

Minutes of the 18th Meeting of the Envision Jefferson 2020 Steering Committee
February 6, 2003 - 3:30 P.M.
Select Properties Building
2121 Airline Drive, Suite 600

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members

Lee Giorgio, Co-Chair	Lynn Parker	Erie Hebert
Cokie Rathborne, Co-Chair	Bruce O'Neil	Buck Barkley
Ross Liner	Donnie Wolfe	
Joanne Mire	Lucien Gunter	

Jefferson Parish Officials

Louis Savoye, Deputy Chief Administrative Assistant
Dr. Terri Wilkinson, Senior Planner
Shannon Burke, Planner

University of New Orleans

Wendel P. Dufour, Jr., Principal Planner
Tim Joder, Associate Dean

Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc

Ed Elam, Senior Planner

GCR & Associates, Inc.

Larry Ringel, Project Manager
Roy Smith, Land Use Planner

Element Committee Member

Angelo Persica, Jr.

Jefferson Parish Affordable Housing Task Force

Nancy Robertson
George Dupuy
Laurie V. Marshall
Yvette Cola
Gary Williams

The meeting began at 3:30 with a presentation by members of the Jefferson Parish Affordable Housing Task Force.

Ms. Robertson addressed the Committee, desiring to inform the Committee of the work of the Task Force and help the Committee understand affordable housing and the importance of including the Task Force recommendations in the comprehensive plan. She explained that the Task Force has had the advantage of having Dr. Wilkinson attend their meetings to help in combining or collaborating the Task Force work with the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Robertson pointed out that according to the 2000 census, 41% of the households in Jefferson Parish earn less than \$25,000 per year and are unable to purchase an average price house in Jefferson Parish in today's market. HUD's definition of affordable housing is that an individual pays no more than 30% of his monthly income toward housing costs – either rental or purchase. She explained that when they talk about affordable housing, they are talking about a community having a range of housing options for all the constituents from the elderly and disabled with very low incomes to young professionals just starting out.

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Ms. Robertson addressed housing costs in terms of renting by stating that 41% of renters in Jefferson Parish paid over 30% of their household income toward rent as compared to 31% in 1989. The cost of renting an apartment in Jefferson Parish continues to rise and those that are considered “rent burdened”, meaning they pay over 30% of their income for rent, has risen in the past ten years. In 1989 Jefferson Parish had about 53,000 rental units that rented for under \$500 per month. In 2000, only 24,000 units rented for under \$500 per month, a loss of about 29,000 units. Mr. Dufour asked if those numbers had been adjusted for inflation and Ms. Robertson answered “No”.

Ms. Robertson continued by stating the mission of the Jefferson Parish Affordable Housing Task Force was to create and expand affordable, safe and quality housing options in Jefferson Parish for persons with low incomes, including persons with disabilities. The goal of the Task Force is to develop recommendations that would allow, support and facilitate the creation of affordable housing in Jefferson Parish. The Task Force is comprised of members from a variety of agencies including banks, lenders, non-profits, developers, and State and Federal government. The Task Force is guided by an Executive Committee and four working committees divided into the concept of home ownership, affordable housing, and rental affordable housing. Committees are further divided into rental production, housing production, and then the people aspect – making both rental and ownership units affordable and accessible. The Task Force has spent the past several months meeting and discussing issues, strategies and barriers and is in the process of developing draft recommendations, with a target date of April 30, 2003 to have final recommendations to the Council.

Mr. Wolfe asked if the \$25,000 per year income to qualify for affordable housing was an individual amount. Ms. Robertson answered that the \$25,000 amount was a combined income, a household income.

Mr. Dupuy then addressed the Steering Committee, representing Omni Bank. Mr. Dupuy explained that the nature of affordable housing has changed over the years and that there were some valuable tools now available to developers and homeowners that are not well known or used. He cited low income housing tax credits and lease-to-own programs. Affordable homes approach the \$100,000 price range, with the price of land being the governing factor. He stated that home building techniques exist and financing vehicles are in place and an emphasis will be placed on how to use those items. Mr. Dupuy said the Orleans Parish has been doing some things that Jefferson Parish can learn from, citing Community Development Financial Institutions working with non-profits and a successful program of acquiring blighted properties and putting them back into commerce.

Ms. Marshall then addressed the Steering Committee by reading a prepared statement expressing the Hibernia National Bank’s strong commitment to affordable housing.

Ms. Cola, representing the Hibernia National Bank, then addressed the Steering Committee. She explained that the Bank considers affordable housing to be good business and a solid economic decision. She wanted to address the multi-family issue by noting a widening gap

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between those that have moved past the median income level and those below. That gap will cause a drain for the entire community. If we don't find ways to address the issue of affordable housing, then those above the medium income will be pulling the load of those below. The best way we can think of to assure that our entire community moves forward is to make sure that we address the needs of affordable housing. That is why we are talking to the Steering Committee about including the concept of affordability within the master plan. She asked that when the Steering Committee looks at affordability, that it looks at a diverse base of individuals in the community, remembering that new college graduates getting their first jobs may fall within the definition of affordability. If we don't find a way to meet their housing needs, we may lose them. That would be a drain on the Parish. She asked that we not consider the concept of affordability in terms of clusters. The Task Force does not want to create clusters of affordable housing, which they feel would be a drain on the community.

Mr. Williams then addressed the Steering Committee, representing the FannieMae New Orleans Partnership Office. He stated that homeownership is an economic stabilizer in the Parish and he expects homeownership to continue to grow. He explained that most of what FannieMae does is single-family investments in mortgages. His office works with municipal partners, lender partners, non-profits and developers to stimulate affordable housing, having invested over \$2 Billion in Jefferson Parish. FannieMae wants to do more in Jefferson Parish. He concluded by saying that he hopes that the recommendations of the Task Force will assist in addressing some of the barriers and shortcomings in Jefferson Parish.

Mr. Rathborne asked Mr. Williams to clarify that the \$2 Billion in investments were mortgages and not equity investments. Mr. Williams confirmed that definition.

Mr. Barkley asked if Ms. Robertson could share some of the strategies the Task Force is working on.

Ms. Robertson mentioned several strategies that may impact the comprehensive plan:

- A strategy to recover blighted housing.
- A way to bring down the price of land.
- Inclusionary zoning requirements, for instance, if a multi-family unit is being developed, a certain number of those units must be affordable.
- A homeownership coalition.
- A landlord association.
- The concept of CFEI expanded into Jefferson parish
- A certified homebuyers education program.
- Development of a post-purchase support plan and system.
- Assuring that the comprehensive plan does not prohibit the development of affordable housing and actually facilitates the development of affordable housing.

Mr. Joder asked Mr. Williams what portion of the \$2 Billion in FannieMae investment represented large multi-family complexes as opposed to single family homes and if those

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properties were concentrated in specific neighborhoods or spread about the Parish. Mr. Williams answered that the vast majority of investment was in single-family homes, perhaps 98% in single-family stand-alone detached housing units. Those units were spread all over the Parish, “from Old Metairie to Grand Isle”.

Ms. Robertson was asked to clarify her statement that in multi-family units a certain percentage must be in affordable housing. Was she speaking of rentals?

Ms. Robertson explained that the Task Force was not a proponent of cluster affordable housing. She cited an example might be something like the American Can development which may have 30 units renting for \$700 to \$1,000. You may have an ordinance that says that 10% of those have to be affordable and rent at \$500 to \$600. That is an example of what some communities have done to increase the number of affordable housing units. Some communities may do density bonuses, she added.

Ms. Cola concluded the Task Force presentation by mentioning the need for reeducation in the Section 8 landlord-tenant relationship, looking for an increased landlord participation in the plan.

Mr. Giorgio introduced Mr. Ashton Ryan of First Bank and Trust as his guest.

Mr. Ringel asked for approval of the November and December minutes. The Committee approved the November minutes as offered. Mr. Wolfe asked that the December minutes be amended to include the discussion concerning the feasibility of constructing a new bridge instead of expanding the Huey P. Long Bridge, including the statements that the Committee was told that it would be at least as cheap, could have been better traffic-oriented, but could not be considered. Mr. Ringel agreed to edit the December minutes to reflect that discussion.

Mr. Ringel advised the Committee that contracts are in place between the Parish, UNO, gcr & associates, Planning Works, and Burk-Kleinpeter to continue Plan work in 2003 toward taking the Plan to the Council in June for action. The Metairie CBD Plan will go to public hearing at the same time as the Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Ringel and Mr. Joder assured the Committee that every effort was being made to coordinate the Comprehensive Plan with other planning initiatives being conducted by UNO, JEDCO, the State and others.

Ms. Mire asked if UNO was keeping track of zoning changes and subdivision activities in the South New Orleans area as they conduct the study. Mr. Dufour stated that they were trying to keep up with changes as they occur. Ms. Mire offered to provide UNO with subdivision requests for the area as she gets them.

Ms. Parker asked if the Planning Team was keeping up with major re-zoning being done by the Council such as the recent actions on Causeway Boulevard and if the land use maps were

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coordinated with re-zoning. Dr. Wilkinson responded that the Planning Department was tracking zoning changes to make sure the land use maps are current and accurate.

Mr. Barkley asked if the Preferred Plan was still a work-in-process. Mr. Ringel responded that the Preferred Plan was still being refined. Mr. Barkley asked Mr. Ringel if that applied as well to the land use categories. Mr. Ringel responded that some categories may be added such as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) category.

Mr. Barkley noted that the Master Land Use Plan is a tool not etched in granite. He was concerned where we were going beyond that and asked if the Plan would evolve into zoning changes. Dr. Wilkinson responded that zoning is one way to implement the land use plan to which Mr. Barkley asked if the Committee was charged with recreating zoning.

Dr. Wilkinson responded that if the Plan is adopted, the Parish would review the existing zoning to see if it is consistent and implements the Plan. She offered that in most cases, it will be sufficient as is. In other cases, she added, the Parish will need new zoning or will have to tweak existing zoning to try to accomplish the policies and implementation strategies of the Plan. She explained that the PUD is generally a zoning mechanism so if the Parish wanted to encourage planned development, it would need some kind of implementing mechanism and it would probably come through zoning, possibly some kind of new zoning category. Dr. Wilkinson offered that all of the single family residential R1A zoning that the Parish has in place is probably sufficient and meets the needs of the Plan. For the most part, that wouldn't change. Neither would some of the commercial districts. She concluded that the Parish, for the most part, might already have the zoning it needed.

Mr. Barkley noted that the land use categories developed so far have not included R1C. Dr. Wilkinson responded that R1C is an example of low-density residential zoning. If portions of the Parish are shown on the future land use map as low-density residential, then in order to implement that, those portions would have to be zoned R1C or R1D, the Parish's existing low-density residential codes.

Mr. Barkley noted that the land use categories that have been crafted so far relate to the number of units permitted in a low-density residential category and has nothing to do with minimum lot sizes. Dr. Wilkinson responded that density is a reflection of minimum lot size. She believed that ger & associates had put together a table that shows which of the existing zoning districts already fit into the future land use categories. Mr. Barkley suggested that specifying a minimum lot size may not be consistent with a land use category that specifies a maximum number of units.

Mr. Rathborne stated that what the Plan does is tell certain land owners "That's all your land can be used for." He questioned if it was right to zone everybody in a certain way. Dr. Wilkinson responded that everyone is zoned in a certain way *right now* – that is already in place. Mr. Joder added that the problem comes when it becomes clear that we ought to amend the zoning category that applies to a specific parcel in order to implement the land use plan. In

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that case, we may be at odds with the desires of the individual property owner and have to resolve those issues. Dr. Wilkinson reminded Mr. Rathborne that when the consultants put together the future land use categories, they did take existing zoning into account and try to be consistent.

Mr. Rathborne stated that he would hate to have someone tell him that he would have to have a PUD on property he owned. Dr. Wilkinson responded that generally, around the country, a PUD is not a land use category. It is something that is implemented through zoning. She said that in our case, the Churchill Farms property may be a property that the owners might be interested in some type of a planned development. If they were, that could be designated on a land use plan as a mixed-use category that has a very broad definition and allows a multitude of uses including a PUD. The developer would then apply for a PUD, provided the Parish included a PUD in its zoning regulation.

Mr. Ringel mentioned that the Churchill Farms property is the only property in Jefferson Parish that anybody is considering a candidate for a PUD. It is now coded as a community mixed use which would allow a PUD to be put there if the owner so wished. If over the next few months the owners and developers of that property say they want it to be a PUD, then it can be shown as a PUD. Mr. Ringel stated that the Planning Team is trying to be sure that the land use categories are general enough and broad enough to support a range of different zoning to support the uses that the owners of the properties have right now. The idea is, they will have to develop the property. There shouldn't be conflicts.

Mr. Dufour said the Jefferson Parish probably has a lot of good zoning rules in place for certain land use classifications. Unfortunately, what has happened is that those rules have not been applied uniformly. He offered the example of an area zoned residential in which someone wants to open a grocery store and gets a parcel zoned commercial. When that happens, he said, you no longer have a general flow to the zoning, but a hodge-podge is created in the area. He said that if you have a couple of acres, you may have half zoned multi-family, some zoned single-family and some commercial. There is no way that a person that is buying or already owns land can have any expectation that what may be built around his property will be supportive of his development. Solving that problem, he said, is part of the reason the Parish is undertaking a comprehensive plan. The desire is to give a landowner some certainty of what is going to happen in the future to not only his land, but also the land around his land.

Mr. Wolfe asked if it was correct that in order to receive federal funds for the "fast start" program, you have to have mixed use zoning within a one-half mile radius of each rail station.

Dr. Wilkinson responded that you do not necessarily have to have the area zoned "mixed-use", but you try to encourage a mix of uses within a 2,000 foot radius of the station. It does not have to be mixed-use zoning, but a mixture of zones that allows residential and neighborhood commercial. She pointed out that you *could* have mixed-use zoning and some communities do that.

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Mr. Wolfe stated that a half-mile radius is approximately 47 acres or 2 million square feet¹. Within that area you have R1 residential. If you rezone in hopes of building high-rise apartments and other development to support light rail, he posed, how would you get that property? Would you hope that they would sell it to developers or acquire it through eminent domain, he questioned. Mr. Elam responded that the private enterprise system would drive development. Mr. Wolfe asked Mr. Elam if he was saying that the value of the property would go up and people will sell the property to developers, to which Mr. Elam answered in the affirmative, stating that not everybody will sell, but most people will.

Mr. Wolfe noted that if the value of the property went up, that would make the cost of development higher. Mr. Elam agreed and offered an example of an area that is currently a low-density community-commercial node at an intersection with residential development around it. In 15 years, he postulated, it could be an office complex. Future development, he said, depends on what the land use plan says should occur in that area plus ridership, amenities at the rail station, and rail system characteristics. There are a lot of factors that feed into future development patterns, he said.

Mr. Wolfe observed that another rail stop was to be at Zephyr Field where he believed there are 30 acres. He stated that we were still talking about 47.9 acres in the one-half mile radius¹. He asked Mr. Elam where the land would come from, questioning if one would take the green space. Mr. Elam responded that he had a feeling that the green space would remain green space, being Parish property and Mr. Wolfe asked if it might become Parish property for multi-family residential use.

Mr. Savoye noted that the purpose of having a rail stop at Zephyr Field would be different than stops in more urban developed areas. Stops exist for different reasons, he said, some for development and some for activity.

Mr. Wolfe stated that in order to get federal funds, you have to have a master plan that includes the transit system with a one-half mile radius from the station.

Mr. Elam stated that was correct and clarified that it would be necessary to have some policy or something in place that would support the development around the stations. Dr. Wilkinson added that it is still a private real estate market and Mr. Elam observed that the Parish cannot just come in, state that the owner of the property does not meet the mixed use criteria, condemn the property, take the property, and build on it as it sees fit. Mr. Wolfe noted that you still would not have the ridership unless people sell their property to developers in the coming years.

Mr. Joder offered that you have to trust in the free enterprise system. People, he said, are going to figure out that the transit stop is a good place for certain types of development activity and market forces are going to work to make development happen.

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Mr. Wolfe stated that he did not believe that people are looking for high rise apartments to live in. He referenced an article in the paper a week ago that said affluent people were leaving Jefferson Parish. They are not leaving, he said, because they don't have high-rise apartments to live in. They are going across the lake and getting in traffic jams, he said. Mr. Wolfe then stated "We certainly don't want this light rail system and the high-density living that goes with it."

Mr. Joder responded by observing that those people that leave have choices. Nobody would force them to live in high-rise buildings, he added. He concluded by noting that we don't have a light rail system *now* and people are going across the causeway.

After discussing the work load required to write policies and implementation strategies, the Committee agreed to meet on February 20th, March 6th, and March 20th.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the land uses in the Bucktown area had changed on the land use map since the last version. Mr. Ringel agreed to revisit the Bucktown land uses and get back with Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Persica.

Mr. Ringel gave the Committee a short synopsis of recent changes made to the land use map and discussed the upcoming meeting, open house, presentation and hearing schedule and methodology through the end of June, 2003.

The next meeting of the Steering Committee was set for Thursday, February 20, 2003 at the Select Properties Building. The meeting was then adjourned.

Footnote 1: The true number of acres contained in a circle with a radius of one-half mile is 502.7 acres. The circle comprises 0.7854 square miles. There are 640 acres in a square mile.