



City Council Investigates Council Emails Sent to Local Attorney By Sanitation Director without Legal Review

News Release

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City Council](#)

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New Orleans, LA - March 3, 2009 - New Orleans City Attorney Penya Moses-Fields has informed the City Council that Councilmember emails have been made available to local lawyer, Tracie Washington, at her request. Washington filed a public records request for these documents, but instead of working through the City Attorney's Office, which normally reviews public records requests, Washington obtained these records from 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. This content might include attorney-client communications, the personal information of constituents, information on pending litigation, and information relating to the federal investigation surrounding New Orleans Affordable Homeownership (NOAH).

Today, the City Council's special counsel, Herman, Herman, Katz & Cotlar, notified Councilmembers 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.

The City Council is expected to take the matter up in Executive Session Thursday to decide how to best protect the interests of the public, the City, and the Council.

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@hkc.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.