New Orleans City Council

Council Votes 7-0 to Allow Demolition and Planned Mixed Income Redevelopment of The Big Four Public Housing Complexes

News Release **December 20, 2007**

Contact:
Ronald J. Pursell
Council Chief of Staff
(504) 658-1082
rjpursell@cityofno.com

New Orleans City Council

Join Our Mailing List!

New Orleans, LA - December 20, 2007 - This afternoon, after more than four hours of public comment, the New Orleans City Council voted 7-0 to allow demolition of the Lafitte, St. Bernard, C.J. Peete and B.W. Cooper housing developments and expressed its commitment to planned mixed income redevelopment.

The Lafitte complex will follow a phased redevelopment. The St. Bernard complex will follow a phased redevelopment, if workable under the plan.

The motion specified that upon completion of the redevelopment, a minimum number of units will not be demolished and will be prepared for occupancy in the next six months. Specifically, 94 interim and potentially 102 additional interim units will be prepared for occupancy at Lafitte as well as 75 interim units at St. Bernard.

The Council's motion further requested that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) assure immediate redevelopment following the targeted demolitions. The Council asked that HUD and HANO provide to the Council quarterly performance reports on the status of redevelopment. The Council also asked that HUD ensure equitable restructuring of the board of directors of HANO and pledged that the Council will solicit local input into the redevelopment process.

Prior to the Council's vote on the motion, each side was given equal time to comment. The Housing Authority of New Orleans gave the main presentation for the proponents. Individual citizens, representatives of groups and organizations and the faith community also offered comments.

Before action on the demolition motion was taken, the Council by a vote of 7-0 overruled the decision of the Housing Conservation District Review Committee (HCDRC), granting demolition of the Lafitte Development. HCDRC, a historic district review committee and an arm of the City's Safety and Permits Department, had previously denied the request of the Housing Authority of New Orleans to demolish the Lafitte complex. The City Council took up the issue because under the law it is the appeal body of the HCDRC.

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.