

DRAFT RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Homebuilding Plan for Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier

Date Wednesday, June 11, 2008
St. Peter Claver School Cafeteria, 1020 N. Prieur

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

Participants

A. Banks	Dorothy Jackson	David Rayford
Lloyd Bell	Valerie Johnson	Sylvia Redmond
Valerie Brown	Claudia B. Jones	Harvey Reed
Terry Carter	Norvin Jones	Alice Riener (NOLAC)
Darrieltta Carter	Edwina Joseph	Lachia L. Rodriguez
Mr. & Mrs. S. Daufauchard	Edith Kennedy	Gale Sanders
Angelina Dorsey	Travis Leblanc	Lloyd E. Thiel Sr.
Jacques M. Edwards	Bertha Lively	Carol Thomas
Langston Ford	Cynthia Magraff	Evelyn Wallace
Roderick B. Franklin, Sr.	Daniel Mathieu (PICO)	Joni Washington
Claudette Freeman	Emelda Paul	Shirley Waters
Alice Gomes	Anthony Perdleton	Pauline Wilkens
Sheila P. Green	Sharon Pierce	Gertis Wiltz
Dorothy Hills	Christina Quezega	

HANO: Dwayne Muhammad, Eddie Scott, Lois Watson, Louis Harvey, Valerie Brown
Case Management: Carol Carter (New Orleans), Dianne Pitts, Cheryl Glover & Claire Burgo (Baton Rouge)
Providence/Enterprise: Jim Kelly, Tammy Crumpton, Matt Morrin, LaTonya Williams, Abigail Bowes

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.

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

Dwayne Muhammad, Lois Watson and others from the HANO team provided updates on the following:

- Tenant Protection Vouchers
- Re-Occupancy of Repaired Units
- Status of the Lottery (for temporary re-occupancy of repaired units)
- Demolition

The following questions and/or comments were raised by participants. Responses, where provided, are noted *in italics*.

TENANT PROTECTION VOUCHERS

Questions regarding TPVs were answered by Dwayne Muhammad, HANO.

1. When you adjusted my income, did you take into consideration car notes, and other bills? *No, that is not factored in as an allowable expense. It's a federally regulated approach that every housing authority across the country follows. The TPV program is not like the DVP. The TPV functions like a regular Section 8 Voucher. Education expenses, child care, those kind of things – you do get credit for. It's 30-40% of annual adjusted income. We will provide the details to Providence staff with a list of all of the adjustments that are considered. We will also forward them to all of the Case Managers.*
2. We were told that residents in Baton Rouge have to come to New Orleans to get their TPV. This is very difficult for residents. *I'll correct that first thing in the morning. Our Admissions Manager should be packaging applications and forwarding them to Admissions Manager at other Public Housing Authorities, and then should be able to process them there.*
3. We have virtual clients all over US they're being told that have to come to NO to take care of this process. *We understand that there has been some apprehension from other Public Housing Authorities (PHAs). In some cases it's a funding matter. Some have never heard of TPVs. Unless they've gone through this process, other PHAs wouldn't know this program exists. I've asked HUD to again forward notification to PHAs that are assisting HANO clients, and I've been told that it would be done in the very near future*
4. Once a TPV application is complete, where does the application go? *The application comes back to HANO. Our staff will do a verification, ensuring everything that's needed is attached. Then the TPV will be forwarded to the relevant PHA to assist those clients.*
5. The last time I went to HANO to get my TPV they told me I have 4 months to find where I'll be living. That's not enough time for me. *If you need longer, contact us about getting an extension.*
6. I understand that DVPs and TPVs are different. If DVP has been extended, why are some clients in Baton Rouge having to pay rent June 1st? *For clients on DVP in New Orleans, it makes sense for us financially to ride out DVP and make the conversion to TPVs on September 1. If this is an issue for some residents in Baton Rouge, ask for something in writing from the Baton Rouge Housing Authority about their process. If you are not satisfied with the response, residents can also contact the local HUD office.*

Also note that if you were a HANO client, and you've been absorbed by the local housing authority, then normal program guidelines apply (i.e. recertification to determine tenant portion of rent). Just as reminder, normal guidelines did not apply under DVP, and therefore tenants did not have to pay rent unless they were above payment standard (for example, if a family had been in a 2 bedroom unit pre-Katrina and was now living in a 3 bedroom, then the family would have to pay the difference in rent).

7. What process does HANO use for assessing how much rent people have to pay? *The Housing Authority uses 30-40% of adjusted income. We're using 30% (HANO) but federal regulations can go up to 40%.*

Dwayne Muhammad wrapped up the TPV part of the discussion by suggesting participants send any additional questions by email and he'll do his best to answer them.

UNITS REPAIRED FOR TEMPORARY RE-OCCUPANCY

Questions regarding Temporary re-occupancy were answered by Lois Watson, HANO.

8. We were first told we had 11 months in the repaired units. Then it was 6 months, now it's 5 months. Why is the time so short? *I don't know. When I was given this assignment I needed to get 94 units occupied. Of the 94 units, there were a few vacancies and a few people deceased so there were 89 residents contacted. We sent 89 letters out. Because of all of the other difficulties we've encountered, residents began to change their minds about coming back. So we did a lottery for the units where the pre-Katrina residents said they didn't want to come back. 22 of the 89 pre-Katrina residents said yes, they wanted to come back. A few of those were on Section 8, while some were on public housing, and some were scattered sites. Now that number has dropped from 22 down to 15. Seven people called in the last 3 weeks and said they didn't want to move in because the time in the repaired units is too short. That meant that just about everybody who put their name in the lottery for the repaired units was able to get in. In the last couple of weeks many of those residents have now changed their mind too. Right now 47 residents are still interested, so we have 47 vacancies.*
9. When will we be getting keys? The longer we wait for keys, the fewer the days. *We had set backs with the repairs. A lot of vents were stolen off the roof and we started to get some water penetration. We can't put people in till those issues get resolved. I think July 7th is when we anticipate turning keys over to Mrs. Watson. The majority of the units are 90-100% complete right now. We just need to make sure they're weather tight.*
10. What are you doing with security? *We have HANO security and NOPD is also on call and patrolling the area.*
11. Can we get an extension on the amount of time we can live in the repaired units – beyond 6 months? Beyond January 2009? *Valerie Brown (Consultant to HANO) responded to this question. The answer is that there will be no extension. It's not because we want to keep you from Lafitte, but because we want to get you back to a new and revitalized community. To do that we need to keep the demolition moving forward. We need to vacate the repaired buildings in January 2008 so the developer can do the redevelopment of the site. Our ultimate goal is to get you into a new redeveloped community.*
12. When we leave the repaired units on January 31st, will the other developments be ready? *No.*
13. When our time comes up, have you got somewhere to put us? *There are a number of options, and these will be outlined in your lease. You'll be temporarily relocated to other HANO communities or given a voucher for other accommodation.*

14. Will people in the repaired units have first preference to move into the new units at Lafitte? *I can't speak to that.*

II. Membership on Lafitte Resident Council

Valerie Johnson let participants know that the Resident Council is looking for more members. In part this is because out-of-town members are thinking of giving up their seats. Valerie encouraged people interested in coming on to the Council to add their names to a sign up sheet she brought to the meeting. She also reviewed a letter written by Emelda Paul, President of the Lafitte Resident Council. The letter covered a number of points, including:

- The purpose of the Council is to serve the residents and their needs, and to be a voice for the residents.
- In the past the Lafitte Resident Council has had a good relationship with the property manager and whenever there was a problem concerning the residents, the Resident Council would work with management and residents to resolve it. That's part of the Resident Council's job.
- Resident Council members must do some kind of volunteer service. This could include visiting the sick, tutoring, mentoring, etc.
- To be a member of the Resident Council you must be committed, dedicated, and sensitive to resident needs. Whenever residents confide in you about a problem, you must respect it. You must be flexible and attend workshops and meetings, and participate in some or all activities. You must also be able to work with all the partners that are involved with programs. You must have a positive attitude and your first impression is your last. But most of all "KEEP SMILING".

Tammy Crumpton also encouraged participants to sign up tonight before they leave. Eddie Scott from HANO added that HANO would set up an orientation for new members, including reviewing all of the basics on what's expected of Council members.

III. Update on Covenant

Gail Sanders (Lafitte resident) and Daniel Mathieu (The Micah Project) let participants know that a group of residents has been meeting regularly to draft a Covenant between Lafitte residents, Providence, Enterprise, and others covering a number of issues like: housing, health, development, and recreation. The Draft Covenant will be included in next month's newsletter, and all residents are encouraged to review and comment on it before it's finalized. Over the next 90 days resident leaders will continue meeting with Providence to discuss details on eligibility, occupancy, lease, and property management.

Daniel also encouraged people to come out to regular meetings of the resident leaders, and asked people to contact him if they were interested.

IV. Resident Table Discussions

Daniel Mathieu (The Micah Project) introduced this item on the agenda by reviewing the top four issues discussed by participants at the May meeting. These included: safety, schools, jobs and businesses, and youth.

He described the characteristics of a problem: it's big; its ongoing; it's been around for a long time and chances are it will continue (e.g. schools, always been a problem with quality education in America); and often it's unclear (we don't necessarily know who's in charge of the problem or who to go to make it better).

He also talked about the difference between problems and issues. He described issues as: something small (e.g. broken school window); there's a timeframe (we know we want windows to be prepared in month or so, and we want school guards to be there for year); and we know the decision maker (principal or School Recovery District).

He said that tonight the plan is to think about how to move from problems to issues.

Residents at the meeting split up into four tables to discuss the four problems. Then each of the groups reported on the results of their discussions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- We need jobs paying at least \$10 per hour because of the cost of living.
- Also if we own cars but gas is \$4/gallon, it's hard. If you have a job but can't get to it, that's no good.
- Most young people have high school diplomas, but you've got to give them an incentive to work and \$5/hr isn't enough.
- We need supermarkets for people that don't drive.
- We need Circle Foods, Winn Dixie, and if we're lucky enough we might get a Wal Mart or a Walgreens.
- We also need washers (everybody needs clean clothes), restaurants, health centres. If we can't get to it, what good is it? We want corner stores – but no alcohol – just the basics.

SAFETY

- Think about a curfew – there are too many kids disobedient about staying in school.
- We need safety for the elderly/disabled. Right now they can't go across the street to the store without being attacked for whatever reason because they're easy targets. Some people see a person in a wheelchair and they'll rob him, might even take his car.
- We need more patrols, and they need to be visible.
- For next steps, we want to see: more parental commitment, organized groups, maybe a community task force, and a dedicated police unit (like Iberville).

SCHOOLS

- We have to think about the placement of schools. When the development goes up we need a school centrally located for our kids.
- We want specialized schools for our gifted children.

- Transportation is an issue. A teacher wants to fail a kid out of Craig School because he's not on time - but the kid lives out east and can't get there on time. The school needs to be local to address issues of transportation.
- We need after school programs like Boy Scouts and other kinds of programs. Mr. Harvey's here at the meeting – he raised a bunch of us in the Lafitte project and made us who we are today. Thank god for others too – we need after school programs.
- It would be nice to have a trade school/vocational school – teach kids a trade right here in neighbourhood.
- In terms of next steps, we think we should identify Council members to talk to and also talk to the superintendent.

YOUTH

- Youth need to learn to respect themselves as well as others.
- We need after school programs.
- Also we don't have any more play areas. We used to have playgrounds with swings, but now kids are playing in dirt. We need structured playgrounds.
- We need after school tutoring for all ages – every day we should be learning something – from little kids to adults.
- We should change the dress code. Who wants to see all of that underwear and no shirts. Some youth don't care – they clearly need help.
- For next steps, we would like to see after school programs, church programs, community centres, and playgrounds.

Daniel wrapped up the discussion by encouraging residents to join the Resident Council and other resident leaders to continue working on these issues. He said a resident will call participants from this meeting and ask which one of these areas you want to work on. So when it's time to do research, you can be there to help move things along. Next month we can report back on what we've done to move this along.

V. Property Management Update

Matt Morin from Enterprise provided the following update about property management:

- Today we released a Request for Proposal – we having a competition to choose a property management firm for the new development.
- We've heard a lot of feedback from residents about the importance of the property manager. People are concerned about response time; people want to know if it's a firm that's been around for say 5 years or with enough experience managing say 1000 units.
- I know you talked about this with Tammy, Daniel and Nicole and we're incorporating your feedback into our process as we make decision about who to hire.
- We expect to receive responses from firms in about a month, so in about month and a half expect to select a property manager.
- Once the property manager is hired we will immediately involve them in these monthly meetings with residents.

Jim Kelly from Providence added his understanding that residents were concerned about what happens if this company doesn't do good job? There was a suggestion that perhaps Providence could hire the company on a 3-6 month contract. Jim said that he

was concerned that Providence wouldn't get a property management company interested in the work if it was only a 3-6 month contract, and that likely a minimum of a year long contract was required. He suggested another way to address the issues – which would involve writing the contract in such a way that if the property management company fails to perform, the contract is terminated in 30-60 days.

Matt asked residents at the meeting if they had anything to add about they wanted in a property management company. The following comments were provided:

- If anything breaks, that they're dependable and responsible enough to do whatever we hire them to do.
- We want to make sure we can get rid of the property management company if they're no good.
- We need them to be resident friendly.
- We want an open door policy – don't send us through a whole lot of red tape.
- When they enter the home, I want them to be introduce themselves to make sure they are who they say they are, and make sure they're qualified people. They should behave like UPS or an electrician - approach us in manner that is professional and respectful.
- At Lafitte – some of maintenance crews acted like they'd been out smoking crack at night. You don't want someone like that coming to door fixing your house.
- We want honesty. Don't lie.

The meeting wrapped up with an announcement from Officer Franklin about a Crime Prevention Fair being held on Saturday June 14 at UNO Human Performance Center at the intersection of Elysian Fields and Leon C. Simon from 9am to 3pm. He also mentioned that a new person would be working in the area – Robert Norton – who is very interested in working with the community.

Officer Franklin was asked about whether the police were still putting on talent shows – since the kind of people who came to the shows would surprise you. Officer Franklin said he wasn't sure if there were any talent shows.

The meeting ended at 7:30 and dinner was served.