

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Homebuilding Plan for Treme/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier

Date Wednesday, January 9, 2008
St. Peter Claver School Cafeteria, 1020 N. Prieur

Next Meeting Wednesday, February 13, 2008
St. Peter Claver School Cafeteria, 1020 N. Prieur
6:00 – 8:00 pm (dinner to be provided)

Participants

Alvin R. Banks	Regina Guichard	Christina Quezergue
Trenise Bryant	Yetta D. Harper	Sylvia Redmond
Doretha Bryant	Vastine Jeanmarie	Rochelle Roberts
Frances Burnett	Bernice King	Audrey Mae Smith
Gertha Burnett	Cynthia Magruff	D'Ana Smith
Paulette Carter	Sarah Marcello (NOLAC)	Maxine Stewart
Geraldine Coleman	Daniel Mathieu (The Micah Project)	Leonetta Tenell
Gracia Davis	Barre Marquez (NOPD)	Veronica Walker
Shirley Daufeuchard	Emelda Paul	Joni Washington
Sidney Daufeuchard	Sharon Pierce	Mary T. Watson
Lanetter Dorsey	Gail Pierre	
Roderick B. Franklin (NOPD)		

HANO: Louis Harvey, Tracy Mercadel, Dwayne Muhammed, D. Martin,

Case Management: Carol Carter (New Orleans), Diane G. Pitts (Baton Rouge)

Providence/Enterprise: Jim Kelly, Brenda Richard-Montgomery, Andreanecia Morris, Tammy Crumpton, Matt Morrin, Caroline Gammill, Kathleen Mullen, Rosalind Ross,

St. Peter Claver: Rev. Michael P Jacques (Providence Board Chairman)

This meeting record was drafted by Caroline Gammill, staff of Providence, and reviewed by Nicole Swerhun, community development and facilitation consultant to Providence. Prior to being finalized, it will be provided in draft to all meeting participants for their review. It reflects the key messages and main points raised at the meeting. It is not intended to represent a verbatim transcript.

I. HANO Update

Tracy Mercadel, the new Director of Management at HANO, opened the meeting by providing the following updates:

- **Unit Repairs** – HANO reported that the contracted plumber will start the installation of plumbing line in the crawl spaces on January 26. All of the installation was copper and has been stolen from the building. That work will take place in the first eight buildings, from Claiborne to Derbigny. The roofs will also be repaired; 3 contractors have been hired to do that work so it should move quickly.
- **Site / Demolition Update** – On Monday or Tuesday a fence will go up around the Lafitte sight in preparation for the demolition, beginning at Rocheblave and moving backwards. After the fence is constructed, the BVS panels will be removed and other pre-demolition work will get underway, including the removal of lead and asbestos.

Questions and Discussion

1. **Is it too late to get my things out of my unit?** *You must schedule an appointment before Friday. Many people have been scheduling appointments lately and we won't have enough staff to let people in if you don't schedule it by then. I'll give you my number so you can touch base with me and figure out where you need to go.*
2. **The repairs are on the first 96 units?** *Yes, the first units moving up from Claiborne.*
3. **When will the repaired units come online?** *They will come online in phases, we expect the first ones to be complete towards the end of March. We have to do roofing repairs and other repairs. They'll be available in late March or April.*
4. **Who will be able to return?** *The first option goes to the tenant who had the unit pre-storm. If they don't want to move back into it, then it is opened up to anyone who was on the site at that time.*
5. **If the tenant is living in Baton Rouge with children settled into school and their old unit becomes available, and they want to come back but not at that moment, then what happens?** *They can return to their unit or take advantage of the TPV.*
6. **What's going on with the Florida site?** *HANO has had some problems there – architects began working in December. They made designs for 77 townhouses. They started to finalize the plans, and then someone stole all the air conditioning and refrigerator lines. After that, the plans had to be changed and modified. As long as acts like that continue, it will slow down the work. It is our expectation that the units will be online at the end of the year.*

Father Michael gave an introduction and welcome for the evening's meeting and led the group in prayer.

Dwayne Muhammed, the Director of Section 8, provided the following updates:

- **Tenant Protection Vouchers** – There is no new information on the Tenant Protection Vouchers, it is the same as before. The TPV are currently available and if you are on DVP, you are eligible for TPV. By March 1, HANO would like to transfer all families who are on DVP to the TPV. There are several reasons to do this: If we move families from DVP to TPV, then we can assist more families. Also, the DVP is set to expire in 2008, the TPV will not. How many participants of this meeting are on DVP? (Close to 2/3 of residents raise their hands). For those of you who are on DVP, it will be less of a burden to get the TPV – HANO will send you a letter notifying you of the change. We will do it automatically for you. If you have trouble switching, come to the HANO offices at 501 Galvez; or, if you are working with a case manager, tell them and they will communicate it to us and we'll resolve the problem. If you are not currently under TPV but are under DVP, you are protected and there is no need to rush to the office.

Related To Tenant Protection Vouchers

1. **Are there minimum requirements under DVP?** *Yes, in HUD's latest regulations, with all voucher programs (DVP, TPV), all participants are required to pay a minimum of \$50 / month. The time of full coverage has passed.*
2. **Where I'm staying, in an apartment complex, the letter I received said we had to pay \$50 in January and it didn't specify when, but the apartment complex said I had to pay by January 5 or I'd receive a late fee – I hadn't been notified of that earlier.**
There are two contractual obligations you have – one with the Housing Authority and then with your manager. The Housing Authority doesn't involve ourselves in the contract with the landlord or owner, unless it is a case of abuse or neglect. So, you must act in accordance with your lease. Our partners at NOLAC can assist us in assuring that justice is done. Some haven't received letters about the minimum rents depending on when you leased up with DVP, and the letter is forthcoming – we're not sending them out in a blanket way, but the letter will be coming.
3. **In January, I received a letter stating that my tenant portion is \$47 and my utility allowance is \$3? HANO will pay a rent subsidy up to \$50.**
4. **The minimum when the DVP was transferred was \$50 – is there a formula to figure out that number?** *No, it is a \$50 minimum rate. Even if there is zero income, you still have that rate (in the case of \$0 income, come to the office and document the hardship, then there is assistance for those special circumstances). Typically, there is a rent calculation formula, but in this case, that is not being used.*
5. **There is no maximum?** *It is \$50 across the board. Hardship forms are at the Section 8 office and outlines what you can do to qualify.*
6. **Is the \$50 constant or do you add on more and more?** *The \$50 is constant. The \$50 that you're paying IS NOT PAID TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, it goes directly to the landlord, property manager or owner.*
7. **If you haven't gotten notification, do you have to pay?** *If you haven't received a letter from us or your landlord, then you don't have to pay yet.*
8. **I was paying \$36 and now my landlord says I have to pay \$86.** *Under DVP, unlike normal vouchers, HUD allowed for a family with a 2 bedroom voucher that was worth \$1100 to move into a unit that was \$1500, HANO would pay the \$1100 and the client would pay what was above. Because of the new regulation, you now have to \$50 AND anything above the voucher amount. Your landlord cannot arbitrarily change your rent. He has to come to the Housing Authority and ask for the increase. If we grant the increase, then you have the choice to leave because your landlord has changed the agreement.*
9. **When I called HANO, no one answered?** *I am happy to announce that HANO has finally paid for a modern phone system. When you call, leave a message, it is encrypted to an email; that email is sent to a customer service center where your email will be directed to the right staff person. All emails received go to two staff people who work with me to make sure that all calls are taken care of. That will be in place by Friday – I also got word that that it will also happen at the Section 8 office.*
10. **I share a double with a neighbor and I have to pay an extra cost that she doesn't.** *You may have different agreements, I don't know the specifics but I would think that you would have the same rent.*

11. **2009 is right around the corner, if we are at your ceiling, will we have to pay more than \$50 then? Did the mayor guarantee our rights?** *Providence / Enterprise ensured your rights. You have the right to return to Lafitte, HUD has protected you with the TPV (that can be a permanent voucher if you choose); you're not going to fall through the cracks. Our goal is to get you off of DVP so if that program ends, it won't affect you.*
12. **Who do we have to call for the new voucher?** *You're on DVP? Stay on it. The Housing Authority will contact you and anything you need to do will be spelled out for you. We'll work with our partners.*
13. **Thank you for taking care of my mother!**
14. **For displaced persons, has HANO reached out to provide them with this information?** *If Lafitte residents are in another jurisdiction, HUD is transferring the budget authority to that housing authority (for example, Houston or Harris County). That housing authority will receive the money that HANO was receiving for that client. It is the same situation that we're undergoing here. If DVP ends and the client was a resident of one of the Big 4, TPV will kick in. The \$50 charge is a federal regulation, so all clients will have to pay.*
15. **I have a virtual client in Dallas, she received a letter stating that she had to pay \$400, why?** *I don't know the situation- please get her specifics for me. If she is trusting, we can do a three-way call and I can then call the housing authority with more information. We may find out, like we did in Georgia, that clients arrived with DVP because the Housing Authority had excess Section 8 benefits – that housing authority can absorb those clients. So maybe your client has been absorbed and is now in a housing choice program or Section 8. If the Housing Authority didn't issue proper notification, that was wrong and we can fight for them – as we have in the past. No way she should be paying \$400 she is on DVP – unless her voucher is for \$1100 and she's in a \$1500 unit.*
16. **What should I do if I want to move from the house I am in now?** *Within 30 days from the end of your lease, notify the owner that it is your intent to leave and notify the Housing Authority, we'll issue you another voucher.*
17. **I gave my voucher to my landlord to set up an inspection and the unit did not pass.** *When you turn in a RTFA to Section 8, you're saying, "I intend to enter an agreement to live here." If the unit fails, then the owner has 30 days to request a re-inspection. If he hasn't done that or it doesn't pass, then we will issue you another voucher. You're bound to stay with that unit until those 30 days expire – we're obligated to you and to the landlord.*
18. **What's this green notice?** *The green sheet is for the Disaster Housing Assistance Program – homeowners, private renters, those who got trailers, etc. The program is administered by HUD. That's the program where the rents are going up (the people in the program weren't HUD clients at the time of the storm).*

Other Questions And Comments

19. **My mom is 75 years old and she can't find her birth certificate and HANO is telling her she needs it. She has been with HANO for years – from Desire, to Lafitte, to Iberville. Can we get some help with this situation?** *Let me get your contact information and I'll follow up.*
20. **What is the maximum income you can make to qualify for public housing?** *There is no maximum income for receiving the Tenant Protection Voucher – all former Lafitte residents qualify because your development isn't coming back in the immediate future. We will not exclude people based on income.*

21. **I was receiving help for my utilities and that help stopped 2 months ago. HANO told me I wouldn't receive any more help, and that I had to start paying rent. Can you help with this? I don't know specifics of your case. The best thing is to go to the Section 8 office. I already went there twice, and signed a paper. Nothing's happened. I'll get your name and information and we'll try and resolve your issue.**

Louis Harvey, the Director of Client Services, provided the following updates:

- I am responsible for job training and job development. In December, we held an information session for residents of Lafitte with 12 -16 residents and some other individuals who are now signed up for the Homeownership Program!
- In the near future, we are trying to get as many residents hired for the jobs that are becoming available.
- For the rehab of units, residents need skilled training due to the short timeline and fast pace of the work. If you don't have a skill, they probably will not hire you because of the timeframe. However, don't let that stop you from getting the training! I have forms here for residents to fill out – it is a general information form.
- Fill out the forms because developers are calling client services looking for names of residents to employ. Just this week, we employed 8 residents for the Fisher demolition process.
- We will be receiving very many requests soon and I need your help to connect residents to jobs. Take the contact forms to your relatives, friends, neighbors – but bring the forms back!
- Also, here's what I said the first time: I cannot help someone with a drug addiction. No employer in America will hire someone on drugs. But if they are willing to stop, I can help them – landscaping, plumbing, someone is going to be able to get hired.
- There are a lot of jobs and HANO has free training. This is the time for the training if individuals want to be electricians, plumbers – it is not too late. Training is starting February. All these partners are looking for individuals.
- It's a simple solution for the next generation – have a job, buy a house, don't worry about your rent. If you have a job and have been working consistently for 1 year, you pre-qualify to get into the homeownership program and then there is the opportunity to get you into job training. However, you must sign up by the end of the month.

Questions:

1. **Are you hiring women?** *Seven out of the 8 were women at Fisher. Call me – 670 – 3399.*
2. **The Homeownership programs – are those just for New Orleans' residents?** *No, they're open to all public housing residents. If you are under a case manager, let the case manager know and we'll start the process through them.*
3. **To get the jobs, if you know someone who is a painter and does it for a living, can you recommend them?** *We want the jobs to go to the residents first. This week, a resident went to a job site, she had sent someone else too and he got the job instead of her. We want you to get it instead of the outsider. The contractor is looking for bodies, so we cannot procrastinate. I am willing to take the names of friends and relatives who may be suitable as well – we want them to be Homeowners too, but our first obligation is to the residents. After we've exhausted the Big 4 and the HANO system, then I will go to outsiders. On the form there's space to say if you're not the head of household, who is and what development you're from. Be honest, because we have to track through Section 3, but we're more than happy to help anybody.*

II. Resident Update

Reactions to the City Council Meeting

- Daniel Mathieu: Good evening, at the last meeting, it was an interesting time with many people coming into town and making noise about the future of Lafitte. We had a series of meetings, making signs, sharing feeling. We want to take time to have the residents who participated to share their experiences – and we can also have other residents who were there share.
- Cynthia Magraff: I participated – it was lovely but there was a lot of chaos too. I was of the position that we needed change. It was a very interesting meeting, it was the first time I went to anything like that – I was very nervous but I was sitting next to a nun who was praying so that calmed me down. I was very happy the council voted for demolition because we did need a change.
- Christina Quezergue: I know what it is to be homeless and not to have anywhere to go, but I am for the change and for the demolition because I would like to have a home for my grandchildren and have my porch and have the right to say you can sit there (or say you need to go). We had to share a hallway before. Just because we're poor it doesn't mean we have to live on top of each other and I think its going to be ok.
- Doretha Bryant: I went to the meeting for my daughter, Everyone needs a change and a place were they can stay and be safe. I was for the demolition.
- Daniel Mathieu: Dariel also participated in the meeting, but she was unable to come tonight.
- Emelda Paul: I was to compliment the young ladies who got up – you did a beautiful job and we want you to do more! That's what I meant with passing the baton, we're moving on and we have to bring the young ones forward – it is not about us, it is about how we serve others. I was very impressed by city council, I wanted to jump and scream but I sat still. If the SPCA can have a new facility, so can we – I love animals, but I want a new Jerusalem – see the children playing, sit with the trees, and in order to rebuild, we have to be part of the rebuilding and move on. It's all about progress, we can't sit back, we have to move with the rest of the people!

Residents' Bill of Rights

- Emelda Paul: We're going to start a residents' Bill of Rights. We'd like a lot of participation for our rights as residents – Daniel is going to get it together, but we want everyone to participate. Speak up! No parking lot gossip, speak up! We want to hear it.

III. Providence / Enterprise Update

Jim Kelly, CEO of Providence

- Good evening, I was thinking about porches – and we're going to bring back the design pictures so we can all see them. We'll bring that and Matt will give an update on where the two- and three-story buildings are. Architects and designers met with the City Planning Commission for three hours this week to go through details, trees, overhangs, parking lots and spaces and gardens.
- At the next meeting, we'll do more interaction and hands-on to see the buildings, it is important to see it in 3-D. It's reality and it is coming together. It doesn't have to look like an apartment complex- because that's what we heard from you. There will be one building with three stories and it will have 100 apartments and a couple of sixers, but it will look like Tremé.
- Please take a look at the plans circulating and we'll bring more. On that map you can see all the little structures and what we'll save and what we'll renovate. It shows the blocks we'll repair. This is a little diagram and we'll hand it out to everyone next time.

- I want to thank our case management teams from New Orleans and Baton Rouge. They come to the meetings because they want to hear it and get it right.
 - Emelda Paul: I told my case manager that I wanted a part-time job at Wal-Mart and she said, I don't want you to work there! She got me a great job with the senior center taking care of a 92-year old woman. I was very grateful to my casemanager because it's a great job, much better than Wal-Mart!
- At the next meeting, we'll discuss homeownership opportunities. We want to talk more about schools and jobs. On January 15 at 6 pm there's a meeting about schools in this area on Carrollton at the Esperanza Charter School– anyone who is interested and the resident council should go.

IV. NOPD Safety Update

Officer Franklin and Barre D. Marquez (commander who is patrolling Iberville and will be in charge of Lafitte when it comes back online)

- For the month of December we had 35 incidents: 12 simple burglaries unoccupied (people taking things from residents), 6 occupied burglaries, 1 cutting a bar around the corner – it was a young lady, part of an on-going dispute between two families, it was a juvenile fight.
- Cameras in the area will be activated next week.

Questions and Discussion

1. **Why are there so many barrooms? Ask the City Council. We've got to get rid of the drama of the barroom. Barrooms bring drama to the neighborhood and children don't have a chance, they'll never have a change if they stay.**

B. Marquez: *I spent 17 years with special operations, but if you're question is that there are so many more ABOs (Alcohol Beverage Outlets) and they're trying to increase in number – we need input and we need everyone to be part of the solution. We have units to identify the hotspots, but there is so much going on at the same time. Cameras will be activated, not just at Housing Developments, but also in other areas. Please help up solve the problem – be part of the solution. Let's make it work.*

Tammy Crumpton: Thank you for coming and being attentive!