

## City Council Examines Homelessness Issue & Hears Testimony from Social Service Agencies

*Council Passes Resolutions Supporting  
New Orleans Hornets Northshore Broadcasts,  
"Pump to the River" Project and  
Expanded Fresh and Healthy Food Access*

News Release

January 10, 2008

### Contents

Examining Homelessness Issue

Supporting New Orleans  
Hornets

Pledging Support of Regional  
"Pump to the River" Project

Expanding Fresh and Healthy  
Food Access

### Contact:

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

[New Orleans  
City Council](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

**New Orleans, LA - January 10, 2008** - Today, the New Orleans City Council comprehensively examined the City's homelessness issue and heard testimony from social service agencies serving the homeless in New Orleans. The Council also passed three resolutions supporting New Orleans Hornets Northshore broadcasts, the "Pump to the River" drainage project and expanded fresh and healthy food access.

### *Examining Homelessness Issue*



*Representatives from social service agencies  
serving the homeless in New Orleans*

Numerous social service agencies and groups serving the homeless in New Orleans testified before the City Council today. As its first order of business the Council convened these agencies to comprehensively examine the City's homelessness issue. Through the testimony from City Council members the importance of agency collaboration was reinforced.

Among those testifying were social service professionals working on interim housing, mental and physical health, law enforcement and workforce development. In the coming weeks, follow-up meetings with council members will be held to continue coordination of an action plan to address this issue.

Offering testimony were Martha Kegel, Executive Director of UNITY of Greater New Orleans; Sam Scaffidi, NOPD Homeless Assistance Collaborative; Calvin Parker, Manager of Multifamily Housing Programs for the State of Louisiana Office of Community Development - Disaster Recovery Unit; Lisa Woodruff-White, Deputy Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Social Services and Ron Gonzales, Executive Director of New Orleans Mission.

## ***Supporting New Orleans Hornets***



*Representatives from Cox Communications and Charter Communications*

The resolution requests the Council's Special Development Projects & Economic Development and the Cable & Telecommunications Committees work with the St. Tammany Parish Council, representatives from the New Orleans Hornets, Cox Communications and Charter Communications to return broadcasts of New Orleans Hornets basketball games to St. Tammany Parish.

The Council resolution outlined the importance of the New Orleans Hornets to the general economic vitality of the City. The resolution also reinforced the related economic and entertainment benefits the Hornets bring to the citizens and businesses of metro New Orleans.

Special Development Projects & Economic Development Committee Chair Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow, Committee Member District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head and Cable & Telecommunications Committee Chair District "C" Councilmember James Carter and Committee Member and Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson formally participated in the formulation of the resolution.

### ***Pledging Support of Regional "Pump to the River" Project***



*Members of Jefferson Parish delegation*

The Council's action formally supported the "Pump to the River" drainage project, citing the importance of a collaborative process and alternative methods of enhancing flood protection and drainage. The project reflects the recommendation of the August 30, 2007 United States Army Corps of Engineers Report to Congress. "Pump to the River" calls for the removal of existing and the installation of new pumping stations at the mouths of the 17th Street, Orleans Avenue, and London Avenue canals. This project calls for these new pumping stations to discharge directly into the Mississippi River.

A Jefferson Parish delegation including Jefferson Parish President Aaron Broussard, Councilmember-at-Large John Young and members of the "Pump to the River" project appeared before the Council. They offered testimony citing the economic and quality of life benefits of the project and the protection of the lives and property of citizens in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes. The Council resolution encouraged continued engagement by the United States Army Corps of Engineers with all necessary stakeholders to address any and all concerns.

### ***Expanding Fresh and Healthy Food Access***

By resolution a task force will convene to examine options to expand access to fresh and healthy food. The task force will specifically address this critical need from both a health and an economic perspective.

The task force membership will include the City Council's Special Development Projects and Economic Development Committee, the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee, the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Development Administration, the New Orleans Health Department and the Office of the City Attorney. The task force will work to identify and include appropriate representatives from State government.

### **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.