



**CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 8, 2004 – 4:00 P. M., ROOM 303, YENNI BUILDING**

Members of the Citizen's Advisory Committee Present:

Norbert White	Charles Miller
Connie Casey	Ben Zahn
Debbie Skrmetta	Lynne Parker
Larry Katz	Lee Giorgio
Leon Scoriels	Scott Coulombe
Bruce Layburn	Debbie Settoon
Sheree Kerner	Jim Fantaci
Cocie Rathborne	Bruce O'Neil
Louis Thomas	Phillip Truxillo

Planning Works Staff Present:

Michael Lauer
Sara Copeland

UNO Staff Present:

Tim Joder

Burk-Kleinpeter Staff Present:

Ed Elam

Planning Department Staff Present:

Ed Durabb, Director
Terri Wilkinson, Planner III
Wanda DeWailly, Steno Clerk III

Public Present:

Mrs. S. Layburn

Mr. Joder opened the meeting by introducing himself and by welcoming everyone to the first meeting of the Citizen's Advisory Committee for the Envision 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Joder said there were no rules of order at this point, so he would preside temporarily. Mr. Joder said the first order of business should be for everyone in attendance to introduce themselves. After all the introductions were made, Mr. Joder told all newly appointed committee members that the Parish is required to adopt rules of order or standards by which they operate. Mr. Joder introduced Dr. Wilkinson, who referenced a handout given to committee members that summarizes some suggested rules of procedure extracted from Robert's Rules of Order.

Dr. Wilkinson said the legislation that created this committee requires the committee to adopt rules of procedure. In addition, she said that the committee will need to elect a

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chairperson or persons. Dr. Wilkinson explained that in putting the handout together she reviewed Robert's Rules of Order, a standard process for running meetings, as well as proceedings of the predecessor Steering Committee and requirements of the Parish's Code of Ordinances. She showed the committee a revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order, which is extremely detailed and a bit complicated. She said that using Robert's Rules of Order to the letter would necessitate everyone memorizing at least the Order of Precedence for motions and rules that apply to motions. At its first meeting, the Steering Committee discussed adopting Robert's Rules of Order and the consensus then was that it was too complicated and much more than they needed. She said it would require a parliamentarian who knew the rules and motions, etc in order to use this system of committee management. She told the committee that the previous Steering Committee has operated under procedural rules that were a lot less formal than Robert's Rules of Order. Even though the Council and Parish President also appointed that committee, it was not a committee that was created by ordinance or law as is the Citizen's Advisory Committee. Dr. Wilkinson felt that this committee needed to operate more formally than the Steering Committee, but not as formally as Robert's Rules of Order warranted. Based on the proceedings of the past Steering Committee, Robert's Rules of Order, and the requirements of the Code of Ordinances, Dr. Wilkinson believed that the 13 items summarized in the handout, which she briefly reviewed and in which included rules for debate, motions, votes, election of chair(s), and quorums, would cover the needs of this committee.

Mr. Joder said that the committee was not bound to address the issue of a chairman and/or co-chairman at this particular meeting, but if their pleasure was to hold elections then he would be happy to facilitate the process. Dr. Wilkinson reminded Mr. Joder that at some point rules of procedure needed to be adopted.

Mr. Coulombe made a motion to adopt the rules of procedure summarized in the handout. Mr. Scoriels seconded the motion.

Mr. Joder asked if there was any discussion. Mr. Fantaci said he would also second the idea not to use Robert's Rules of Order. It is much too complicated. He said there was another set of rules, Corporate Stockholders Meeting Rules, that most of the organizations he has dealt with use. He said that with these rules, a subject for discussion is not required to be introduced by a formal motion, as is dictated by Robert's Rules of Order for introduction of business. Instead, a formal motion is used later in the process when action is to be taken. Dr. Wilkinson said that the Steering Committee functioned that way, making formal motions only to take action.

Mr. Joder asked if there should be an amendment to the motion on the table to adopt the rules of procedure summarized in the handout.

Mr. Fantaci said he would like to make a motion to amend the procedure to permit a more informal introduction of business for debate which would then move into the process of someone making a motion and then following up for action. Mr. White seconded the motion. Mr. Joder asked if there was any further discussion. There being none, Mr.

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Joder asked if everyone was in favor of amending the motion. Everyone was in favor and none opposed.

Mr. O'Neil said he felt it would become obvious that over time some topics would be more lengthy and involved and they may have to limit discussion. The committee has to know where they are headed in terms of time and goals. The subject of proxies also has to be addressed. The Steering Committee fell short on attendance towards the end and that presented problems in terms of getting motions passed.

Mr. Joder said that the length of a debate can be controlled, but the issue of proxies was another matter; he asked the committee if they wanted to expand on this issue or were in favor of making a motion for proxies?

Ms. Settoon said she thought it should be put out for general discussion. Mr. Joder said it was not part of the motion. He asked if anyone wanted to make a motion about proxies. Mr. Rathborne said there was already one motion on the floor. Mr. Joder said that an amendment could be made to the motion. Ms. Settoon said to let the motion go as is and bring the proxy issue up later.

Mr. Joder asked the committee if everyone was in favor of the original motion as amended which was to adopt the rules with modifications that had been passed earlier. All were in favor and none opposed.

Mr. Joder said he was willing to entertain suggestions about how to proceed with the nomination of officers.

Ms. Casey said both co-chairs from the Steering Committee were in attendance at this meeting. She asked if they would be willing to be chairpersons for the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Ms. Parker asked to have a short discussion for the new members of the committee. She said Mr. Giorgio and Mr. Rathborne had led the Steering Committee admirably and she would be very satisfied to have both of them return as co-chairs. Ms. Parker then made a motion to elect Mr. Lee Giorgio and Mr. Cocie Rathborne as the committee's co-chairmen. Ms. Casey seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and there being no objections the motion passed.

Mr. Giorgio thanked the committee for their confidence in electing him and Mr. Rathborne as co-chairs. He said he wanted to make one statement. There was much concern when the steering committee was formed several years ago that business and civic interests would be opposing each other. As we went through the planning process, it became apparent that there was significant unity and harmony because the issues were the issues and whether you were on the business side or you were a resident, the issues were still the issues. It became a unified effort on both sides. The communication and the support from the group is what brought us this far. This plan is not totally comprehensive as of yet and that is why we are here.

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Mr. Giorgio gave Mr. Joder the floor. Mr. Joder presented a Power Point presentation to the committee detailing the development Envision Jefferson 2020 from its inception to the present. He summarized how the plan was developed, what it contains and the changes to the Code of Ordinances to effectuate it, including the section in the Code that establishes the duties of the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Ms. Setton asked how you would effectuate future land use in this plan through zoning. She also asked if any properties would be grandfathered in.

Mr. Joder said that you zone the property in a manner that is consistent with the proposed land use. Mr. Joder said that grandfathering is an issue whenever you plan after the fact. We don't want to create all sorts of nonconforming uses by having a future land use map that is inconsistent with what is out there on the ground. Both the planning team and the Steering Committee tried to be very respectful of existing land use. They tried not to produce situations of direct conflict between what we had on the ground and where we wanted to go.

Ms. Parker said she would like to add that as properties came up for rezoning in her neighborhood and the land use map was incompatible with the request, the neighborhood asked its Council member to take a look at the land use map and a way was found to zone the property so that it was compliant.

Mr. Joder came to the end of his presentation by explaining the work program for Envision Jefferson in 2004-2005. He said that later in the meeting some of the people involved in the current planning process would be speaking on what is going on, but for now he would like to provide some background to the committee concerning the structure and content of the current planning effort. There are two cooperative endeavor agreements into which the Parish has entered. One of those cooperative endeavor agreements is with the Regional Planning Commission and the other with the UNO Foundation. Regarding the agreement with the RPC, the Parish asked the Regional Planning Commission to hire someone and have them address three things: (1) a Thoroughfare Plan; (2) a Housing Element; and (3) a facilitator for the Citizen's Advisory Committee meetings. As a result, the Regional Planning Commission has selected Burk-Kleinpeter as the principal consultant and Burk-Kleinpeter has gone out and engaged subcontractors: for the Major Thoroughfare Plan, the subs are Urban Planning Innovations and S. W. Leader; for the Housing Element the subs are both Tim Joder personally and his college, the College of Urban & Public Affairs at UNO; and for facilitation of the Citizen's Advisory Committee facilitation, the sub is Tim Joder.

Mr. Joder continued by reviewing the second cooperative endeavor agreement with the University of New Orleans Foundation. Mr. Joder is acting as the principal investigator for the purpose of overseeing this agreement. It involves two contracts that are directly related to activities that are being done in conjunction with the plan and another project that Mr. Durabb will speak on later in this meeting. The two principal tasks are with Mr. Michael Lauer of Planning Works, Inc., who is working on a new set of subdivision

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regulations, and GCR & Associates, Inc., who is doing GIS work for the land use map correction process. Mr. Joder said before he introduced each of the principals and have them speak on a brief overview of what they are doing, where they are, and how they expect to go forward, he would like to say that he is working on a time line for some of these activities. Each year the Parish has seen fit to spend a certain amount of money on its comprehensive planning efforts and those expenditures during the first four years has led us to where we are now with the Comprehensive Plan. The plan that has been adopted is only part of a plan. While the Council acted to make some money available in 2004, by the time the cooperative endeavor agreements were negotiated and the consultants selected and the sub-contracts were negotiated, we are just beginning to get started on the list of 2004 tasks. In addition to the work efforts under the RPC and UNO contracts, there also is an Economic Development Element that is being addressed separately by JEDCO (Jefferson Economic Development Commission). JEDCO has engaged GCR & Associates, Inc., and a contract has been signed. Mr. Joder then introduced Mr. Ed Elam of Burk-Kleinpeter to speak on the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

Mr. Elam said Burk-Kleinpeter, along with UNO, participated in the citizen's briefings where they talked to a variety of people about transportation priorities in establishing the transportation element of Envision Jefferson 2020. The voters of the Parish passed a road bond issue in 1998, but most of the projects were under construction at the time of the meetings. Mr. Elam referred to maps that the committee had received as part of their packet. He said the maps reflected projects that people in the community felt were important for the ongoing development of the Parish; also some other critical links or missing pieces that need to be put in place in the developed portions of the Parish as well as those undeveloped areas west of the Harvey Canal on the Westbank. A lot of the emphasis is on connecting those elements we already have in place such as roads that have transit service.

Mr. Elam emphasized that most of the consultant's work will take place in areas where development is proposed. They will be looking at locations where corridors should be placed based upon the land use decisions that are made in this process. The State and the Federal governments are actually making decisions on major transportation improvements for the area. In some cases the Parish will be catching up to them and hoping to influence some of those decisions. The consultants and past Steering Committee had many discussions about the proposed East/West corridor for light rail between downtown New Orleans and the airport and to make improvements to the Earhart/Airline area so that the Earhart corridor becomes a much more efficient transportation artery in East Jefferson. Mr. Elam noted other projects that are in the planning stages, such as the Harvey Boulevard extension which has entered its second phase of planning through the Regional Planning Commission.

He told the committee that he hopes to provide them with information about what is going on, but also to see where the thoroughfare planning process can better serve the areas. Many of the larger projects will have their own separate processes that will look at the impacts, the costs, and the benefits associated with them, and those processes alone will determine whether they survive or move ahead. That is one of the discussions that

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took place about the East/West corridor because there was a lot of concern about ridership on light rail, how will it connect to neighborhoods, etc. Those types of elements would be covered under their own planning processes, and the consultants will review these processes with the Planning Department.

In the coming months the thoroughfare plan consultants will be looking at the existing street networks in East and West Jefferson to identify those roads that are most critical. For example, Clearview Parkway/I-10 plays a critical role, but there are also a series of smaller streets in our neighborhoods that provide a mechanism to get people from their houses to other areas. The consultants will identify a list of streets that they consider to be major in moving traffic as well as significant for helping neighborhoods. They will look at standards based upon the quality of life issues that they heard about in the community group meeting process, and some of the data elements will be put into the Parish's GIS system so that Parish engineers and planners can do analysis and prepare maps that look at a particular stretch of roadway, figure out the type of road, the number of lanes, and the volume of traffic. This data is useful in considering design standards, when to make improvements, and what type of improvements are possible. One of the things the current process will do is take a rational approach to what is reasonable given the land use and the Parish's population; also what the Parish's economic development strategy shows. Mr. Elam pointed out that there is a Technical Advisory Committee set up under the planning process underway that will report back to this committee. The planning process will stretch out to about sixteen months. He said he would be coming back from time to time to keep the committee updated.

Mr. Joder then spoke on some of the things he himself is doing. As a subcontractor to Burk-Kleinpeter, he and the University of New Orleans are responsible for producing the Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan. He said this was a difficult task because all types of housing issues occur in the Parish, including affordable housing, group homes, etc. Mr. Joder said a plan needs to be established to provide housing for everyone, all income ranges, and in a fashion that caters to the needs of the population that we expect to have in the future which includes a graying population. The principal tasks over the course of the past month was to review the housing-related data from every source and come up with a clear picture to forecast the demand for housing in terms of density and types of special needs populations. They are producing that report and their work is going to be guided by a Technical Advisory Committee for the Housing Element. Along the way the Citizen's Advisory Committee will receive reports from them and as the work goes on, they will be forwarding things to this group for review and recommendation.

In this two-tiered process, many of the things that go on over the course of the next year will be filtered through a technical committee specifically appointed for the purpose of addressing an element, whereas this committee has the overall purview for reviewing all the elements. Mr. Joder said he is the Citizen's Advisory Committee's facilitator. He then introduced Mr. Michael Lauer to the committee.

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While Mr. Lauer was setting up for his presentation Ms. Parker asked who was handling the Bucktown Plan and how the Bucktown Plan is funded.

Mr. Joder said no one had been selected to do the Bucktown Plan yet. Councilwoman Sneed had set aside \$100,000. A formal advertisement carefully detailing the responsibilities of any perspective consultant had been published and distributed. The members of the Planning community are forming teams in an effort to secure this contract, and the Parish is waiting for these responses and will make a selection.

Ms. Parker also asked about the Economic Development Plan – who was handling it and the funding.

Mr. Joder said the Economic Development Element is not being financed through RPC or through the UNO Foundation; instead, it is being financed by JEDCO. Mr. Giorgio is a member of the committee that has looked at this and Mr. Joder said his understanding is that the consultant had been selected and it was GCR, Inc. Mr. Joder asked Mr. Giorgio if he would like to add some input.

Mr. Giorgio said the Jefferson Edge Program was funded by businesses and companies that came together and pledged \$50,000 a year over five years for planning and economic development for the Parish through JEDCO and the Jefferson Edge 5-year strategic plan. Through this budgeting process there was enough money to incorporate the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan into the strategic plan update. Jefferson Edge has been around for four years. It was to be a five-year undertaking and JEDCO and the business community is in the process of assessing where we've been and where we're going. In carrying Jefferson Edge forward and updating the goals and objectives they have added in the scope of the Economic Development Element. Mr. Giorgio said \$100,000 is committed to this effort. He said he was on the consultant selection committee and it had applicants from all over the country. GCR did a good job on their proposal; time-wise and resource-wise they were the best choice.

Mr. Lauer then made his presentation. Mr. Lauer said that he has been through many plan development and implementation programs. As a consultant who works around the country, he knows many different approaches to establishing sound Master Planning regulations, what succeeds and what fails to solve problems. Fundamentally, he said a plan does very simple tasks. It says we have a vision of what we want to be, and we have challenges we have to address in order to accomplish this vision. One of the challenges to implement the plan is to figure out how to encourage development that actually makes effective use of infrastructure that results in not only compatible development, but development that actually builds and strengthens neighborhoods and insures that the community grows and prospers. Mr. Lauer said it was interesting to him that over the last three years every Comprehensive Plan in which he has been involved was initiated because of economic development. The economic development interests sat down and said they were competing in an environment where all they had to market was quality of life, and if they did not focus on that then they would be out of business. That is an important background for the plan.

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Mr. Lauer added that he has had the pleasure of working with a number of the members of this committee to refine policy and figure out what the choices would be. He was retained to work on the subdivision regulations and to start on the zoning ordinance by preparing the structure for a unified development code. Such a unified code basically says we are going to take all of our development regulations and merge them into one document instead of having them scattered in a number of different ordinances. He said he is working on the outline for this type of code. But today he would like to focus primarily on the subdivision regulations. Mr. Lauer has been meeting with an excellent technical committee that represents a lot of different interests. He said they had started in June and at the next month they will start reviewing text. They are ahead of schedule and will be drafting text that will be coming to this committee along with the issues sometime in November. Mr. Lauer mentioned that this committee will also get another crack at the subdivision regulations in January, when the committee will focus on the regulatory policy decisions and hopefully get to the adoption process in March and April.

Mr. Lauer explained that the Parish's subdivision regulations were drafted in 1958. Processes were developed over time, and some work and others don't. The standards are not explicit. Consequently, standards are made up on the spot, which leads to uncertainty. In revising the subdivision regulations we are going to address the standards issue. The other thing we are going to try to do is establish the appropriate role for the subdivision regulations. Subdivisions should not be a discretionary act. In development, discretion comes in the Comprehensive Plan, which says this is what we want to be. That is highly discretionary. It is an issue of saying our public policy is thus. Zoning is also a discretionary act; it apportions land uses and establishes how those land uses should be designed and work with each other.

Subdivision regulations (water standards, waste water standards, traffic standards, etc.), however, are non discretionary acts. Because of the lack of standards, Jefferson Parish's subdivision review has become a battleground much more than it should be. One aim of revising the subdivision regulations is to depoliticize the subdivision regulation process. Mr. Lauer said that he, working with the technical advisory committee, is proposing two fundamental changes in the process. First, it may not be necessary to have an ordinance for subdivision approval. The Parish Attorney's office has to look into this, but eliminating the ordinance can streamline the process. There would still be two public hearings, i.e., go through the process with the Planning Advisory Board. Then the subdivision goes to the Council and before it is recorded it goes back to the Council. The Council says we have some kind of guarantee that there will be improvements in place, thereby protecting Parish residents' pocketbooks and making sure the development will go ahead without forcing the Parish to become the development financier. This guarantee for improvements is the second change. Another big issue is how much administrative authority should be granted. The amount of discretion you give staff versus the Council is one of the major issues to be faced. Mr. Lauer said that he would be coming back to this committee with more information at a later date, and ended his presentation.

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Mr. Joder said that the UNO Foundation Cooperative Endeavor Agreement was funding another study that had some relevance to the Comprehensive Plan. He added that other studies are being addressed by the Planning Department and he asked Mr. Durabb to speak on these.

Mr. Durabb said subdivision regulations are outdated and antiquated. The same held true for the zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance and the parish's zoning districts work some of the time, but the ordinance does need to be overhauled. One of the task elements in the Comprehensive Plan is to take the zoning ordinance and redo the whole thing and rezone the whole Parish. There are two studies underway to look at making our zoning ordinance more flexible to meet the needs of 2004. One of them is high-rise residential development study recently called by the Parish Council. The current zoning ordinance does not address high-rise residential development. It assumes Jefferson Parish will be a low-density, largely single-family developed community. On the Westbank there is a lot of vacant land, but on the Eastbank there is not. There is also a graying population that is downsizing, thus producing a growing market for high-rise condos and other residential developments. We do not allow this easily under the current zoning regulations. We have zoning districts that ostensibly allow them, but they require the developer to set back one foot for ever foot the proposed building goes up over whatever the zoning allows. In Bucktown there have been several condo proposals. There is no specific review process in the zoning ordinance designated to look at those structures and how they fit in with the community around them. Rather than continue to approve high-rise condos by the variance process with the Board of Zoning Adjustments and to do zoning changes without knowing what is going to happen, a study has been called to let the Planning Department write the rules on how these high-rise residential structures will be permitted, what districts they will be permitted in, what conditions will apply, and under what districts they should not be permitted. The Planning Department will bring this back to the Council within the next six months.

Mr. Durabb continued with the second study—to look at zero-lot-line and small-lot zoning. This study is being done by Fernandez Plans and will take a look at adding flexibility to the zoning ordinance. Some of the older parts of the parish have a traditional small-lot development pattern but our zoning ordinance doesn't make provisions for these small lots, which creates permitting problems for redevelopment. Our zoning ordinance also doesn't allow garden homes or cluster housing that some communities use. We can't all live in detached, single-family homes. Land is at a premium; there is a graying population in Jefferson Parish and people are looking for other types of housing. We have to provide this housing. One of the things this study will do is to make suggestions to put zero-lot-line and small-lot provisions in the zoning ordinance. In general, the zoning ordinance is a very inflexible document that assumes Jefferson Parish is a low-scale suburban residential community. However, the parish is changing. It is important to maintain the quality of life here, but it is also important that we provide amenities for people of all walks of life, including affordable housing. If we don't, the citizens will leave. Mr. Durabb concluded that he would be coming back from time to time to let the committee know how these two projects were coming along.

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Mr. Joder said, unfortunately, comprehensive planning is something that goes on one year at a time. He said there are the two cooperative endeavor agreements and the money that is associated with them expires at the end of this year, although there are provisions to carry forth. We do not know what the Council will do this spring. The Housing Element, for example, is currently underway and is split-funded for one half this year and, in theory, one half next year, provided the Council appropriates the money. There will be a new slate of items we will want to go into for the 2005-2006 planning cycle. Mr. Joder then asked if there were any questions or comments.

Ms. Settoon said she thought it would be helpful to the people who were new on the committee to have an overall schedule of tasks laid out so they could see where they are in the process.

Mr. Joder said that he would produce one. He said his presentation was not on the web site, but if anyone would like it he would be happy to e-mail it. Mr. Joder then agreed to mail a copy of the presentation available to each member.

Mr. Truxillo asked if the committee would consider rotating from East Bank to West Bank for meetings. Mr. Giorgio asked for a show of hands from those members who are coming from the West Bank, and noted that about 25 percent are commuting from the West Bank. He said that the committee would consider having some of the meetings on the West Bank, and the Planning Department agreed to look into what rooms are available at the new Administration Building. However, the next meeting would be held here at the Yenni Building.

Mr. Giorgio noted that typically an agenda and any review material were sent out to the committee members before each meeting. The next meeting date was chosen as October 28, 2004 at 4:00 P. M. in Room 303 of the Yenni Building.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

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