

City Council Sets Deadline for FEMA, State and NORD To Show Clear Path to City Playground Summer Openings

Youth & Recreation Meeting Set for May 22nd to Assess Progress

News Release

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New Orleans
City Council

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New Orleans, LA - April 7, 2009 -


Today, the New Orleans City Council Youth & Recreation Committee, led by Chair Arnie Fielkow and Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis, directed FEMA, the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD), and the State of Louisiana to work together over the next month towards the re-opening of more NORD facilities by this summer. A Youth and Recreation Committee meeting will be held on

May 22nd where the parties must account for their progress.

"Like all New Orleans citizens, I am frustrated hearing bureaucratic excuses and explanations about why many of our recreational facilities are still not rebuilt nearly 4 years after Katrina," says Council Vice President Fielkow. "I have asked FEMA, NORD and the State to come back to the Council in May, hopefully ready to announce that additional parks and playgrounds will be ready by this summer."

At today's committee meeting, the following 3 points of progress towards expediting the re-opening of city recreational facilities were noted:

- FEMA officials will now be embedded within the city administration to expedite the reimbursement process;
- No later than June 17, 2009, FEMA has pledged to open the remaining 11 FEMA trailer park sites that were temporarily occupying NORD property. FEMA has already reopened 4 former trailer sites;
- FEMA pledged in writing to work with the City and the State to ensure that the maximum federal funding is provided for each city recreation project



Panelists at the hearing included Larry Barabino, Jr. of NORD; Cynthia Sylvain-Lear, Dr. Ralph Thayer, Julie Schwam-Harris and Bill Chrisman of the City of New Orleans; Ronnie Fairly and Bob Josephson of FEMA; and James Clark and Skip Barber (GOHSEP - Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness).

New Orleans City Council

The New Orleans City Council is the legislative branch of New Orleans city government. The Council considers and enacts all local laws that govern the City of New Orleans. The Council also approves the operating and capital budgets for the City, as recommended by the mayor, and continually monitors revenues and expenditures for local government operations. The City Council is also the regulatory body for public utilities. It also reviews and has final say on many land use and zoning matters, as well as considers major economic development projects for the City. As a Board of Review for Orleans Parish, the Council examines appeals of property tax assessments for real estate taxes, and certifies tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission. Other responsibilities of the Council include overseeing the operation of the public access television in Orleans Parish.

The City Council is comprised of five districts and two councilmembers-at-large. Council President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; Council Vice-President and Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.