

## **Abita Springs Alderman – choose 5**

E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.	Republican	
Lynne Congemi	Republican	No responses
Regan Kelley Contois	Independent	
Stewart ‘ManyLightnings’ Eastman	Green	
Lex LeBlanc	Independent	
W.E. ‘Pat’ Patterson, III	Republican	
Stephen Saussy	Republican	
Eric Templet	Republican	

### **Questions and answers:**

- 1) **Why do you want to continue as Alderman of Abita Springs? (I)**  
**Why do you want to become Alderman of Abita Springs? (C)**

#### **E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.**

*I want to become an Alderman in Abita Springs because after attending town meetings, I realized that the town’s Municipal Codes are very much in need of review and clarification. The current administration has begun working on municipal codes, a master plan and zoning districts. I want to become an Alderman to ensure that this important work remains constant and keeps pace with the development of Abita Springs.*

#### **Lynne Congemi**

*No response received*

#### **Regan Kelley Contois**

*I have been involved in planning for my entire career, both the private and public sectors. My job as a Planner and Landscape Architect at St. Tammany Parish affords me a unique perspective on the speed and scale of development happening on the Northshore. Additionally, my affinity for art, architecture, and nature have inspired me to become engaged as a community member in our town. I can offer practical experience and leadership as we work together to create a unified and sustainable vision for the of the Town of Abita Springs.*

#### **Stewart ‘ManyLightnings’ Eastman**

*Aldermen should be proactive, and I want to set the best example of what an Alderman can be. I want a better platform to fight for my ideas and proposals; and, I want to ensure that any other items that come before the Aldermen are thoroughly discussed, researched, and debated before action is taken.*

#### **Lex LeBlanc**

*I’ve lived in Abita Springs for 25 years and raised my children in this town. I love living in Abita Springs and now that I’m retired I have time to commit to our town. In September 2021 I retired from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) as the Technology Development Lead.*

#### **W.E. ‘Pat’ Patterson, III**

*I want to continue the work that I have been doing to up grade our infrastructure systems. We have completed our sewage collection system upgrade but now we need to rehabilitate our sewage treatment plant. It is in disrepair and needs structural assessment and mechanical overhaul to bring it up to today’s standards. A majority of our streets and bridges are substandard and need repair and in some cases replacement. I will continue to work with our town administration to pursue both state and federal grants to enhance our roadways and bridges to bring them to acceptable levels. I would like to finish our comprehensive reclassification of zoning and permitted uses in our town and address our present and future growth with the input from the whole community so that we can all move forward like-minded.*

### **Stephen Saussy**

*I want to continue the work of creating a transparent administration from a legislative position. In the history of Abita Springs history, there has not been a time where the town's finances have been displayed publicly on a monthly basis to the extent of my tenure as Alderman. With this in mind, I want to continue to improve Abita in order to better the lives of each and every citizen. I want to continue as an Alderman to continue to improve the path of communication with the citizens of plans for the town, construction projects, new developments, etc., before moving forward*

### **Eric Templet**

*Hello, I'm Eric Templet (pronounced Tom-play). I am seeking to represent the citizens of Abita Springs as an Alderman on the Town Council. While I am originally from Baton Rouge, my family has called Abita Springs home for 16 years and counting. My wife, Patricia, and I are raising a son and a daughter here and we love Abita! I also believe in serving my community. I don't want to be someone who complains; I want to be someone who helps to make improvements.*

## **2) What are three significant accomplishments in your current term as Alderman? (I) What are three of your significant political, personal, or business accomplishments? (C)**

### **E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.**

*This is the first time I have run for political office but I am honored to be an Elections Commissioner for St. Tammany Parish.*

*I was very proud to graduate cum laude with a BS Degree from Nicholls State University. I was pleased that I worked my way through school.*

*My business accomplishments include auditing worldwide corporations so that they could attain registration as quality corporations.*

### **Lynne Congemi**

*No response received*

### **Regan Kelley Contois**

*1. I sought to develop a level of trust with the citizens of Abita to help our community better understand the legislative process and how they could become involved with governance.*

*2. I worked to safeguard our town from uncontrolled development by using moratoriums to give us time to investigate practical solutions to outdated ordinances.*

*3. I collaborated on creating new legislation such as: low density zoning designation, stormwater ordinance, and town master plan. Additionally I have maintained awareness for greenspace and flood protection. I offered ordinances for consideration to establish roadway and traffic standards for our town.*

### **Stewart 'ManyLightnings' Eastman**

*My professional accomplishments involved getting large computer systems to run right, run better, and to provide new services for the sailors in our Navy. Of my personal accomplishments these are relevant to this campaign: Marching in 23 consecutive Krewe du Vieux parades as well as nine Push Mow parades shows that I will support and encourage our wonderful Push Mow Parade. The 17 medals I have won here in the Senior Olympics in bicycling and my leading the annual Bike Festival ride around town show that I will remain dedicated to supporting bicycling as a vital part of Abita's culture and attractiveness. My state championship and other awards in Beard and Moustache competitions and continued appearance in local and national newspapers shows that I will support Abita's uniqueness and that of its citizens in expressing themselves in a positive and entertaining fashion. My political accomplishments include successfully lobbying for an Abita "Twenty is Plenty" speed limit, convincing two civic groups to sponsor a Bicycle Fixit Station by the Trailhead, and alerting the citizens of the town of plans to build a large chain store..*

### **Lex LeBlanc**

*I have been happily married to the same woman for over thirty years. We raised two daughters, both went to college on full scholarships and are working in their field of study. My professional career has been very rewarding and many of my designs are in use today.*

### **W.E. 'Pat' Patterson, III**

*Codification of all of our ordinances so that everyone has access to our laws and legislation via our website.*

*Short-term rental legislation to regulate rentals in our town*

*Planned Unit Developments {PUD} moratorium*

### **Stephen Saussy**

*- Some of our biggest accomplishments include working with Administration in providing a well balanced budget, completing the greatest amount of work orders by Public Works department, and supporting the rehabilitation of the sewer system/lift station.*

*- I also worked closely with administration during the Covid lock down to procure security by providing technology to the town*

*- I worked with local state representative in providing services during Ida.*

*- I started to budget for a master plan to begin.*

*- Most importantly, I fought and advocated against bring the desires and developments from cooperate America into our unique town.*

*As stated four years ago, "Many years ago our local fire district was spiraling downward at a rapid pace. Equipment wasn't being purchased, morale was low, and there was talks of a possible merger with another district just to survive. Former board members didn't possess the skills warranted to turn on a fire hydrant much less run a fire department. As difficult as it was, I began the process of eliminating those, whose practices were detrimental to the department". I ask every citizen to visit with our local fireman and ask them to what degree, the fire department has changed for the positive. Since my election four years ago, I have been appointed to the board of Fire District 8 and have recently been reappointed for another term.*

### **Eric Templet**

*I attended Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, earning a bachelor's degree in Health Promotion and Exercise Science in 2000, followed by a master's degree in Kinesiology in 2001. In 2013, I earned my Doctor of Business Administration degree from California Intercontinental University. And I am currently working on a Master's of Healthcare Administration degree at Louisiana State University. Currently, I work in the Healthcare Administration field. I have also taught part-time at Southeastern Louisiana University for 22 years and counting. I also proudly served in the Navy Reserve from 2003 to 2007 as a Military Intelligence Specialist.*

*For the past three years, I have served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for Abita Springs and currently serve as the chairman. During this service, I have witnessed a welcomed increase in citizen involvement in town government, which I would like to continue to increase. Every vote I make on the P&Z committee is based on what I believe the citizens of Abita Springs expect to keep their community safe and consistent while respecting the property rights of our citizens.*

## **3) What will be your vision for Abita Springs at the end of your four-year term? What will you do to improve and enhance the quality of life for Abita Springs residents, businesses and visitors?**

### **E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.**

*Our **joie de vivre** (joy of life) is important to maintain for our residents and visitors alike. I want to encourage our young families to take an interest in their hometown because it is their future for generations to come.*

*My vision for Abita Springs is to keep our historical/architectural suitability while we grow.*

*I will work to ensure that our business requirements are clear and understandable in each zoning district.*

## **Lynne Congemi**

*No response received*

## **Regan Kelley Contois**

*My goal for Abita Springs is to create an updated zoning map and master plan with significant community involvement that will guide development, protect citizens, grow businesses, and help Abita continue to be a unique creative town to visit, work, and live. Additionally, I seek to advance Abita's representation by conducting outreach to local and state governments. Finally, I want to create an environment for openness, collaboration, and trust between the citizens and the representatives of Abita Springs.*

## **Stewart 'ManyLightnings' Eastman**

*I hope to see even less chain stores and more original, local businesses. And they should flourish alongside a healthy stock of attractive, native trees. And I hope to continue all our festivals and cultural events, and perhaps even add new ones. This can be achieved by revised or new local ordinances, and it is the duty of the Aldermen to write and pass them.*

## **Lex LeBlanc**

*The quality of life in Abita Springs is very good and has an appeal to many people seeking to move. This means that Abita will continue to grow. It is very important to understand the growth and the increasing demands on the town's infrastructure. The town's water, sewage, waste collection, and electrical grid need the same growth. Reviewing, understanding and bringing Abita Springs town ordinances up-to-date is critical to the town's future growth.*

## **W.E. 'Pat' Patterson, III**

*My vision is that we have a comprehensive zoning plan with concise outline of use and provisions for each zone in the plan. Major progress on the upgrading of our road and bridges to be to acceptable standards. Upgrades and refurbishing of the existing sewage treatment plant and enhancements to our force mains. Raising of Town Hall to preserve that historic building and allow for different uses for the town, citizens and visitors. To have a Master plan in place for the continue growth and life style of our Town. Safe streets initiative to have sidewalks, bike paths and pocket parks to make our town walkable and safe. To have a vibrant and diversified downtown/historic district for citizens and visitors alike with attractions for all and to present a quaint area with quality attractions.*

*Continued development of our trailhead complex including additions to the waterpark/splashpad, playground, picnic areas and the Amphitheater.*

## **Stephen Saussy**

What is your vision for Abita Springs at the end of your four year term? *As I mentioned four years ago, "At the beginning of my first day, I can only hope that the newly elected Mayor will embrace transparency of the Town's finances. We are a town of approximately 2900 residents. Under the right leadership, Abita Springs, is setting an example for the United States of how government should conduct itself and give its citizens—the tax payers—the dignity and respect they so deserve. Many Politicians act as if they are beyond reproach, that their decision is best for all. It is my goal that we no longer have a legislative body that fails the people of Abita. This means restoring communication between the government and the people we serve and promising transparency in all that we do". Not only do I feel this has been accomplished, as the finances are published on line monthly, the town has the one of the greatest if not the largest emergency contingencies funds on hand in Abita History. I, for one, have been extremely public that the citizens, not Corporate America or wealthy developers, shall aid in governing the town.*

What will you do to improve and enhance the quality of life for Abita Springs' residents, businesses, and visitors? *Again, as I stated four years ago; "First fight for transparency. As stated above, , I will continue to work tirelessly in getting Abita Springs, up and running with a daily transparent overview of the Towns fiscal status. Clean (just not from debris, but pot holes repaired, etc. ...), and work with those less fortunate to improve their own properties. Long before entering the curve on Hwy 59 into Abita, You will notice, you're arriving in a Town that not only talks about being clean but practices what it preaches. Being fully transparent for all to see, but more importantly for all to understand". Although, we have had more substantial issues to address; sewer, lift station, developers wanting to develop*

beyond the towns infrastructure capacity to name a few. In realizing we have had major issues to address, we must add the resources to clean the town, enforce fines for littering, speeding. We must assure proper drainage, and change the ordinances so that we can focus on Abita citizens, FIRST, while protecting the Citizens investment in a town, called home.

### **Eric Templet**

*The following is my candidacy platform:*

- 1) To enact legislation allowing Abita Springs to grow in a way that preserves the town's unique character and aesthetics.*
- 2) To work with the administration, other aldermen, and citizens to create fundamental guidelines for property development that will minimize the effects on sanitation, flooding, traffic, and litter.*
- 3) To keep residents informed with accurate information about issues affecting them through social media platforms and personal communications.*
- 4) To help residents understand the procedures and ordinances of town government. I want to use my experience in teaching to create a training program for different boards in Abita and citizens to educate citizens and officials about the rights, responsibilities, and duties of each board, procedures, and processes of town government. I will lead the creation of Citizens Academy, as implemented in other municipalities, in Abita to this end.*
- 5) To advocate for the town's interests at the state and parish levels by soliciting meetings with parish and state officials to discuss issues that Abita Springs families face.*

## **4) What environmental issues do you consider important to Abita Springs?**

### **E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.**

*I worked for The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management and I will bring the all-important lessons learned in air, water, beautification, landscaping, and noise pollution, to the administration for consideration. We can achieve our motto of "Where Nature Performs Miracles".*

### **Lynne Congemi**

*No response received*

### **Regan Kelley Contois**

*Flood protection and tree canopy are two parts of the same system that will significantly impact Abita's future. Adopting a stormwater policy last year was extremely important; however, further development standards to reduce runoff, increase tree protection, and regulate pervious to impervious space are needed. This legislation will help protect citizens' homes and businesses while providing green space and natural habitat. It will also reduce insurance, development, and maintenance costs while enhancing the town's character.*

### **Stewart 'ManyLightnings' Eastman**

- \* Reducing runoff into our storm drainage. Every new development should not merely guide runoff into the ditches but avoid increasing runoff at all. This requires preventing impervious driveways, parking lots, and slabs.*
- \* Reducing plastic waste and litter. Volunteers picking it up is not enough! We need to enforce anti-litter ordinances, and prevent businesses from selling or using known litter creating items.*
- \* Achieving 100% sustainable energy as soon as practical. We should start with solar panels on all municipal buildings along with storage batteries, and by removing the rule against solar panels of the Historic Commission. We should negotiate with the two electric utilities to progressively increase renewable energy sources.*
- \* Protecting our trees. We need to stay a Tree City and go beyond that to protect native species, remove invasive species, and make it easier for citizens to trim their tree cover without excessive paperwork or expense.*

### **Lex LeBlanc**

*The town's waste treatment plant is very old and is operating near capacity. Preventing any release into the Abita Creek is a high priority. Encouraging the use of alternate energy harvesting and conservation to the highest extent possible. Although there is potential conflict with some of the goals of the historical committee*

### **W.E. 'Pat' Patterson, III**

*I consider tree management a big concern. We need to make sure ,as we grow, that we protect our tree canopy for the future. No clear cutting as we observed with the development that was being put in on Hwy 36 until we placed a moratorium on Planned unit developments.*

*Energy, we have added low voltage wiring for camaras that we use to protect our town at a savings to the town and to conserve energy. Also we have installed fiber optics throughout the town and its facilities to enhance our capability will increasing speed and saving additional energy.*

#### **Stephen Saussy**

*The sewage system is a priority. We need to address newer subdivisions and how they may negatively disrupt the natural flow of water. Infrastructure issues that will need to be addressed before additional subdivisions are built and is currently a priority of this legislative body and Administration. Drainage is paramount and our waterways need attention. The town can only do so much with parish/state/federal assistance. We are still waiting on the Abita River and Long Branch Creek to be cleaned post Ida.*

#### **Eric Temple**

*I have heard numerous times from citizens of Abita that keeping our lush green spaces is important to them, so it's important to me too. While serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission, I was part of drafting the stormwater/run-off ordinances to keep contaminants out of our natural aquifer. As an alderman, I will continue to work with (and lead where possible) the town administration to continue such work to keep Abita's environment healthy.*

### **5) Please rank your top three priorities for this new term and outline your plan for implementing them.**

#### **E.J. Boudreaux, Jr.**

*Review all the Code of Ordinances: This will be achieved by working together with the Board of Aldermen and the Administration.*

*Keep Abita Springs beautiful: This can be accomplished by working with the many volunteers that already give a herculean effort to maintain a clean town.*

*Ensure smart, innovative development of Abita Springs: I will only vote for actions that have been thoroughly examined, shared with the public, and benefit the residents of Abita Springs.*

#### **Lynne Congemi**

*No response received*

#### **Regan Kelley Contois**

1. *Anyone who has come to a Council Meeting in the last 4 years will know that establishing a community master plan and new zoning map has been my top priority. I believe we need to establish a community vision in order to grow the town in a sustainable, creative, and fiscally viable manner. The zoning map and associated ordinances will ensure our ability to manage the development of our town in the future. Over the last year, the citizens, town staff, Alderman, and various town boards have learned a lot about the process of modifying legislation. I feel we have finally reached a point where everyone understands the need for a unified plan and is ready to bring creative ideas forward to make it happen. I look forward to participating in the development of our community master plan.*

2. *Our town would benefit from a parking, streetscape, and bikeway plan to better organize how vehicular traffic and pedestrians navigate Abita Springs. The opportunity exists to enhance the experience of visitors and residents by creating safe and attractive walking and bike access and more efficient parking. This will also benefit local businesses by creating an environment where people will want to linger and spend more to support local art, food, goods, and services. I will collaborate with town staff to apply for funding to create the plan and seek creative strategies to fund implementation such as working with town citizen groups, seeking grants, and establishing dedicated town funds towards this project.*

3. *Abita needs better representation on a Parish and State level. As a small town that is divided into three council districts, Abita does not have a specific individual who can work on our behalf on a Parish level. By lobbying Parish officials during the upcoming redistricting process, I will seek to have all of Abita be represented by one council member. This will help us to establish better funding, development*

agreements and generally raise the profile of our municipality within the Parish, Additionally, I will reach out to state leadership to request support for the needs of our town using our masterplanning efforts to secure funding for infrastructure and storm recovery.

### **Stewart ‘ManyLightnings’ Eastman**

1: The commercial zone classifications and rules should be revised to prevent intrusion by chain, formula type businesses like Dollar stores. I have already proposed ordinances to do this and will keep pushing for them. Similarly, the subdivision ordinances should be studied and improved to prevent large subdivisions and to ensure the developer fully pays all the costs, both short term and long term, and builds any required improvements first not last.

2: The Historic District rules should be rewritten and replaced with a goal to stop harassing current residents over minor repairs and to actually prevent new, modern business buildings. As an Alderman I will take a leading role in rewriting these rules. Meanwhile, the Town should be more proactive in improving and upgrading the cultural district, especially by encouraging those businesses which have not been contributing to begin to take part.

3: Protect our trees: Trees that should not be cut down are still being cut down, and trees are being killed by bad construction practices. Meanwhile, nuisance and invasive species of trees are being allowed to flourish without action. We need someone in charge of protecting and improving Abita’s trees, and that should be done by appointing and supporting a qualified arborist to the currently vacant position of Town Urban Forester. Taking care of our trees should be a substantial annual budget item, as Alderman I will seek to ensure this.

### **Lex LeBlanc**

Fixing the town ordinances. I’ve been reviewing the town’s ordinance for the last 3-4 years and have a working knowledge of the structure and content. Several sections need work to bring them up to date and consistent with the nomenclature contained within the State of Louisiana ordinances.

Bring Abita Springs infrastructure to a level that will support future growth. The town's budget and revenue stream does not allow for major upgrades to the town’s water, drainage, and sewage services. I would look to the State and Federal programs that could provide funds for these infrastructure improvements.

Preserving Abita Springs eclectic atmosphere. This is Abita’s true treasure. Regardless of growth we need to preserve our town’s unique atmosphere and traditions such as the Push Mow parade, festivals, farmers market, town wide garage sale, and all activities that bring visitors to our town for the day

### **W.E. ‘Pat’ Patterson, III**

I feel that it is extremely important to finish our review of the towns commercial zoning classifications and guidelines. The counsel, planning and zoning and the Historic Commission are all working together to modify, update and rewrite acceptable ordinances to be presented to the public and counsel for review and comments. I believe that review of zoning guidelines be reviewed annually to make sure that they remain relevant as we grow. It is almost impossible to take into account every circumstance but it is necessary to have safeguards in place that we face nothing community threatening.

Continuing the upgrades and expansion of our waste water treatment facilities and infrastructure. We are in the process now of connecting to the waste water facility in Arrowood. This will allow us upgraded capacity along with the ability to address and evaluate our existing plant for refurbishment. I am working with the administration to file for local, state and federal grants to help us with this project. Several million dollars will be needed to addresses our needs for the future.

Infrastructure. We are in need of street repairs and replacement to raise them up to an acceptable level. We also have some substandard bridges in the town limits that need reworking or replacement. All of these upgrades come with a price, a hefty price. We have \$200,000 set aside for repairs. Unfortunately this does not go as far as it once did. We are finalizing a cooperative agreement with St. Tammany parish to have an overlay done from the traffic circle north on Main St. past the elementary school to the end of Burvant. The total cost is \$500,000. Three hundred thousand is coming from Councilman Toledano and Councilwomen Tanner to help us with this much needed project. I will continue to work with our administration to secure funding from local, state and federal programs to help us get our roads and bridges to a level that we can all be proud to have.

## **Stephen Saussy**

- 1. Continue to establish a master plan outlining priorities with a clear plan to address each identified priority: Sewer, PUD densities, and fiscal transparency. This includes having the financial figures public in order to peel the layers of redundancy back, address the irresponsible spending, and assure all are contributing their part as employees of the tax payers. Unbeknown to most, upon being elected four years ago, the waste in public works and the lack of accountability of town assets was disgraceful. Today more than the previous administration, accountability and responsibility of town assets is monitored. Equipment is being maintained, insurance is not being paid on vehicles that sat for years not running, etc.*
- 2. I would like to establish a team to work on different projects and solicit to the citizens for their input and their contributions. This would include communicating with the citizens the Town's goals. For example, One of the greatest attractions and businesses is the Abita Brew Pub. Why isn't there ample visitor parking.*
- 3. Continue to working in eliminating blight when legal and search for resources to help the less fortunate. .*

## **Eric Temple**

*First, I want to enact legislation allowing Abita Springs to grow in a way that preserves the town's unique character and aesthetics. We are currently working on revamping our ordinances (starting with the commercial district) to protect the citizens from negative effects on sanitation, flooding, traffic, and litter. I have been a part of this process on the Planning and Zoning Commission and will continue that work as an Alderman.*

*Second, I want to help the town administration to communicate to the citizens of Abita about developments that could affect them. My first idea is to host a monthly social media live show where I will inform citizens on current and upcoming developments and take questions from citizens to keep them informed with accurate information. I will develop additional ideas as necessary to accomplish this goal.*

*Third, I advocate for the town's interests at the state and parish levels by soliciting meetings with parish and state officials to discuss issues that Abita Springs families face. I plan to start at the parish level by setting up meetings with Abita's parish council representative to pursue Abita Springs having a dedicated representative on the parish council (instead of sharing one with Mandeville). Once the process is fully known for enacting such a change, I will pursue that change to have an Abita Springs Parish Councilperson.*

**Note:** Mr Stephen Saussy provided additional answers to questions that LWVST did not ask. In fairness to the other candidates who did not have an opportunity to answer these supplemental questions, only the answers that corresponded to our questions are provided.