

City Council August 20, 2009
Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - August 20, 2009 - Today, the New Orleans City Council adopted Resolutions supporting affordable community-based health care, the Port of New Orleans' Alternative Site Plan, coastal restoration and enhancement, and the new International School of Fine and Performing Arts at Live Oak Elementary.

The Council also passed Ordinances approving the expansion of fire and police stations in District "E", and establishing a process for proper collection of property liens.

Additionally, the Council addressed a presentation from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority on its expropriation process, and a presentation from ERACE Executive Board Members updating the Council on the organization's recent activities.

The Council addressed a Subdivision Appeal involving the subdivision of property owned by Old Morrison Partners, LP & VOB Development, LLC, after holding an Executive Session to address pending litigation related to the matter.

Addressed Subdivision Appeal by Lake Carmel Subdivision / Homeowners Association



The Council held an Executive Session to address pending litigation relative to the subdivision of property owned by Old Morrison Partners, LP & VOB Development, LLC. Due to the confidentiality of the issues, they were taken up in Executive Session closed to the public.

Following the Executive Session, the Council addressed Subdivision Docket #29/09, a Subdivision Appeal by Brenda Jackson, President of the Lake Carmel Subdivision / Homeowners Association, requesting to appeal the decision of the City Planning Commission approving the Subdivision of property owned by Old Morrison Partners, LP & VOB Development, LLC Old Morrison Homes.

The Council voted to approve the Subdivision Appeal, therefore overruling the City Planning Commission's approval of Subdivision Docket #29/09.

Supported Affordable Community-Based Health Care



*Clayton Williams,
Director of Health Systems
Development for LPHI*

The Council passed Resolution R-09-432, authored by Councilmember Fielkow, expressing support for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI), and numerous public and private not-for-profit organizations for their work to provide affordable health care to the uninsured and underinsured in the Greater New Orleans region through the Primary Care Access and Stabilization Grant (PCASG), which expires September 30, 2010.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) awarded \$100 million to the State of Louisiana in July 2007 through the three-year PCASG to stabilize, expand and improve community-based primary and mental health care services in the Greater New Orleans region in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Clayton Williams, Director of Health Systems Development for LPHI, appeared before the Council to offer his support for the Resolution.

The Resolution also supports continuing efforts at the local, state and federal levels to create sustainable financing for high-quality community-based health care in the Greater New Orleans region when the PCASG expires in September 2010.

Council President Arnie Fielkow said, "Failure to identify replacement funding will result in the closure of clinics and a significant decrease of services available to those patients who need them most. We must put a plan in place to ensure that our many uninsured and underinsured residents do not experience a lapse in health care services at the expiration of this grant."

Supported Port of New Orleans Alternative Site Plan



Councilmember-at-Large
Clarkson

The Council passed Resolution R-09-433, authored by Councilmember Clarkson, supporting the application of the Port of New Orleans to use an Alternative Site Plan to more rapidly respond to international business needs.

The Port of New Orleans has submitted an application to the Foreign-Trade Zones Board to restructure the Port's Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) #2 so as to technologically advance the management of the FTZ and best serve both the current FTZ users and potential business start-ups, all contributing to Parish economic development.

Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "This Alternative Site Plan will ensure that our Port is equipped to handle the diverse needs of international businesses. It is vital that we do all we can to support the Port of New Orleans, a catalyst for economic development in the City."

Established Process for Proper Collection of Property Liens



Councilmember Head

The Council passed Ordinance Calendar Nos. 27,603 and 27,604, authored by Councilmember Head, to establish processes to ensure proper payment of property liens.

Ordinance Calendar No. 27,603 establishes penalties for collection costs relative to outstanding liens. Ordinance Calendar No. 27,604 establishes, as part of the City's process for collection of liens, that any payment collected for property taxes will first satisfy all outstanding liens, and only when all outstanding liens are satisfied in full will payment be applied towards property taxes.

District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head said, "These Ordinances will provide

the City with funds to defray the cost of legal and other services related to the collection of delinquent liens by a private attorney, as well as directly link the payment of property taxes with the payment of outstanding liens, ensuring that property owners are held responsible for liens."

Supported Coastal Restoration and Enhancement Program



Councilmember-at-Large
Fielkow

The Council passed Resolution R-09-404, authored by Councilmember Fielkow, expressing support for the Coastal Restoration and Enhancement through Science and Technology (CREST) Program and urging the state's Congressional Delegation to work with their colleagues in the U.S. Congress and with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to ensure continued funding of this program.

CREST was established in 2003 as a cooperative effort to supply the latest research and techniques in coastal restoration for state and local managers, officials and policymakers.

Council President Arnie Fielkow said, "As a coastal city, we have a direct interest in the restoration of Louisiana's coast. CREST utilizes the exceptional concentration of coastal scientists and researchers found in Louisiana and provides training for the next generation of scientists by supporting graduate and post-graduate students. We encourage the continued funding of this very important program."

Approved Expansion of Fire and Police Stations in District "E"



The Council passed Ordinance Calendar No. 27,600, authored by Councilmember Willard-Lewis, to permit the expansion of an existing fire station (Engine House 36) and the relocation and expansion of a police station (7th District).

Engine House 36 is located at 5403 Read Blvd. and the 7th District police station is now located at 10555 Lake Forest Blvd.

District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis said, "This Ordinance allows our first responders the ability to improve and enhance their stations and headquarters. We are so grateful to both our fire and police first responders for their dedication to this City, and we as a Council will continue to do all we can to provide them with the resources they need."

Addressed NORA's Expropriation Process



*Herschel Abbott, Chair of
NORA Board of Directors*

Herschel Abbott, Chair of the Board of Directors of New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA), appeared before the Council, at the request of Councilmember Clarkson, to provide specific details on a blighted property in Algiers and general information on NORA's expropriation process.

Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson felt it necessary to address the property at 1714 Shirley Drive in Algiers, following a news report on the blighted and overgrown lot and the concerns of community members about the effect of blight on neighborhoods.

Abbott explained that numerous factors, including available funds and resources and the City's adjudication process, contribute to the slow progress of properties through the expropriation process.

Council Vice President Clarkson said, "We need to work together to determine where the major delay is in the expropriation process. It is imperative that an efficient and timely process is in place to move the multitude of blighted properties in this City through the pipeline, so that they are either demolished or brought back on the market."

This issue will be discussed in a more detailed and comprehensive hearing during an upcoming joint meeting of the Budget and Recovery Committees.

Addressed Presentation from ERACE



*Marion Mackie Legard and
Bill Knecht, ERACE Executive
Board Members*

ERACE Executive Board Members Marion Mackie Legard and Bill Knecht appeared before the Council, at the request of Councilmember Fielkow, to give an update on the organization's efforts to "erase racism."

ERACE is dedicated to bringing people together in an atmosphere of safety to honestly and openly discuss race relations. The organization also strives to teach people how to discuss emotional issues with one

another, while also emphasizing the importance to learning to listen to each other. More than 150,000 of the organization's well-known "Eracism" bumper stickers have been distributed around the world.

The ERACE representatives informed the Council of their recent efforts to address racism across international borders, including meetings with tribal leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The representatives also provided information on recent grant applications for the purchase of online software which will allow for online meetings through the use of webcams, so that any person can take part in these discussions no matter where they are. Locally, this web technology will be used to address the lack of diversity in many New Orleans schools by using webcams to bring classes of children at different schools together.

Council President Arnie Fielkow said, "Thank you for dedicating yourselves to such an important issue. We recognize the importance of giving citizens the opportunity to speak honestly about issues that people are many times afraid to speak about, and to promote a safe and open atmosphere in which to do this."

The representatives invited the public to attend their weekly meetings, held on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. - this week's meeting will take place at 618 City Park Avenue (click [here](#) for map). Visit www.eracismneworleans.org for information on future meetings and the ERACE organization.

Recognized Representatives Responsible for Formation of International School of Fine & Performing Arts at Live Oak Elementary



L to R: Damon Batiste, Leslie Williams and a RSD representative

The Council passed Resolution R-09-434, authored by Councilmember Fielkow, recognizing all those who have been instrumental in the formation of the Batiste Family International School of Fine & Performing Arts at Live Oak Elementary, for their extraordinary contribution to the children of New Orleans and the future of arts education in the City.

The Batiste family, the Recovery School District, Greater New Orleans Afterschool Partnerships, and New Orleans South African Connection teamed up to found and administer the Arts in Education Initiative at the new arts school at Live Oak Elementary, which is expected to serve as a feeder school for the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA). Students in the program will be taught by acclaimed artists from around the city, the country and the world.

Council President Arnie Fielkow said, "This school is supplementing traditional academic curricula with instruction in arts and culture. It is important that we teach our children the importance of the rich heritage that New Orleans

possesses. We encourage other schools and organizations in New Orleans to use the Arts in Education Initiative as a model for arts education across the city."

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 Arnie Fielkow; Council Vice President and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson; District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura; District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.