

## RECORD OF DISCUSSION

### Homebuilding Plan for Treme/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier

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

**Next Meeting** Wednesday, May 14, 2008  
St. Peter Claver School Cafeteria, 1020 N. Prieur  
6:00 – 8:00 pm (dinner to be provided)

#### Participants

Anthony Pendleton	Sharon Pierce	Vastina Jeanmarie
Lloyd Bell	Bernice King	Alvin Banks
Yetta Harper	Norvin Jones	Gale Sanders
Gail Pierre	Dorothy Hills	Jessie Osborne
Evelyn Wallace	Diane Pitts	Joni Washington
Carol Carter	Donna Augustine	Jennie Gorden
Clyde Hudson	Lachia Rodriquez	Alice Jones
Gertis Wiltz	Richard Eugene	Carol Thomas
Leotha Thibodeaux	David Rayford	Cynthia Magraff
Daffney Davis		

Daniel Mathieu, The Micah Project  
Sarah McMorris, NOLAC  
Emelda Paul

HANO: Tracy Mercadel, Louis Harvey  
Case Management: Carol Carter (New Orleans), Dianne Pitts & Cheryl Glover (Baton Rouge)  
Providence/Enterprise: Jim Kelly, Tammy Crumpton, Matt Morrin, LaTonya Williams, Caroline Gammill, Stephanie Walton

*This meeting record was drafted 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.*

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The meeting began with an opening prayer, and a review of the agenda by Tammy Crumpton, Director of Resident Services for Providence.

#### I. HANO Update

**Tracy Mercadel**, Director of Management at HANO, provided the following updates to the meeting:

- **Repairs:** Repairs to units were expected to be completed this week, but the units have been broken into again and copper pipes were stolen out of the attics. This has flooded the units, and so the units we expected to be ready in the first phase will now need to be repaired again. Because of this, it looks like the second phase of units will probably come on line first. The next step is to do a final (“punch list”) inspection on the repaired units. Then HANO will notify residents that identified they want to return to that unit. We hope this will happen by end of next week, if not the following Monday.

- **How many former residents want to return to repaired units:** In terms of interest in the repaired units, here are the numbers: Total number of units to be repaired = 94. Of the 94 units, there were 3 vacancies; therefore 91 letters went out to the residents who used to live in those units. Of those 91, 16 have indicated they want to return and 21 said they did not. Two occupants have passed, 9 letters came back as undeliverable. The rest have not responded and haven't been returned as undeliverable. These letters went out on March 10<sup>th</sup>, and the response deadline is 30 days later. If you didn't get the letter, please talk to me – especially if you are interested in returning to a repaired unit. On March 24<sup>th</sup> letters were sent to all former Lafitte residents (those who did not live in the units being repaired). They were asked if they wanted to be in a lottery to return to the repaired units. So far 32 people have replied and said they want to occupy those units.
- **Demolition:** Demolition of the buildings are scheduled to start tomorrow at the Rocheblave end of the site.

**Louis Harvey**, who works with Client Services and the Section 3 Employment Department with HANO then provided the following update:

- **3 Lafitte residents interested:** We did get an opportunity to solicit residents from Lafitte to work on the building repair contracts. There were three residents in total that expressed interest. One couldn't pass the drug test, and the other two had trouble using their cell phone and pulling up their pants at work, so they're no longer working.
- **Need more names of interested residents:** We still need to collect names of residents who are interested in working on the Lafitte site. Ms. Carol from Catholic charities has my number. If you know of any person, female or male, who can do the job and pass the drug test, please give me a call and we can put your name on file.
- **Meet contractors weekly:** We meet with each contractor on a weekly basis to get forecasts on what jobs will come available, and if any training is required. Louisiana Tech provides free classes, and other organizations also provide free training. Training is important so that by the time the job becomes available people have the necessary skills to be at least an apprentice on the job.
- **Call Louis:** If you know of anyone that is a Lafitte Resident that is on the lease, please have them give me a call at the HANO office. We want them to get hired first. There are a lot of people that walk up to the site and ask the contractors for jobs. We're lucky because this contractor has been calling us before giving walk ups a job. 504 670 3399.

## Questions and Discussion

*Responses, where provided, are in italics.*

1. There's a lot of work happening with renovations, painting, etc. on the site, and there are a lot of folks in this city crying for a job. I've noticed a lot of Hispanics doing the work. Were no local companies hired to do repairs? *There are three contractors working on repairs. I think one company may be out of Baton Rouge, but Harris and*

*AME are local. Two of the three are minority vendors, registered as disadvantaged businesses. The people you see working on the site are the employees they've hired*

2. Are there part time jobs available? *Right now it's all full time – maybe down the road there will be part time.*
3. How many days are they working? *5 days a week, 10-12 hours a day.*
4. What about security? Who's providing security? Who's supposed to be making sure the copper vents don't go missing? *Once the contract is executed, that's up to the general contractor. Any vandalism or theft, they're responsible for. They're supposed to secure the sites they're responsible for. They're incurring the costs involved.*
5. Do contractors have private security? *The weekend after the vandalism I saw 2 security guards there myself personally. Theft has hit all the buildings – there are only 6 copper vents left.*
6. Once the demolition is done, will the contractors continue to work with residents they've hired? *I try to encourage every individual to continue on and look at it as a career path. We do not close the door on people.*
7. Will HANO pay for training? *No, but we do partner with organizations – for example like Louisiana Tech, who get state grants to provide training. If an individual in our file is interested, we'll be more than happy to submit their names for the training.*

Tammy thanked Mr. Lewis and let people at the meeting know that it's very sad to her that we're only able to get three Lafitte residents connected to the on site repair work. She said that there's a whole lot of work we need to do to get more people involved, and urged residents to please take advantage of the skills training, especially for young people.

## II. Resident Update

Lafitte residents Alvin Banks and Gale Sanders provided an update on work that residents have been doing to develop a future vision of Lafitte and to put that vision into a Bill of Rights. They noted that they would present the key points, and that the Bill of Rights is what's going to keep residents safe, keep us from getting kicked to curb, not letting Providence do whatever they want to us.

The Bill of Rights being developed by residents includes the right to:

- **Decent, safe, sanitary housing.** We want lawns that are manicured or let us know if we have to do it ourselves. When paint starts to peel, we want fresh paint. Go look at other sites, we want ours better than those.
- **Have emergency repairs performed within 24 hrs.** We need someone out there to do that. At the Lafitte Project we had Mr. Harold and Mr. Simpson. These guys rode around on bikes 24/7. They did it a lot of time because they're just decent men. Now

we need to find someone who's interested in doing that for us. We also have the right to be given reasonable notice of any non-emergency entry to our units.

- **Organize residents independent of management.** If you have a beef, we'll have a meeting, and if we want to have Providence/Enterprise attend we can invite them. We have a right to have a voice in management decisions too.
- **Equal and fair treatment without discrimination.**
- **Quality education.** This comes with thinking that as residents move back into the area, we need to look at current state of schools. How do we begin working with all community residents, schools and businesses to provide a quality education? We need more than buildings and teachers for quality education, need community pride. Will be opportunities for residents to work together with other community groups and residents on schools.
- **Quality health care and services.** Providence/Enterprise is probably going to put facilities in for seniors, youth (I think it's in the buildings at Galvez and Johnson)– think they're going to use those buildings for health care, single parents, stuff like that.
- **Recreation opportunities** at Sojourner Truth.
- **Eliminate selling drugs** and those kinds of things.
- **Decent business and employment opportunities.** My thing with employment opportunities – I'd really like to see Lafitte residents, and it's sad what Mr. Mercadel said at the beginning of the meeting, would like to see someone walk out door that development and go to work in that development. I would hope Providence would look toward doing something like that.

This is a summary of what a few of us came up with. We invite you to join us – if there's something you think should be corrected, you'd like to see have done, come and brainstorm on it, bring it here and let us know. We're working on a timeline. Daniel tells me we need to be finished this by July. There's no such thing as a dumb idea or a dumb question. Whatever comes to your head, just spit it out. You'd be surprised.

### III. Providence / Enterprise Update

#### RESIDENT SERVICES

Tammy Crumpton, Director of Resident Services for Providence, opened the updated by letting people know how excited Providence and Enterprise are when they see residents take ownership of their community. She covered the following key points:

- **Thank you for participating:** Tammy highlighted the fact that Providence and Enterprise will develop the community, but ultimately they won't be living in it – so that makes it important for communities to participate in developing a vision for their community. She applauded residents for coming out to the meeting, and indicated that from the perspective of Providence and Enterprise, our priority is to engage you in the whole process and not to dictate to you. We know there are some struggles.

She highlighted Sarah from NOLAC (New Orleans Legal Assistance) as an example of someone who keeps coming to the discussion table, is an advocate for residents, and helps keep Providence/Enterprise in check.

- **Resident Council update:** Providence continues to meet with the Lafitte Resident Council. There are Council members that are still displaced out of Louisiana so we had two of them on the phone in a meeting, along with Valerie Johnson and Emelda Paul.
- **Bill OF Rights/Covenant:** The Resident Council discussed the Bill of Rights, and while they see the need for it, there was some concern expressed about calling it a “Bill of Rights”. Since then, the concept of calling it a “covenant” came out. Covenant is mutual commitment to the community – from the residents and Providence/Enterprise. We want standards of excellence, high expectations. It’s going to take some work – we’re rebuilding a whole city. A covenant would talk about how we develop trust, and the vision you have for your community.
- **Part of the larger community:** Lafitte residents will not be just on the footprint of Lafitte, there will be homes outside the footprint. You have an awesome opportunity to do something new and different. But you got to believe by faith that it can happen. You will be part of the great community. It will take time. I believe and I know you believe you want certain things for your family to thrive – you want good health care, education, don’t want alcohol and barrooms throughout the community. Why? Because it breaks you down. You are the advocates for what you want your community to look like. Please participate now because sometimes that moment of opportunity slips away. We’re asking for your involvement and participation to guide the process.
- **Counseling:** Lafitte will be coming down. It hit me – I went to visit all of HANO’s demolition sites last week. St. Bernard is down. BW Cooper, CJ Peete are down. We’ve been told by Mr. Tracy that tomorrow Lafitte is coming down. We tried to provide you some counseling information – these are great treasured memories, you had your baby, you left charity hospital you came back to Lafitte. Your mother’s history is there, you got married there, we understand . These services are free – please take the handout with contact information for Louisiana Spirit counseling. Also we have members of our case management team in the room.
- **Case management:** If you are not already in the case management program and you are interested in the program, call LaTonya at 821-7226 (or toll free at 1-888-429-2499) and LaTonya will refer you to us. And we’ll assign a care coordinator to assist. We have about 180 families in our caseload now in New Orleans, that’s 360 or so people. In Baton Rouge we have 36 families in the system and over 100 individuals in those families. Diane also encouraged residents to access mental health counseling services available.
- **HUD survey:** When we last met I told you we’d provide you with some of the information HUD provided us with when they did the survey of residents interested in returning to public housing. We have two handouts with the results, so please pick them up if you’re interested. We also have copies of minutes from the last meeting

and our last newsletter which gives you updates on activities that have taken place at Lafitte.

Jim Kelly then thanked Tammy, LaTonya, Carol, and Diane for all the work they're doing. He reminded participants that he wears two hats – one for Catholic Charities and one for Providence – and that he'd really like residents to take advantage of the services offered.

Before getting into his presentation, Jim let participants know that Ms. Pat Herbert passed away last week. He recognized that many people at the meeting knew Pat, and that she was a wonderful person with a great heart. She became ill at church and her funeral was this past Saturday at St. Peter Claver. For those of you who were here a year and a half ago we had the big meeting in this room, you'll remember that Pat stood up and had a pretty loud voice.

### **WORK UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE THE BROADER COMMUNITY**

Jim talked about the importance of strengthening the whole neighbourhood that residents will be returning to, and not just building housing. If we only build housing, but no schools, churches, child care, health care – then we'll have housing but not a community. So Providence/Enterprise is working to entice different organizations to come, spend energy and money in helping us to rebuild Treme/Lafitte and the Tulane Canal area. Jim highlighted the following points:

- **Community is in the heart of the city:** Lafitte sits in the middle of two critical neighbourhoods in the rebuilding of New Orleans and is right next to the medical district, the French quarter and the business district. There are a number of people working on different parts of this area.
- **Broad Street:** There is a group of folks trying to redevelop Broad Street – they're working to bring back grocery stores, drycleaners and others.
- **Orleans Avenue and Claiborne Avenue:** There are also two more streets that need revitalizing. We want a strong Orleans Avenue, and we need to think about how we bring back Claiborne Avenue. Many of our community partners are going to help us.
- **Greenway:** The Friends of Lafitte Corridor are working to make sure there's a greenway through the area.
- **Target zones:** When Dr. Blakely talks about redeveloping New Orleans, he mentions target zones. There are 17 target zones in total, and 3 of those zones are in our neighbourhoods.
- **Home ownership:** There will also be several home ownership opportunities in the community.
- **Head Start Center:** AFL-CIO, the Urban League, Providence, Enterprise, and TCA are looking at the possibility of establishing a Head Start Centre in the area. We're still thinking this over because we need to think about how many things we want to do, and how much space we have. Also we need to think about if the Head Start Center

is more important than a health clinic? It depends on who you talk to. Right now we're trying to gather information and find out what people have to offer – TCA's oldest Head Start Center is right here on Galvez.

- **Hospitals:** We want to continue to lobby to bring two hospitals to the area – they could be the largest employers. And that would mean people could walk to work. Providence/Enterprise are hopeful that the Film Technology Institute will go forward and provide jobs.
- **St. Peter Claver** also plays a major role in this part of the community.

## Questions and Discussion

*Responses, where provided, are in italics.*

1. What are you doing about transportation? My husband can't get to work on time – he's late every day because the bus is not on time. He leaves home at 6:15 am, starts at 7, and he doesn't get there till 7:30. *Jim – Prior to Katrina, transit was given one of the highest ratings for services, but we know it's different today. Daniel – Transportation is a perfect example of how Lafitte residents can get together to report issues and work with Providence/Enterprise and other community groups to have meeting with transit authority and begin looking at ways to improve transit. We'll work to look at how to investigate the issue.*
2. I just want to say how exciting I find this partnership. There are a lot of neat ideas here – I'm a resident of this neighbourhood and I find it really exciting.

## FINANCING

Jim let participants at the meeting know that there was an article in the paper this morning about Providence that got part of the story right regarding the financing Providence/Enterprise have to support the redevelopment of Lafitte. The article led readers to believe Providence won't look for it's money until demolition happens. This is wrong. We wouldn't have gotten to this point if we didn't have financial commitments and a financial plan. Do we think we'll be able to get financing? Absolutely.

Jim also made the following points:

- **Impact of markets on financing:** There are concerns about what's going on in the markets and how it will impact financing. We saw this coming in the fall, and we made sure our was conservative. Enterprise is our syndicator – they have worked in redevelopment for years. Enterprise and Bank of America have agreed to lend us money during construction. We are talking to Chase as well to be part of financing during construction.
- **What does a syndicator do?** They go out and get a bunch of investors together who are interested in a project. Enterprise has already spoken to lot of their investors who are very interested in investing in the redevelopment of Lafitte. The way this works is that we don't pin down which ones are in the pool of investors until we actually do the closing on the property. We don't make a commitment to particular investors now because we want to get the most people in at the highest price.

- **Pool of investors exists:** The article made it seem we don't know who our investors are. We have a pool of investors, and we'll pick and choose who the investors are at the end. I wrote to the Mayor telling him this, and the Mayor said that he believes in Lafitte and what will happen here, and he encouraged me to "keep the faith".

## Questions and Discussion

*Responses, where provided, are in italics.*

1. Sarah McMorris, NOLAC: I did get an this morning email about this. With the buildings coming down, I think there will be a lot of fear and worry about the future and it's good to talk about it. *We're in this together till the end.*

### OPPORTUNITIES ON THE LIFT PROPERTY (BESIDE LAFITTE)

Jim next focused on the property beside Lafitte that is owned by the Louisiana Institute of Technology (known as LIFT). He showed the map of the Lafitte and LIFT properties, and said that Providence/Enterprise are exploring the possibility of acquiring some of the LIFT land. He said that Providence/Enterprise have spoken to them for over 2 years about this, and that about a month ago LIFT contacted him to tell him that they're interested in selling. This is good for LIFT and good for Providence/Enterprise. It would give Providence/Enterprise more room to build units for Lafitte residents that are close to the original footprint of Lafitte and next door to Sojourner Truth.

Jim highlighted the following reasons for wanting to build on a part of the LIFT property:

- It allows us to build square blocks, with no dead ends. It allows us to bring back cross streets which helps to integrate the community a lot more.
- It means we won't have vacant industrial land sitting next to Lafitte.
- We can still include the greenway – which promotes health and economic vitality.
- With more streets we have more safety – there are more areas for activity, more light.

Jim let residents know that Providence/Enterprise are continuing to meet with LIFT and completing due diligence before finalizing a decision.

## Questions and Discussion

*Responses, where provided, are in italics.*

1. How many more apartments could be built with the LIFT property? *It could be 72 more apartments. They will be singles and doubles, and there will be two 6-plexes.*
2. What will happen to swimming pool at Prieur and Lafitte? *We'll put it on our list to find out.*

### NO-TELL MOTEL UPDATE

From the very beginning when we were in the design charrette planning how to redevelop Lafitte, residents did an exercise where they put green dots on things they liked, and red dots on things they don't like. Nothing got more green dots in this whole neighbourhood than Sojourner Truth, and there were lots of red dots on the no-tell

motels on Prieur and Orleans. At a meeting last week we found out that a young man with a small company has bought one of those motels and is planning on turning it into affordable housing.

## Questions and Discussion

*Responses, where provided, are in italics.*

1. How's he going to turn no tell motel into housing? *I don't know. It's not simple renovation, but he's done a lot of affordable housing and we hope he's been successful.*
2. We don't want it to be boarding house with all kinds of traffic. I hope it's affordable housing. *That's our understanding based on research we've done.*
3. Have you seen his places? *I haven't seen them yet, but I know some of the projects he's working on – like one of the big ones on Canal.*
4. What's considered affordable housing? Half the residents here don't make \$10/hr. *My understanding is that he's trying to gear housing to people who make below 80% or 70% of the average income. Is that \$20k - \$30k. Providence/Enterprise are looking for people all the way down to \$10k. His numbers are still good numbers, those are policemen, firemen, and teachers.*

## OTHER UPDATES

- Jim let residents know that HANO will be moving out of Sojourner Truth in the next 30 days, and that Carol and her Catholic Charities Case Management team will be moving in, along with the Lafitte Resident Council. Providence/Enterprise are working with the Resident Council to look at what other services can be offered out of there.
- Matt Morin, Enterprise, wrapped up the Providence/Lafitte update by letting residents know that the date when the Lafitte plans will go to the City Planning Commission has changed. It will most likely be May 20<sup>th</sup>, however that date is not yet finalized. Matt committed to providing folks an update at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## IV. Adjournment

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 14, 6 pm

Dinner and Raffle