

## City Council October 16, 2008 Regular Meeting Summary

News Release

October 16, 2008

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**New Orleans, LA - October 16, 2008** - Today the New Orleans City Council passed Motions supporting funding for Orleans Public Defenders, addressed presentations on flood control in New Orleans and Prospect One International Art Biennial and, as the Board of Review, approved property tax assessments appeals recommendations.

The Council also honored the Consular Corps of New Orleans for their commitment to the City and received a report on the recovery of Louisiana from Senator Mary Landrieu.

Finally, the Council voted unanimously to defer approval of the 2007 Economic Development Fund grant applications and recommendations.

### *Supports Funding for Orleans Public Defenders*



*Representatives from  
Orleans Public Defenders Office*

Representatives from the Orleans Public Defenders (OPD) Office came before the Council today to give a report on the Office's mission, operational status and funding.

The Council adopted Motions M-08-576 and M-08-577 supporting funding for Orleans Public Defenders and encouraging the state to fund OPD at a level that will enable the Office to meet the standards mandated by the Louisiana Public Defender Board.

Criminal Justice Committee Chair District "C" Councilmember James Carter said, "We understand the importance of the Orleans Public Defenders Office and the services it provides to our citizens. Funding Orleans Public Defenders at a level that will enable them to meet constitutionally mandated standards is critical to ensuring a criminal justice system that is just, effective and efficient and it is an essential step toward making New Orleans a safer City."

### *Addresses Flood Control in New Orleans*



*Councilmember Midura*

The Council, at the request of District "A" Councilmember Shelley Midura, addressed a presentation on the outcome of the October 11-13 meetings with the Dutch to discuss new flood control ideas in New Orleans.

The presentation featured diagrams detailing the City's current flood control measures and illustrating alternative flood control methods currently utilized in the Netherlands, and highlighted the need for multiple lines of defense as a fundamental strategy in the protection of New Orleans.

Councilmember Midura said, "Thank you for all of your hard work and the time you dedicated to addressing this issue. We know the importance of keeping this at the forefront of discussions and we look forward to evaluating what we can do to improve flood control in the City."

### *Addresses Louisiana Recovery Report from Senator Mary Landrieu*



*U.S. Senator  
Mary Landrieu*

Senator Mary Landrieu came before the Council today to distribute to Councilmembers a report on the state of Louisiana's recovery progress.

The Council thanked Senator Landrieu for providing them with important recovery updates and for all of her work in assisting with the recovery of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans.

### *Supports Prospect One International Art Biennial*

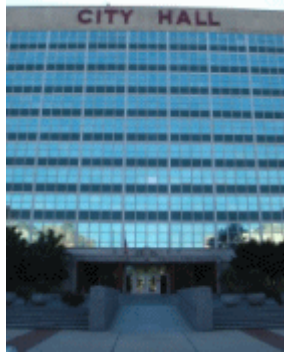


*Prospect One Representatives*

Representatives from Prospect One came before the Council today at the request of District "B" Councilmember Stacy Head to discuss Prospect One International Art Biennial beginning on Friday, October 31, 2008.

Prospect One representatives gave a presentation on details of the upcoming event which will feature artists from around the world exhibiting art at galleries and venues throughout the City. The event is free and open to the public, and a free shuttle bus service will be provided to transport people to all the venues.

Councilmember Stacy Head said, "Thank you so much for all that you are doing - this is going to be a legacy for our City and will help make New Orleans a focus of the national and international art community. Our citizens will have the opportunity to travel all over the City and see exhibitions from artists from around the world."



### *Approves Property Tax Assessments Appeals Recommendations*

The Council, acting as the Board of Review, unanimously approved the recommendations presented by Frilot, LLC in connection with the 2009 tax appeals for Orleans Parish.

The Council for the 2nd year contracted with Frilot, LLC to conduct a tax appeal hearing process in which over 435 tax appeals on 2009 assessments in the 1st thru 7th Municipal

Districts were submitted to the Orleans Parish Board of Review.

Frilot submitted to the Board the recommended adjustments to the assessments for each appeal. The Board voted to adopt resolutions R-08-1 and R-08-2 accepting the recommendations for disposition of the 2009 tax appeals in the 1st thru 7th Municipal Districts and to certify the 2009 tax rolls to the Louisiana Tax Commission.

Frilot representatives emphasized the improvements in the process this year, highlighting the efficient and timely distribution of information and details on the process to residents via the City Council's website.

The Board of Review will mail determination letters to each taxpayer who had an appeal. Taxpayers and assessors may take appeals from the Board of Review's determinations to the Louisiana Tax Commission.

Appeals to the Tax Commission must be taken within 10 days of the postmark of the Board of Review determination letter. The determination letter from the Board of Review will contain the appropriate forms and instructions for filing appeals to the Louisiana Tax Commission.

### *Honors Consular Corps of New Orleans*



*Members of the Consular Corps of New Orleans*

The Council, as its first Order of Business, honored the Consular Corps of New Orleans for their continued commitment to the City of New Orleans.

Honorary Consuls of more than fifteen countries appeared before the Council, at the request of Council Vice President Arnie Fielkow, to speak about their experiences in New Orleans as well as the historic cultural ties that countries represented by the Consular Corps share with New Orleans.

The representatives also informed Councilmembers of international activities and events happening around the City and discussed the relationships each country has with Louisiana and New Orleans, trade relationships and economic development relationships.

Councilmember-at-Large Fielkow said, "We want to thank all of you and the countries that you represent for all of the hard work you do. New Orleans is a unique multicultural city and we recognize the importance of maintaining international relationships."



#### *Addresses Economic Development Fund Grants*

The Council addressed the 2007 Economic Development Fund (EDF) Grant applications and recommendations.

The Council voted unanimously to defer approval of the EDF grants. A substitute Ordinance to temporarily suspend the award deadline was introduced. The Council is expected to take final action at its December 18th regular meeting.

2007 EDF grants total nearly \$5 million of taxpayer money, with grants going to local small businesses and non-profit organizations who contribute to economic development in New Orleans.

Council President Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson said, "We understand the importance of these grants and we want to ensure that the process for awarding them is both equitable and efficient."

#### **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.