

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Homebuilding Plan for Treme/Lafitte and Tulane/Gravier

Date Wednesday, February 7, 2007
Ujima Building, 1019 N. Prieur

Participants Eugene Oppman (Carver Theater), Amy Chandler, Alex Morgan (Councilmember Midura, District A), Danel Tzylm (D'Gerolzmo Development), Mtumishi St. Julien (The Finance Authority), Leonetta Terrell (FOLC), representative (Greater Treme Consortium), Tres Burnhard, Malcolm Petal (LIFT), Nathan Shroyer (Neighborhoods' Partnership Network), James Ross (NeighborWorks America), Fr. Perry Henry (St. Joseph Church and Tulane-Canal CDC), Russell Fraise

Providence Community Housing: Jim Kelly (President & CEO), Nadine Jarmon (VP Community Development), Tammy Crumpton (Director Resident Services), Brenda Richard-Montgomery (VP Homeowner Programs), John Turnbull (VP Multi-Family Project Development), Father Michael Jacques

Enterprise: Chickie Grayson (President), Ron Wilson (Director of Housing Initiatives), Christine Madigan (VP)

Other people working on the Homebuilding Plan: Ray Gindroz and Tiffany Haile, Urban Design Associates (architects and designers), Nicole Swerhun (facilitation)

The purpose of the meeting was to meet with a small group of stakeholders to:

- Provide an update on Providence and Enterprise's work on the Homebuilding Plan; and
- Seek feedback on the updated development plans, and discuss opportunities to work together in our efforts to strengthen these communities.

The meeting began with a general update by Jim Kelly and Chickie Grayson, followed by a presentation by Ray Gindroz reviewing the updated Homebuilding Plan.

Key points covered during the discussion

General questions about design:

- Will the houses be on the ground or raised? *They will be raised a minimum of 3 feet, and generally more. They will also be easier to access, abiding by visitability legislation. The entire site will also be raised in areas.*
- Do you have the money ready to build once the lawsuit is settled? *Yes.*
- Where are you in the planning process? Have you been to the Planning Advisory Committee? *Yes, met with the Advisory Committee and the meeting with the full Commission is still coming.*
- Have you heard about the City's plans for restoring the 2 pools, Lehmann 1 and Lehmann 2? *At this point we haven't heard, but we can try and find out.*
- Will there be porches on the homes redeveloped on St. Louis street? *Once we get control of property in the area, then all houses we build will follow the housing designs just presented. Many of the houses have porches.*

- Will the Sojourner Truth Community Center be restored? Yes.

Making sure home ownership works:

- I think the presentation was excellent. We need to have a discussion around the appropriate size and affordability of the units. Pre-Katrina the New Orleans Neighborhood Collaborative was preparing for a lease-purchase program. If the intent is to transition residents to home ownership, then it's critical that make sure the size is appropriate. Pre-Katrina we were thinking a 1400 sq ft home with 3 bedrooms and 9 foot ceilings would sell for \$125,000, and we would build it for \$110,000. *It would be helpful to learn more about that program. We're thinking that the rental units will eventually become the lease-for-purchase properties. How did you cover the \$125,000 purchase price?* We used home and CDBG funds to tack onto the back of the first loan, so we didn't have to worry about amortizing. Dr. Wade Regas did a report for us that showed about a \$30,000 gap between what residents could afford (based on incomes in the hotel/motel industry) and house price.
- What percentage of the properties will be for sale versus rental? *Of the 1500 units, 900 will be subsidized and 600 for sale. Some of the subsidized units could have a lease to purchase option.*

LIFT Film Studio:

- LIFT is developing a film studio, and we plan to start our pilings March 15th. We will have union jobs that range \$20-45/hr. We expect up to 2400 jobs could be created from building the studio in this location. *Are there ways to connect you to Lafitte residents?* We're the only one in the country blending a studio with a Votech school at the same time. Jobs are not short term, but over the next 5, 10-15 years the studios will be a source of employment in the community.
- Are there opportunities for construction jobs at LIFT? *Happy to try and explore options.*

Carver Theater:

- What do the residents of Lafitte want to see happen with the Carver Theater? *They'd like to see it operating as a theater. There are real opportunities to see the Carver Theater as a hub in the area, with development of surrounding retail.*
- Instinctively makes sense to connect the theater redevelopment to the film studio.

Retail:

- We need a plan for retail development, especially on Orleans.

Outreach:

- NeighborWorks has several offices in Houston that could probably help provide information on/to Lafitte residents.

Next steps:

Seems like there are two potential areas where working sessions may be helpful:

1. **Land acquisition.** One of the key challenges for redevelopment is the ability to acquire land. One challenge for this group could be to start looking at ways to pool our ability to acquire. This could happen by sharing ideas on which properties to secure. Right now adjudicated properties are scattered throughout the community, and do not necessarily match logical places to build the housing program. Everybody's wants the exact same thing – a happy, healthy, prosperous New Orleans.
2. **Orleans corridor.** This could be a discussion around a retail strategy.

Providence and Enterprise indicated that it's important to keep talking, whether they host or others host. Providence and Enterprise will try and continue similar meetings like this on some type of regular basis.