



## City Council Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

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**New Orleans, LA - August 7, 2008** - Today the New Orleans City Council addressed the New Orleans Affordable Homeownership program, supported Panama Canal economic development opportunities, addressed the importance of an equal base pay rate for firefighters and supported the beginning of the second phase of the "Desire Hope VI Project."

### *Addresses New Orleans Affordable Homeownership*



*Mayor Nagin*

Mayor C. Ray Nagin appeared before the Council today, at the request of Council President Clarkson, to address recent investigations of New Orleans Affordable Homeownership (NOAH).

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "Mayor, we thank you for coming today and speaking with us about NOAH. We recognize the importance of working together to get to the bottom of this issue and we look forward to assisting in any way we can with the ongoing investigation."

Mayor Nagin stated that the Administration was currently conducting an internal investigation of NOAH and would continue to do so to resolve all issues related to work done on NOAH properties throughout the City. The Mayor also assured the Council that the Administration was in no way impeding the investigations of NOAH being done by any other agency.

### *Supports Panama Canal Economic Development Opportunities*



*Members of the Panama Canal Delegation*

Members of the Panama Canal Delegation appeared before the Council today, at the request of Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow, to give a debriefing on the Delegation's trip to Panama.

The Delegation addressed the progress being made in Panama with regard to the expansion of the Panama Canal, as well as the necessity to take action to be a part of this important economic development opportunity.

Councilmember Fielkow said, "We need to have a plan in place so that New Orleans can take advantage of the increased business that will result from the expansion of the Canal. We are competing for this business with many other cities and we need to be proactive in our approach so as to ensure that we do not miss out on this opportunity."

The Delegation was made up of Plaquemines Parish President Bill Nungesser, State Senator A.G. Crowe, Port of New Orleans President Gary LaGrange, and the Honorable Eric Rodriguez, Consul General of Panama.

## *Addresses Equal Firefighter Base Pay Rate*



Representatives from Paillet, Meunier & LeBlanc, L.L.P.

The Council heard a presentation from Ken Paillet and other members of the Paillet, Meunier & LeBlanc, L.L.P. accounting firm, regarding the Civil Service Commission's recommendation on the base pay rate for firefighters.

The Council previously requested that Paillet, Meunier & LeBlanc prepare a comparative review of the pay rates to determine whether the base pay rate for firefighters was determined fairly.

Budget Committee Chair District "D" Councilmember Hedge-Morrell said, "The Council's intention is to request that the Civil Service Commission re-examine all base pay rates not at the Southern Regional Average and work towards bringing those pay rates to the Southern Regional Average."

The Council will revisit this item at its next regular Council meeting on August 21, 2008.

## *Supports "Desire Hope VI Project"*



Councilmember Willard-Lewis

The Council passed Resolution R-08-456, authored by Councilmember Willard-Lewis, in support of beginning the second phase of the "Desire Hope VI Project" in Council District "E."

The second phase includes the addition of 160 units to the Savoy Place Apartments. This phase will complete the project which, at its completion, will have added a total of 318 units to the apartment complex.

The project was first approved in 2006 to improve housing and encourage community development in the Desire Florida area.

## **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.