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**Upriver Neighborhood Meeting
May 1, 2007
Kingsley House**

Sean Cummings welcomed everyone and explained that the NOBC is a public corporation that takes specific properties owned by the city and improves their use for the community and so that they will bring in the maximum tax benefit.

Carol Bebelle explained that the culture of families and neighborhoods is what holds the community together. She said that this is an opportunity for the team to hear from the communities in close proximity to the river. She said that when architects work, they like to imagine how things can be and make it look as real as possible. As these designs have taken a physical shape, it is time to see how culture plays out in the development. It is an opportunity for the neighborhoods to imagine and add to the process.

Allen presented the organizing principles and talked about the “hybrid” solution – creating different landscapes in different areas, in some places with architecture and in others by allowing the river to reclaim the area. He said that the upriver portion would likely be developed within the existing zoning and land use modes.

He talked about the primary nodes or “major moments.”

- 1 – Jackson Avenue – carve away platform to create a green edge
- 2 – Riversphere/Convention Center – Neighborhood uses along with academic village and residential towers and a park that “tilts” up to get over the railroad tracks
- 3 – Julia Street – 900-room hotel already planned
- 4 – Spanish Plaza – Create something appropriate as the terminus to Canal Street
- 5 – Jackson Square – Expand the plaza to rivers’ edge
- 6 – Elysian Fields/Esplanade – Notch out a place in the working wharves
- 7 – Piety Street – neighborhood use
- 8 -- Press Street – neighborhood use, expansion of NOCCA
- 9 – Poland Avenue – Residential opportunity with recreational uses. Possibility for some height at the site of the naval base.

Question (Alan Drake):

What about use as a bicycle path? Will there be interruptions?

Response:

The 4.5 miles will be a continuous connection. Homeland Security won’t allow it at Julia or at Esplanade, but there will be lateral connections at all openings. Jackson, Celeste, Richard, Race, Julia, Poydras and Canal will be the upriver connections. Some openings will be vehicular.

Question:

What about the streetcar?

Response:

That is fairly well determined, with an upriver route that will cover Riversphere, turn up at Richard to St. Thomas to Jackson to St. Charles. On the downriver side it will turn on Poland and tie into the proposed Desire line.

Alan Drake:

He is opposed to the downriver expansion because it impedes development of Desire. He has been working with Boh Brothers to come off the Riverfront onto the Elysian Fields neutral ground.

Question:

Does NOBC include companies and corporations that would benefit from hotels and other development, or have they exempted themselves?

Response:

The board is made up of three members of the City Council and the Mayor, along with Norman Francis, Scott Cowen and Donna Addkison.

Question:

Is there a conflict of interest? Isn't Sean Cummings a hotelier? It speaks to kind of being on the ground floor to direct business a certain way.

Response:

Sometimes there is speculation of another end game. This project is to get a great river's edge to spur private development.

Question:

Given the current situation, is there money earmarked? Where will it come from?

Response:

It was determined some months ago that while the city works on recovery, it has to look at other opportunities, such as the riverfront. There are a lot of pots of money to tap once we have a master plan. The \$15-20 million the city will get will trigger the private development. We know that it has to be private and public money to make it an implementable plan.

Question (Alan Drake):

Have you considered two piers with a longer base and apex? It could create an interesting experience.

Response:

We have determined that the most elegant are the simple piers. They are minimalist to make it more experiential. We see 15-20 connection and 6-8 piers.

Question:

It looks like they are planning for a cruise ship terminal already. Why else would they be widening and paving Chartres Street?

Response:

The cruise ship terminal location has not been determined by the Port.

Question:

What about the maintenance of all these public spaces?

Response:

We will address the maintenance in the financial report that will be part of our final product. There is a consultant working on the financing aspect; it could be a TIF, BID or other mechanism to provide funding for ongoing maintenance.