly asked about opposition or support of the proposed variance. Due to the lack of any notification regarding the upcoming variance hearing, residents of the street and surrounding area were unaware of the upcoming hearing, which will have this issue on the agenda. If not for a couple of diligent neighbors, who have been following the issue closely, we would not have even had the opportunity to provide this letter regarding the issue.

This letter and the signatures provided on it represent opposition to the ornamental pond located at 442 Ontario Street. The opposition is not based on any personal feelings toward the homeowners, but rather the danger and other issues that we feel allowing the pond could result in. The concerns are listed in order of importance:

Safety

The contention that the pond is not dangerous to children (or adults in some cases) is not supported. The fact is that a person can drown in less than 6" of water. The CDC reports that children ages 1-4 have the highest drowning rates and these are the people that we are most concerned about in this issue. While we do understand that children should be supervised at all times, this simply is not always the case and the pond creates a danger to children that could be avoided with this variance decision. This danger is not only now present for the children that live on the street, but also for any child in the neighborhood that comes by. The fact that the pond has wildlife and plant life also now becomes an attraction for children, which could put them in imminent danger of drowning should they fall in and be unable to swim. The fact that the sides are sloped does not make the pond safe should a child fall in and become disoriented, or be too small to stand up and have his/her head above the water. The CDC also reports that drowning can occur in an area as small as a bathtub, or a bucket. While we obviously would hope that a tragedy like this would never happen, this variance decision allows the opportunity to have it happen.

Liability

While it should not be the neighbors' concern of the imposed liability on the homeowner should a tragedy occur, the city's liability is of concern to all residents of Shreveport. Should the variance be allowed, this certainly provides liability issues that the City of Shreveport would have to defend should a tragedy ever occur.

Future Maintenance

What guarantees do the residents of the street have that the future maintenance of the pond will be upheld? Should the property sell and the new owners are not interested in upkeep of the pond, who enforces maintenance and to what standard? We realize this is a "what if" question, but the answers are important in determining the approval or disapproval of this variance.

The following residents of the street and surrounding streets are not interested in creating any ill will towards any of our neighbors, but we feel as though the issue has created a situation in which we are all involved. The City of Shreveport has ordinances that have been thought out and implemented to protect citizens and to uphold neighbor's rights and we believe that this issue does not deserve to have an exception provided. The signatures below represent opposition to allowing the proposed variance for the decorative pond.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide this information and respect in advance your decision regarding the matter.

Melinda Deha 455 Ontario (children age 12, 9, 4) Melissa + Todd Carhon
Bob Kelly 425 Ontario (Children: Age 12, 9, 8 + 7) Ashley + Rocky Rockett
Geethen Daniel 428 Ontario (children: age 5, 2, 9 mos) Geethen + Randy Daniel
Dave Rockett SR. 414 Ontario