



**Civil District Court Judge
Orders Council Emails Be Turned Over to Court**

Review to Begin Within 24 Hours

News Release

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New Orleans, LA - March 12, 2009 - This morning, Orleans Civil District Court Judge Lloyd Medley, ordered local lawyer Tracie Washington to hand over, within 24 hours, compact discs containing City Councilmember emails requested via public records requests and made available to her by Sanitation Department Director Veronica White.

The release of the emails was done without the Council's knowledge or consent and without prior review of the content for information of a privileged and confidential nature.

The Judge's order to turn over the email correspondence mirrors repeated requests made over the last few weeks to Tracie Washington by legal counsel for the New Orleans City Council. The order also requires that Ms. Washington fully disclose to Judge Medley the identities of those individuals with whom she shared the email correspondence.

In this morning's preliminary injunction hearing, the Council's special counsel Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar presented oral argument and affidavits from Councilmembers, a former City Attorney and lawyers currently representing the City Council to support the Council's argument. A representative of the current City Attorney's Office made oral argument in support of the City Council position.

The City Council's legal counsel argued that the release of these Council emails may constitute a serious breach of legal rights and protections afforded the City Council, its constituents and the City of New Orleans.

Judge Medley's ruling orders that Ms. Washington turn over to the court all email and other correspondence that she has received. The Judge's order also continues the prohibition of Ms. Washington's public release of the emails. Judge Medley will begin review of all correspondence to determine what content is privileged and what content can be released to the public. Following the Judge's review, he will meet with lawyers and share his findings.

Because of the subject matter of this issue, media calls are being referred to Steven J. Lane, Attorney and Managing Partner, Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar, (504) 680-0527, slane@hhkc.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 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.