

George Schaeffer

124 Choctaw Drive
West Monroe, LA 71291

January 22, 2019

Mr. Shane Smiley, President
Ouachita Parish Police Jury
301 S Grand St. #201
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

Dear Shane,

Since the first day we briefed you and the other jurors on the Vision 2031 millage proposal in December, we have said the initiative is for the future economic benefit of our parish. ULM is one of the largest (if not the largest) existing drivers of our local economy, and in light of the anticipated VCOM Medical College, presents our greatest and most certain opportunity for economic expansion. The millage will not only provide a workable roadmap for economic expansion, but will also provide well-paying career development opportunities for our children right here in Ouachita Parish. With the programs and improvements envisioned by this plan, ULM will become a healthcare destination on a national level and will strengthen the overall workforce and economic climate for all citizens of the parish.

Dr. Bruno and I spoke several times over the weekend, and we both agree that our hope of sharing our vision for growth has been turned into an unfortunate and unprofessional social media debate that is both harmful and divisive for all. Dr. Ben Carson sent a tweet out yesterday that I think we should all take to heart. He tweeted, "In honor of Dr. King, we must allow the content of our character rather than the loudest pundit voices to determine who we are as a nation." I would add that the same holds true for our community and our university.

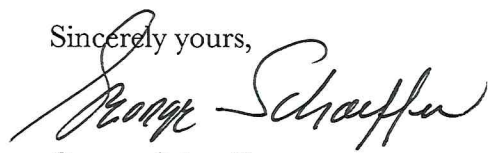
The process of notifying the public of an election call required a 30-day gap prior to our being able to present the plan at a meeting of the Police Jury. Unfortunately, this resulted in an enormous amount of misinformation being spread on social media about the plan that must be clarified. To be fair, there have also been some legitimate concerns raised that also must be addressed before we move forward. Dr. Bruno agrees with me that there is not enough time under our present schedule to adequately address these concerns. For this reason, I respectfully request that you withdraw the Vision 2031 proposal from today's agenda.

To be clear, we are not abandoning the millage concept or proposal. We also believe a vote of the people should be the proper outcome for the public interest. We will review our timing and approach, seek additional input, and wait for our next best opportunity to convince Ouachita voters that growth, economic prosperity, and a better quality of life are obtainable for all with a meaningful plan and vision.

Until then, the University of Louisiana Monroe --- our university --- will stay the course and educate and train tomorrow's workforce, move quickly to establish a medical school for this area, and work collaboratively with our region for improvement at every level. And we will always especially appreciate the support for Vision 2031 that has been expressed from both alumni and our business leadership during this time. This plan represents a common vision shared by many business owners in our community who have our parish's economic development as their primary motivation.

Thank you and your fellow jurors for their interest in ULM and your service to our area.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Schaeffer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

George Schaeffer

cc: Mr. Walt Caldwell
Mr. Jack Clampit
Ms. Pat Moore
Dr. Ollibeth Reddix
Mr. Scotty Robinson
Dr. Nick Bruno