



City Council March 5, 2009
Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

March 5, 2009

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[New Orleans
City Council](#)

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New Orleans, LA - March 5, 2009 - Today, the New Orleans City Council passed an Ordinance relative to the prohibition on out of parish use of city owned or leased vehicles, and held an Executive Session to address pending litigation and security plans relative to the possible creation of an independent Management Information Services system for the Council.

The Council also received a report from FEMA, informing the Council of their options regarding the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) which set flood levels throughout the City and therefore affect insurance rates.

Additionally, the Council received a presentation from the Louisiana Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society on the challenges those afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis face.

Addressed Take-Home Vehicles Policy



Councilmember Head

The Council passed Ordinance Calendar No. 27,381, authored by Councilmember Head, to repeal Section 2-901 of the City Code. Section 2-901 prohibited any out of parish use of city owned or leased vehicles.

The Ordinance provides clarification regarding the administration's role in setting policy pertaining to take-home vehicles.

District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head said, "As a Council we continuously work to ensure transparency and accountability in government. This Ordinance provides clarification on the City's take-home vehicles policy and affirms that the administration has the ability to set policy as needed relative to take-home cars."

Evaluated New Options on Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps



FEMA

Michael Honeycutt of FEMA came before the Council to present four new options regarding the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM), which set the flood levels throughout the City and affect insurance rates of New Orleans citizens.

The four options given to the Councilmembers were:

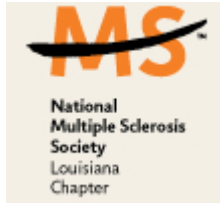
1. Use existing maps
2. Continue with the Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFEs) recently adopted after hurricanes Katrina and Rita
3. Adopt the Preliminary DFIRMs data for compliance only
4. Adopt new DFIRMS through the normal adoption process

After reviewing the information presented by FEMA, the Council chose option two, which Councilmembers believe best protects the interests of all citizens.

By choosing to continue with the Advisory Base Flood Elevations, New Orleans citizens will still be protected from substantial damage caused by hurricanes of sizes comparable to Rita and Katrina.

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "We appreciate FEMA taking the time to present this detailed and comprehensive report to us. It is important that we ensure an equitable and fair assessment of flood levels around the City so that our citizens are not faced with unnecessarily high insurance costs on their properties."

Received Presentation on Multiple Sclerosis



Crystal Smith, Director of the Louisiana Chapter of Multiple Sclerosis, appeared before the Council to give a presentation and to promote M.S. Week, taking place from March 2nd to March 8th.

During M.S. Week, the Louisiana chapter is asking the New Orleans community to join the movement to "Move-It to End MS" with simple actions throughout the week to spread the word and raise awareness.

The Chapter Members also gave a "Try on M.S." presentation explaining the challenges and obstacles of those living with M.S. including numbness, blindness, and a loss of balance and coordination.

Also in attendance was Kathrine Hoover from Citizens with Disabilities and Peggy Wilson, the Chairman of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of New Orleans and a former New Orleans City Councilmember.

The representatives announced details on upcoming events and a chapter-wide trip to Washington, D.C. to promote greater awareness of the disease.

Councilmembers expressed their gratitude to the representatives for the comprehensive and informative presentation and for taking the time to appear at the Council meeting.

Holds Executive Session

The Council held an Executive Session to address pending litigation and the possible creation of an independent Management Information Services system for the Council. Due to the confidentiality of both issues, they were taken up in Executive Session closed to the public.

Pending Litigation

Attention was paid today in Executive Session to pending litigation Case #09-2279, Civil District Court for the Parish of Orleans, City Council versus Tracie Washington, Tionne Simon and the Louisiana Justice Institute.

Independent Management Information Services System

Councilmembers discussed the development of security plans relative to the possible creation of an independent Management Information Services system for the City Council.

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.