

**Council Supports Human Relations Commission,  
Passes Resolution Supporting Port of New Orleans &  
Addresses Business Recovery Grant & Loan Program Progress**

**News Release**

**March 6, 2008**

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**New Orleans, LA - March 6, 2008** - Today, the New Orleans City Council supported the Human Relations Commission and passed Resolution R-08-108 urging approval of the 2008 legislative package of the Port of New Orleans. The Council also addressed the Louisiana Economic Development Department's Business Recovery Grant & Loan Program progress.

**Supports Human Relations Commission**



The Human Relations Commission's (HRC) 2007 Report "We Believe in One New Orleans" was presented today before the Council. The report provided insight into HRC's efforts to engage the community and outlined twelve recommendations

Members of Human Relations Commission aimed at alleviating human

relations challenges in the City.

During 2007, the HRC conducted monthly community "listening sessions." These listening sessions provided a forum for cultural group leaders to discuss their contributions and their perceptions of respect and inclusion of diverse groups in New Orleans.

Representatives from numerous cultural groups, including the Hispanic, Vietnamese, Arab American and religious communities to name a few, provided the Council with descriptions of the most prevalent concerns expressed by their group during the "listening sessions."

The 2007 Report includes twelve recommendations developed by the HRC to resolve existing human relations challenges and promote awareness and respect for all cultural groups in the City. The recommendations focus on local business, housing, police relations, education of minority students, and the role of elected officials to name a few.

The Council expressed their gratitude to the HRC for the time and effort put forth in the development of the report and proposed the creation of a task force dedicated to acting on the Commission's twelve recommendations in a timely fashion.

## Supports Port of New Orleans



The Council unanimously passed Resolution R-08-108 urging the Louisiana Legislature and Governor Jindal to approve the 2008 legislative package of the Port of New Orleans.

Gary LaGrange from the Port of  
Port of New Orleans Presentation

New Orleans appeared before the Council today to discuss improvements to the Port and trade opportunities in the Panama Canal.

The Council emphasized that approval of these projects is essential to the vitality of the Port, to the recovery of New Orleans and to the creation of new and increased economic opportunities for the citizens of New Orleans.

Councilmember-at-Large Arnie Fielkow said, "We need to take action now and take advantage of this critical opportunity for New Orleans to become the gateway to the America's."

This Resolution reflects the Council's strong support of the Port of New Orleans' legislative package. The package includes the following items:

- Commitment for \$250 million for Napoleon Container Terminal Phase 2 which will allow the Port to develop a three berth twenty acre complex to be incorporated into the Port's existing container terminal and will enable the port to secure the long term commitment of one of the world's largest container carriers by expanding terminal capacity by 45%.
- Port Priority funding request: \$6 million for improvements to the Port's France Road Container Terminal to support the development of Latin American trade through the vessel services provided by Seaboard Marine.
- Capital Outlay Request: \$14 million for cruise terminal boarding structures at Julia Street and Poland Avenue Cruise Terminals, essential to attracting the next generation of cruise vessels.
- Approval of a tax credit for Louisiana shippers for imported and exported cargo through Louisiana Ports.
- Approval of a bill to forgive bond debt loan to local governments which was provided not only to the Port but to municipalities, parishes and other local governmental entities to aid in their post Katrina recovery.
- Support for the Port's request to the State Bond Commission to give final approval for the Cold Storage project and Poland Avenue Cruise Terminal.

## Addresses Business Recovery Grant & Loan Program



The Council received an update from the Louisiana Economic Development Department on the progress of the Louisiana Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program.

Michael Hecht, Director of Business Recovery Services for the Louisiana Economic Development Department, provided the Council with a report on the Business Recovery Services for successes of Phase

### One of the program.

Michael Hecht, Director of  
the Louisiana Economic  
Development Department

Hecht also briefed the Council on the launch of Phase Two of the program and discussed steps going forward.

Hecht emphasized the department's efforts to simplify the grant and loan process - citing the numerous changes that have been made to streamline Phase Two of the small business grant program, including modifying program guidelines to include more worthy businesses.

As Phase Two commences, Hecht assured the Council that the Economic Development Department will work with the community through a series of outreach and information sessions to ensure that local business owners are informed about the grant program and necessary steps to participate.

## **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.