

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Homebuilding Plan for Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier

Date 6:00-8:00, October 27, 2010
Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center, 2200 Lafitte St.

Next Meeting 6:00-8:00, November 10, 2010
Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center, 2200 Lafitte St.

Participants:

George Arceneaux
Alvin Banks
Jessie M. Boyd
Phillip Bush
Patricia Claiborne
K. Claiborne
Paulette Clay
Joyce Criles
Shirley Daufauchard

Sidney Daufauchard
Martha Duplessi
Janette Expose
Jennie Gorden
Clyde Hudson
Leslie Johnson
Mary Johnson
Emelda Paul
Anthony Pendleton

Sharon Pierce
Harvey Reed, Jr.
Carl Richardson
Debbie Robinson
Janice M. Sandifer
Beryl Thomas
Monica Wells

Sojourner Truth Neighborhood Center: Carol Carter, Jessica Olivier, Emelda Paul, Rebekah Simon, D'Ana Smith, Kara Watson, Michelle Whetten

Providence/Enterprise: Brandon Dughman, Matt Morrin, Andreanecia Morris

Interstate Realty Management: Michelle Matthews, Robin Maxfield

HANO: Valerie Brown, Iris Conley, Valerie Pruitt, Eddie Scott

Southeastern Louisiana Legal Services: Hardell Ward

This meeting record was drafted by Maggie Tishman, staff at 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. Opening Prayer / Welcome

- Led by Emelda Paul

II. Introduction / Purpose

Matt Morrin:

- The topic of tonight's meeting will be reoccupancy and the policies that are going to be in places, including the responsibilities that people will have when they move back in and also the responsibilities of Providence & Enterprise as the developers and Interstate as the property managers.

III. Re-occupancy and Resident Property Management Responsibilities

Robin Maxfield:

- Three infractions of any kind are grounds for an eviction.

- Maintenance requests will be responded to in a timely fashion. Interstate will hand out a sheet titled “What is an emergency?” If residents call with a maintenance request that qualifies as an emergency according to the guidelines on that sheet, maintenance will come out within 24 hours. Non-emergencies will be responded to within 72 hours. Interstate asks that all maintenance requests be called into the office to track that they are being properly taken care of and to see if there are larger problems that need to be addressed (for example, *all* refrigerators are leaking). At night, Michelle’s phone line will automatically be rerouted to an afterhours emergency line. Residents should leave a voicemail.
- Interstate does have some rules that residents might not love, but they are for residents’ own safety and that of their neighbors. Some rules come from the City or from higher up in Interstate (not from Robin or Michelle directly). For instance, the City has a curfew and a noise ordinance.
- Heads of household are responsible for others in their household as well as any guests staying in their home.
- Residents can come in and pick up a handbook from Michelle. They will just have to sign that they have picked up their move-in package.
- Michelle has Robin’s number. If you have a question that Michelle cannot answer or one specifically for Robin, Michelle can reach her.

Michelle Matthews:

- The application process is going rather smoothly. Over 40 or 50 residents have been interviewed. Those residents who have not yet been interviewed can expect calls soon.
- Michelle has begun background and credit checks.
- She will have some floor plans for residents to see soon.
- If residents have any questions, they should feel free to call Michelle.

Carol Carter:

- Residents should not assume that Interstate is here because something will go wrong. Interstate’s role is to make sure that the property is maintained and clean. If residents see anything unusual or inappropriate, they should report it to Interstate. Interstate is ultimately here to serve residents.

Question: What kind of porch furniture is acceptable? Answer: In the handbook, it states that you are allowed to have patio and porch furniture and plants. Interstate asks that it be in good condition that it not just be indoor furniture brought outside, but beyond that, they are not very particular about what furniture residents have.

Question: Will there be a police patrol? Answer: There will be security. Interstate is still unsure as to the extent or the hours, and whether they will hire on-duty police officers or a private patrol. Police officers will be invited to the next couple residents’ meetings. Residents should have questions or ideas ready, to think about how the residents, property managers, and developers can work collaboratively with the police.

Question: Will you be able to have family members stay the night at your apartment? Answer: They cannot stay for longer than two weeks at a time without being placed on the lease. But if residents do have an emergency come up and need a family member to stay, they need to tell Robin or Michelle and something can be worked out.

Question: Can you give an example of an infraction? Answer: Trash in front of the unit, loud noise, curfew violations, fighting.

Question: How often will unit inspections occur? What will they include? Answer: Housekeeping will come by and unit inspections will occur monthly. Residents will receive an infraction if they get cited if the inspector finds the unit unsanitary (for example, if there is an infestation problem). Inspectors usually look for dirty dishes lying around or trash everywhere. The mess has to be pretty extensive for the inspector to write a citation. The first resort would be for Interstate to simply talk to residents about upkeep.

Question: Monthly seems a bit much. Section 8 voucher recipients only get quarterly inspections. Answer: Because of an accident involving a small child at another site, maintenance cannot give any of the cleaning supplies directly to residents. However, the air filters need to be changed every month, so maintenance will have to be dispatched to the units monthly every month anyway. They will perform a routine monthly inspection, on the same day every month. It will include hot-water temperature; they will change the air filters and check your infestations.

Question: My grandson stays with me for two months every summer. Is that going to be a problem? Answer: No, not necessarily. Some situations need to be discussed and can be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Question: Will residents get their own parking spaces? Answer: There will not be designated parking spaces, but there is almost (but not quite) one parking space per unit, and open parking on street as well. There will not be gates around the development, so something will need to be set up so that non-residents do not park in the onsite spaces, such as a sticker.

Question: Will there be handicapped spots? Answer: Yes, there are designated handicapped spots. They are closest to the wheelchair-accessible units.

Question: What if residents need help with the security deposit? Answer: The deposit is only \$200, but if residents need help with the deposit, they should talk to Catholic Charities. They might have funds to help.

Question: Will there be ramps for wheelchairs? Answer: Yes. Anyone who needs a wheelchair-accessible unit should let Michelle know when they fill out their application.

Question: What type of flooring do the units have? Answer: The floors in the living rooms and kitchens are not real wood but a synthetic material that looks like wood. The bathrooms have linoleum floors. Some of the bedrooms have carpets. The developers tried to keep carpeting to a minimum, but it was necessary in some places to keep with building codes and to prevent noise from traveling between apartments.

Question: Will there be someone to assist with housekeeping training? Answer: The reoccupancy plan is still being developed and housekeeping training will be a part of that. Lafayette will have a CSS collaborative with Harmony Oaks and Columbia Parc. If residents know someone who is elderly or disabled and cannot take care of themselves, they need to let STNC staff and Interstate know and they will plug them into the appropriate services.

Question: Can residents see a picture of how the development will look after all the development is done? Answer: The developers have some renderings of the development but not a full picture of what the entire site will look like. Matt can bring the renderings to the next meeting.

Question: Will residents be able to smoke cigarettes? Answer: Yes. Interstate just asks that they not throw the butts on the ground.

Question: Are tenants allowed to select the floor plans that they would prefer or are they going to be assigned based on family size? Answer: If residents are single, they obviously cannot be placed in a three-bedroom unit, but people can express a preference for a type of unit or a certain location within the site. Residents should tell the developers of any preferences that they might have and they will try to incorporate them.

Question: If residents are pregnant, can they up the size of their unit? Answer: No. They will be assigned to the size unit that they initially apply for.

Question: Will residents have to pay for gas? Answer: It's all electric. There is no gas. The site will be responsible for the water and sewer. The units will include washers and dryers and dishwashers.

Question: How many units will people be living in next year? Answer: There are 134 units that are under construction right now. It is hard to say but people will probably be moving into approximately 80 to 100 units at the beginning of next year. The developers and property managers hope that all of those 80 to 100 will be former Lafitte residents.

IV. Tenant Property Vouchers / Tenant Rights

Valerie Pruitt:

- Works for the Section 8 program
- To clarify, if Section 8 recipients are certified for a one unit, they cannot pay the difference to live in a two-bedroom apartment. Doing so would seriously jeopardize their voucher.
- All Lafitte former residents were eligible for a tenant protection voucher after Katrina since their public housing unit was destroyed. Residents should be allowed to use those if they move into a tax-credit unit; however they will be giving up their voucher if they move into a public housing unit.
- Residents should let HANO know if they are planning to return to the Lafitte site. If they have to break their current lease, HANO might need to pay an extra month's rent to satisfy their current landlord.
- All of the units currently under construction are project-based section 8 or public housing. Project-based Section 8 works like public housing in the sense that residents are bound to that site. If residents decide to move at the end of their lease, they might not be able to get their vouchers back.

V. Relocation Assistance

Eddie Scott:

- Section 3 Coordinator for the Lafitte development. Phone number is 650-6080.

Iris Conley:

- Relocation coordinator. Helped many residents with their first move out of Lafitte. Phone number is 670-3434.
- The HANO Property Management Office is the first contact that she will have to know that a former resident is returning to Lafitte. Interstate will let her know that a resident needs relocation assistance, and she will make sure that they are on the preference list of former Lafitte residents.

- HANO will give \$500 in relocation assistance to former residents moving into a one-bedroom unit, \$700 to move into a two-bedroom, \$900 to move into a three-bedroom, \$1100 to move into a four-bedroom. It is a flat rate
- Question: It is just for pre-Katrina Lafitte residents living out of state? Answer: No. HANO has a list of about 860 families that live both in- and out-of-state. All are eligible regardless of where they currently live.
- HANO will have to deal with the people coming from out-of-state on a case-by-case basis because their expenses might exceed the allowance.
- If residents need relocation assistance, they should talk to Interstate.
- Question: Will the check be made out to Interstate or the resident? Answer: The check is made out to the resident.
- Residents will not get the check until they are ready to move in. If Interstate has already approved you, they need to tell HANO, who will in turn write the check. Residents will have to sign for the check when they pick it up from HANO.
- Question: How long will it take HANO to process the request from Interstate? Answer: It depends which the day of the week it is submitted. Iris sends the requests to the department that writes the checks every Tuesday. So if she gets the request from HANO before Tuesday, it will go in with that week's requests. If not, it will have to wait for the following Tuesday. It could take a minimum of five days or maximum of two weeks for residents to get their checks.
- Before residents go to pick up a check, they should call Iris to make sure that the check was processed. Iris will call residents and tell them to come in when their check is ready.
- STNC will consider providing additional financial assistance on a case-by-case basis. There is an application and a budget to complete, and residents will need to explain why they need assistance. They might need to show how they spent the money that HANO gave them.

VI. Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS)

Hardell Ward:

- 1010 Commons Street. 8 am to 4 pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday. SLLS does outreach on the Westbank on Tuesdays and at River Gardens (St. Thomas) on Thursdays. SLLS hopes to do outreach at Lafitte in the future.
- Provides any help you might need now or in the future moving back into Lafitte or any other relocation situation you might have in the future. Also helps with custody issues, affidavits of separation, clear up that you are a former residents. If residents have infractions or questions about evictions, they should take to SLLS.
- With regards to Section 8 vouchers, it is very important that residents weigh their decision wisely. The voucher is extinguished once they move in. The only way to get it back is to enter another waitlist and hope that they are awarded another voucher.

VII. STNC Updates

Emelda Paul & D'Ana Smith:

- Would like to highlight the Elite Seniors program. Elite Seniors takes place Monday through Thursday from 10 am to 3 pm. 10 to 10:30 is socializing, 10:30 to 12 is exercise, followed by lunch and arts & crafts. One project they have been working on is making wreaths. Anyone over 55 can be a part.
- David Gilmore and HANO are sponsoring a dinner for seniors on Sunday, December 12th, at the Roosevelt Hotel at 3 pm. Pickup will be at 2 pm at STNC.

- STNC arranges senior fieldtrips as well. Past trips have included picnics in City Park and trip to Tanger Outlet malls in Gonzalez. All trips are paid for through CDBG funds and are absolutely free for participants.

VIII. Adjournment

- Dinner served and meeting adjourned.
- Raffle drawn for residents who have completed survey.

IX. Important dates

Next HOPE VI meeting:

- Wednesday, November 10, at 11:30 am