

New Orleans City Council

Councilmember-At-Large
Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson

Statement

July 28, 2009



Councilmember-at-Large Clarkson Statement Re: Purchase of Chevron Building for City Hall

New Orleans, LA - July 28, 2009 - "Today, I voted against purchasing the Chevron Building as a new location for City Hall.

"When the Mayor first approached the Council with the idea of relocating City Hall, I considered the issue with an open mind. I was not predisposed to oppose or support the purchase because of any personalities involved. Instead, I wanted to give the idea a fair hearing and all the due diligence that it and my

constituents deserve.

"I did not then, nor do I now, think the City needs a new City Hall for ourselves while many of our constituents continue to live without streetlights, parks, and in some areas without libraries and hospitals. But, as a Realtor with 40 years of experience, I did see an excellent financial opportunity to buy a modern office building at a great price as an investment, instead of pumping the same dollar amount into a building that probably will be demolished in the coming decade.

"I believe the City's leaders ought to "think big" about the current City Hall site - a site that, with the renovations to the Superdome, Dominion Towers, the Hyatt, and the demolition of the old state buildings around Duncan Plaza, is land too valuable to be holding only a dilapidated City Hall. This site should instead be master planned for a public/private, mixed-development, government complex with an architecturally appropriate City Hall, incorporating the adjacent state property and Duncan Plaza, with private tenants to buy down the cost of government. Other progressive cities have done this, and it has worked. Twenty years ago, as a District Councilmember, I proposed this idea to the Administration. With that perspective, I have taken the opportunity to investigate the possibility of using the Chevron Building as an interim City Hall. I have consulted with my fellow Councilmembers, community leaders, constituents, former professional colleagues, the Mayor, and members of his administration.

"But even in spite of the great opportunity and potential I see for this land, I have continued to have serious reservations about the purchase. Without a comprehensive, public plan for a new City Hall development; a plan that the public has time to understand and buy into; a plan that we can show beyond a reasonable doubt will contribute to the City's wealth and not detract from its recovery, purchasing the Chevron Building is a mistake. With a team of the best minds in this City, we may yet have a chance in the future to come up with a planning process that provides for a new City Hall that doesn't detract from recovery. But with the contract for the Chevron Building on the table today, my vote is 'No.' "

Contact:

Jacquelyn Cole

Office of Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson

Ph: 504-658-1072

Cell: 504-577-3600

jcole@cityofno.com

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 S. Head; District "C" Councilmember James Carter; District "D" Councilmember Cynthia Hedge-Morrell; and District "E" Councilmember Cynthia Willard-Lewis.

