



CITY OF SHREVEPORT

## MAYOR TOM ARCENEUX

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tom Arceneux

**MAYOR**

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### Mardi Gras Parade Changes

The City of Shreveport has adopted changes for two of its largest Mardi Gras Krewes.

Mayor Arceneux met with the Shreveport Police Department, Shreveport Fire Department, SPAR, and Public Works after the 2023 Mardi Gras season to determine how the city could best handle the public safety issues associated with the growth of the two of its largest Mardi Gras parades. “We cannot control what someone might do in a crowd,” said Mayor Tom Arceneux. “We want to give those who might be disruptive less opportunity and to give SPD a better chance to patrol areas where problems might arise.”

As a result of those meetings, the administration developed a new policy for the parades and discussed the changes with Krewe representatives from Centaur and Gemini last week.

The policy goals for the parades, and the major policy changes, are:

- **Have a shorter parade route, which would allow SPD to be able to staff the route adequately.**
  - Although originally proposed to begin at Stoner Avenue the city will permit the parades to begin at the railroad bridge near Veterans Park, instead of downtown.
- **Have parades end by approximately dusk, instead of well after dark.**
  - The parades will begin at 2:30 p.m. instead of the current 3:00 p.m.
- **Have better-managed parades with fewer delays.**
  - The contracts with Krewes will have tighter restrictions on how far apart floats could be, better communication ability between the floats and the City’s EOC, more wreckers available to handle the inevitable mechanical issues with floats, more stringent requirements to start and end on time, and penalties for Krewes which do not comply with these contract provisions.
- **Have only one parade in a day.**
  - This year the African American History Parade and the Krewe of Centaur Parade are scheduled for the same date – February 3, 2024.

The African American History Parade in Downtown Shreveport has occurred on the first Saturday of February for more than 30 years, as a kick-off to Black History Month. The Administration believes that it would be inappropriate to ask the parade’s organizer to move the parade two or three weeks later in 2024 to keep the Krewe of Centaur Mardi Gras parade from having to change its date.

Unfortunately, for 2024, that requires that Krewe of Centaur roll on a different date than is traditional for it. The city suggested two possible dates – Sunday, February 4, or the prior Saturday, January 27. We believe that Centaur’s parade will work out fine on either date.

Depending on when Mardi Gras falls in other years, there will be times when one of the Krewes will have to shift its date. In some years, no changes will be needed.

“We want the parades in Shreveport. But we also want them to be as safe as possible, because if they are not, the families and individuals who have enjoyed those parades for years may be afraid to attend them,” said Mayor Arceneaux. “That is a far worse consequence than a change of time or date.”

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