

DRAFT, subject to revisions and/or amendments

LOUISIANA RECOVERY AUTHORITY

Board of Directors Meeting

Louisiana Boardroom – Louisiana Building – Baton Rouge Community College

Wednesday, April 19, 2006

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Norman Francis, chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m. in the Louisiana Boardroom of the Louisiana Building at Baton Rouge Community College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is noted for the record that notices to the public and news media of the time and place of the meeting had been given in compliance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Dr. Francis extended a thank you to BRCC Chancellor Dr. Myrtle E. B. Dorsey for graciously hosting the LRA.

II. PRAYER

Reverend Gerard Young of St. Joseph Cathedral led the board in prayer.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Norman Francis led the board in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

Ms. Robyn Cockerham called the role.

Board Members Present:

Dr. Norman Francis, Chairman
Mr. Walter Isaacson, Vice Chairman
Ms. Dale Atkins
Rev. Harry Blake
Mr. Tim Coulon
Mr. Rene Cross
Ms. Donna Fraiche
Mr. Tom Henning
Sen. Don Hines
Mr. John T. Landry

Board Members Present:

Mrs. Laura Leach
Mr. Walter Leger
Mr. Sean Reilly
Mr. Virgil Robinson
Mr. John E. Smith
Mr. Matt Stuller
Ms. Susan Taylor
Mr. David Voelker
Mr. Rod West
Mr. Mike Woods

Board Members Absent:

Sen. Diana Bajoie
Mr. Boysie Bollinger
Ms. Donna Brazile
Mr. James Davison
Rep. Yvonne Dorsey
Ms. Sibal Holt
Ms. Linda Johnson
Dr. Calvin Mackie
Ms. Mary Matalin
Rep. Joe Salter
Dr. Mary Ella Sanders

Staff Members Present:

Mr. Andy Kopplin, LRA Executive Director
Mr. Miles Bruder
Mr. Hal Cohen
Ms. Robyn Cockerham
Ms. Jessica Dardenne
Mr. Pat Forbes
Ms. Ann Guissinger
Ms. Catherine Heitman
Ms. Kim Jupiter
Mr. Adam Knapp
Ms. Melissa Landry
Ms. Meg Mahoney
Ms. Christina Stephens
Ms. Alesia Wilkins

Witnesses Present (in order of appearance):

Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu
Ms. Maryanne Lewis
Ms. Laura Drumm
Mr. Steven Perry
Mr. Mark Drennen
Mr. Don Hutchinson
Mr. Henry Friloue
Mr. Henry Charlot
Ms. Shelley Johnson
Mr. Hyatt Hood
Mr. Bill Langkopp
Mr. Gary LaGrange
Mr. Jim Ward
Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Mr. Gary Zimmerer
Mr. Val Marmillion

V. READING AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

The Chairman called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2006, LRA Board meeting. There being no comments or corrections, upon motion duly made by Ms. Donna Fraiche and seconded by Ms. Laura Leach the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Approval of the minutes and ratification of actions taken at the March 16, 2006, meeting of the LRA Board.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting of the LRA Board held on March 16, 2006, as presented at this meeting, are hereby approved and all actions taken by the board presented at such meeting, as set forth in such minutes, are hereby in all respects approved as actions of the LRA Board.

Voting: Atkins, Blake, Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Hines, Isaacson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Robinson, Smith, Stuller, Taylor, Voelker, West and Woods.

VI. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

a. Chairman of the Board Report

Dr. Norman Francis once again thanked the chairpersons of the task forces for all of the hard work that they had done during the previous month. His report included an update on the status of the housing plan in regard to the steps that must be taken for the plan to be implemented. He briefly remarked on the public comment portion of the process. Dr. Francis continued his report with a discussion of the national public opinion of Louisiana's recovery. A focal point of this dialogue was an editorial from the New York Times' that speaks highly of the LRA and Louisiana's recovery.

b. Executive Director's Report

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Andy Kopplin for the Executive Director's report. Mr. Kopplin began his presentation with an update on the supplemental recovery funds from Congress. Mr. Walter Isaacson also commented about the positive outlook of Louisiana securing these funds. Mr. Kopplin then continued his report and updated the board on the legislative approval of LRA action plans. He thanked Sen. Hines, Sen. Bajoie, Rep. Salter, and Rep. Dorsey for their help in getting the legislation through the legislature.

Mr. Tim Coulon sought clarification on the time line of the approval process as well as on the distribution of funds for municipalities to rebuild infrastructure. Mr. Kopplin responded with a review of key dates as well as touching on the remaining steps in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) process. He also noted that the infrastructure rebuilding funds would be distributed on a needs basis.

Mr. Kopplin then commented about recent editorial critiques concerning the housing plan. These critiques were not based upon the current housing plan and were therefore inaccurate.

Dr. Francis vocalized his agreement in regard to the misinformation that the media has spread. He also noted that the LRA is working to help all of the people. He thanked Mr. Kopplin for bringing up the

subject.

Mr. Kopplin noted that there are other alternatives to restoring rental properties besides the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. He estimated that there is \$1.7 billion invested in rental properties due to the low-income tax credits. He continued that commercial demand may take care of a large portion of rental properties. Mr. Kopplin commented on the Solicitation for Offers (SFO) that the Division of Administration issued on April 10, 2006, which seeks a private firm to manage Louisiana's Road Home Housing Program.

Mr. Isaacson sought clarification of what type of firm the state was seeking, to which Mr. Kopplin responded that the firm's role will be to make available grant awards, affordable loans, and other assistance to help homeowners get back into their homes. The firm will also provide information to help hurricane victims understand the housing program and their options. Companies that encourage employment of Louisianans are encouraged in the SFO.

Mr. Kopplin concluded his presentation with a comment on the New York Times' editorial from April 14, 2006, that praised the LRA.

Mr. Isaacson cautioned on the speedy rebuilding of areas without a thorough rebuilding plan. He also commented on the magnitude of work that the LRA staff is doing and the respect they have garnered in Washington, D.C. Mr. Kopplin responded by publicly recognizing the LRA staff.

Dr. Francis noted his frustration with the changing information in regard to the levee rebuilding.

Mr. Rod West reminded the LRA board members of the importance of their role in the rebuilding of Louisiana. He also commented on the sense of urgency in rebuilding versus the meticulous planning.

VII. TASK FORCES - DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS

a. Housing Task Force

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. for an update on the work that the Housing Task Force had done during the previous month. He spoke at length about the public comments that were received in regard to the housing plan.

Mr. Andy Kopplin presented a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment A) which explained many of the issues that were brought to light during the public comment period. The presentation went over the facts and issues surrounding these comments.

Mr. Tim Coulon commented on the misinformation surrounding the housing plan.

Ms. Dale Atkins suggested a diagram explaining the money disbursement of the housing plan.

Ms. Susan Taylor also commented on the misinformation surrounding the housing plan. She further suggested that an easily understood form be made available i.e., a list of bullet points. Mr. Kopplin responded that the current comment period has worsened the confusion surrounding the housing plan.

Mr. Rene Cross inquired whether there was a monetary ceiling in the housing mitigation grant program. He also wanted to know if this program would include raising houses in lower Plaquemines Parish. Mr.

Kopplin responded by explaining that the program was based on averages and that it would cover raising houses in Plaquemines Parish.

Dr. Francis, Mr. Kopplin and Mr. Leger engaged in a short conversation during which they explained more about the housing mitigation plan.

Mr. Kopplin then continued his presentation with a discussion on the partial funding eligibility requirements for the housing plan. He estimated that for this first amount of money about half of the homeowners would be included (those living outside the flood plain who were flooded or those with family incomes at or below 70% AMI, irrespective of cause of damage).

Ms. Taylor inquired as to when Congress would be voting on the supplemental funding and if there was a way to apply pressure on Congress to assure that monies are allocated. Mr. Isaacson responded with an explanation on when a vote could be obtained. Mr. Kopplin responded to her second inquiry with an explanation of the media efforts as well as lobbyists who are working for the LRA support organization.

Mr. Tom Henning noted an “and” on the presentation that should be an “or” (slide 5). He also commented on the magnitude of people at the Lake Charles meeting. He urged for a timely vote so that the process could continue.

Ms. Laura Leach recommended considering encouraging the insurance companies to up flood insurance coverage as house values increase. She also inquired how the housing plan would cover those on the coast that were hit with the storm surge and not necessarily flooded. Mr. Kopplin responded that the uninsured gap between damage and insurance is what the housing plan is designed to cover.

Mr. Henning inquired whether the dispute or failure to resolve a claim with the insurance company would delay the ability to qualify for the housing plan. Mr. Leger noted that there were mechanisms to avoid that problem. Mr. Kopplin added that while it would not delay enrollment in the housing plan, money would have to be repaid to the LRA once the insurance claims were settled.

Mr. Kopplin then further continued his presentation with a discussion of the second half of his Powerpoint presentation.

Mr. Virgil Robinson commented that the banking industry wants to help but they do not want to be forced into helping. He stated that the goal of the bankers is not to have blighted properties due to mortgages. Mr. Kopplin responded that there was time still to work out technicalities in the plan. Mr. Leger explained that meetings with bankers are still ongoing.

Mr. John Smith commented on the banking industry. He also noted his enthusiasm at joining the board. He suggested that LRA members take the information to their communities so that residents are not entirely dependent upon the news media for their knowledge of complicated issues.

Mr. Kopplin continued his presentation by introducing a lengthy memo which was distributed to the board members (Attachment B) that fully explained the issues regarding the housing plan.

Dr. Francis noted that there were details in the plan that could be worked out while the substantive part is passed further along in the process. He further thanked Mr. Leger and the Housing Task Force for all of the work they have done in the last month.

Mr. Kopplin extended his thanks to Ms. Anita Rechler of ICF Consulting and Mr. Peter Werwath of Enterprise Foundation for the work they have contributed to the housing plan.

b. Economic and Workforce Development Task Force

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Matt Stuller for a report from the Economic and Workforce Development Task Force. Mr. Stuller brought the board up to date on what the task force has been doing over the past couple of months. He noted that tourism is the second largest industry in the state of Louisiana, bringing in \$9.9 billion on an annual basis pre-Katrina. Mr. Stuller then introduced the resolution from the Economic and Workforce Development Task Force that seeks CDBG funding for a Long Term Recovery Loan Program, a Tourism Marketing Program, a Small Firm Recovery Loan and Grant Program as well as a Technical Assistance to Small Firms Program.

Mr. Walter Isaacson inquired about the possibility of excluding certain types of businesses from the loan program. Mr. Stuller noted that there were rules in place to restrict certain industries from receiving CDBG funds. Mr. Andy Kopplin commented that the final version of the action plan is still being crafted and could therefore be amended as needed.

Mr. Rene Cross inquired as to which entities would be distributing the monies. He vocalized his concern over the possibility of fraud issues. Mr. Stuller explained that banks would be responsible for the distribution of the loan dollars. He continued that the grant dollar distribution is an issue of concern that will be studied before a final decision is reached.

Ms. Susan Taylor inquired about the provisions for small businesses owned by women and/or minorities. Mr. Stuller noted that these dollars are specifically for low-income businesses but that there are provisions for minority businesses as well. Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. as well as Mr. Rod West commented on the organization of minority businesses in the hurricane-affected areas.

Mr. Tim Coulon sought clarification as to when individuals may be able to access the funds that are involved in the resolution. Mr. Kopplin noted that it would be difficult to pinpoint a specific time frame, due to the legal process; however, "a couple of months" would be a reasonable assumption. Mr. Stuller noted that final approval in Washington is very likely due to Hud following the recovery issues.

Mr. David Voelker questioned whether there was a way to expedite monies for small business and tourism use. Mr. Kopplin assured him that alternatives would be researched.

Dr. Francis opened the floor to public comments and recognized the following individuals for their comments.

Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu updated the board on the work that the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism has been doing post-Katrina and Rita. He encouraged the board to vote for the resolution. Lt. Gov. Landrieu also showed the board a bit of the new campaign that his department has implemented to bring tourists back to Louisiana. This campaign consists of both video and print materials (Attachment C).

Ms. Maryanne Lewis and Ms. Laura Drumm, representing Second Wind Nola, spoke in support of the resolution.

Mr. Steven Perry, representing the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, spoke in

support of the resolution.

Mr. Mark Drennen, representing Greater New Orleans Inc., spoke in support of the resolution. Mr. Drennen left letters of support from the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, Greater Slidell Area Chamber of Commerce, Greater New Orleans Inc., and the Downtown Development District. (Attachment D, E, F, and G)

Mr. Don Hutchinson with the Economic Development department of the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office spoke in support of the resolution.

Mr. Leger noted the desperate situation that small businesses in the Greater New Orleans area are experiencing. He thanked the GNO Inc. for their continued hard work.

Mr. Henry Friloue, representing the River Region Chamber and Alliance of Regional Chambers, spoke in support of the resolution. Mr. Friloue left a letter of support from the River Region Chamber of Commerce. (Attachment H)

Mr. Henry Charlot, New Orleans Downtown Development District, spoke in support of the resolution.

Ms. Shelley Johnson, director of the Southwest Louisiana/Lake Charles Convention Bureau, spoke in support of the resolution.

Mr. Hyatt Hood, representing the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association, spoke in support of the resolution.

Mr. Bill Langkopp, representing the Louisiana Hotel and Lodging Association, spoke in support of the resolution.

There being no further comments or discussion on the motion duly made by Mr. Matt Stuller and seconded by Mr. Tom Henning, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Approve CDBG funding of \$100 million for a Long Term Recovery Loan Program, \$30 million for a Tourism Marketing Program, \$40 million for a Small Firm Recovery Loan and Grant Program, and \$10 million for a Technical Assistance to Small Firms Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Recovery Authority Board is requested to endorse the use of dollars provided through the Supplemental Appropriations to the Community Development Block Grant program for up to \$100 million for a Long Term Recovery Loan Program, \$30 million for a Tourism Marketing Program, \$40 million for a Small Firm Recovery Loan and Grant Program, and \$10 million for a Technical Assistance to Small Firm Program.

Voting: Atkins, Blake, Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Isaacson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Robinson, Smith, Stuller, Taylor, Voelker, West, and Woods.

Mr. Stuller noted that Don Powell's staff requested that suggestions in regard to Gulf Opportunity Zone (GO Zone) Legislation be forwarded to his office. These recommendations included an extension of the twilight period and capital equipment depreciation schedule changes. He then distributed a GO Zone

Business Guide to the board upon the completion of his report (Attachment I).

c. Infrastructure and Transportation Task Force

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. John Landry for a report from the Infrastructure and Transportation Task Force. Mr. Landry began his Powerpoint presentation (Attachment J) with a review of the organizations and departments that worked with the task force in preparing the resolution that they brought to the board. These included the Department of Transportation, Highways and Public Works, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Service, Department of Environmental Quality, and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Mr. Tim Coulon inquired whether the numbers presented were based on actual figures needed for repairs. Mr. Landry responded that these numbers were based on applications and assessments of damage. Mr. Andy Kopplin stressed the importance of getting the process started and moving it forward.

Mr. Landry commended the cabinet secretaries and action teams on the work they have done in preparing the resolution. He noted that there are forthcoming projects that may cover infrastructure needs as well.

Ms. Donna Fraiche inquired whether parishes have one single list of repair needs or whether there are multiple lists. Mr. Landry responded that there are two lists per parish: one for immediate needs and one for enhancements. Mr. Kopplin noted that this current resolution calls for the “fix it” list. He also noted that the next round of funding would be available for high-value recovery projects that are involved in the planning process.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. inquired whether ESF-14 projects were included in this action plan. He also inquired whether New Orleans had completed their ESF-14 process. Mr. Kopplin responded that they could be included if the project was to repair an infrastructure that existed pre-storm; it would be on the list. If the project is to build something that was not there pre-storm; it would not be included in the action plan. He noted that there would be a subsequent presentation once further funding arrived. Mr. Kopplin noted that New Orleans and St. Bernard Parish are still revising their ESF-14 process.

Ms. Laura Leach inquired whether marsh debris removal was included in this action plan. Mr. Landry replied that it only included navigable waterways and not marshes.

Mr. John Smith inquired whether funds are going to be available for the transportation problem. Mr. Landry responded that those would be included in the next round of funding.

Mr. Gary LaGrange with the Port of New Orleans spoke in support of the resolution.

Mr. Sean Reilly recommended that Mr. LaGrange take a prioritization approach when requesting aid for the Port.

There being no further comments or discussion on the motion duly made by Mr. John Landry and seconded by Mr. Tom Henning, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Request preliminary recommendation of an amendment to the Action Plan for allocation of up to a total of \$950 million of the first CDBG supplemental appropriation to repairs to infrastructure damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

RECOMMENDED that a preliminary recommendation of an amendment to the Action Plan to allocate up to \$950 million of CDBG funds for infrastructure repairs. This number will be revised as damage costs are confirmed and FEMA PA eligibility issues are resolved.

Voting: Atkins, Blake, Coulon, Cross, Fraiche, Francis, Henning, Isaacson, Landry, Leach, Leger, Reilly, Robinson, Smith, Stuller, Taylor, Voelker, West, and Woods.

VIII. LUNCH

Dr. Norman Francis recessed the meeting at 1:10 p.m. for lunch. Mr. Walter Isaacson reconvened the meeting at 1:49 p.m.

IX. TASK FORCE – DISCUSSIONS AND REPORTS CONTINUED

a. Long Term Community Planning Task Force

Mr. Walter Isaacson recognized Ms. Donna Fraiche for a report from the Long Term Community Planning Task Force. Ms. Fraiche took the opportunity to thank Cindy Fontenot, Boo Thomas and the rest of the task force for the work they have done. She commented on the usefulness of the LouisianaRebuilds.info website. Mr. Fraiche then presented a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment K) that gave an overview of the work that the task force and its associates have done over the past several months. She then commented on the work being done with the Bring New Orleans Back committee. Ms. Fraiche noted that the minimum standards are close to being finalized and are close to being announced.

Mr. Andy Kopplin noted the work of Peter Calthorpe and Ray Gindroz for the work they have done in relation to the planning process.

Mr. Isaacson thanked Ms. Fraiche for the report and the work that she and the task force had done thus far.

X. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

a. Overview of the Federal Actions on Levees and Flood Maps

i. Federal Levees

Mr. Walter Isaacson recognized Mr. Jim Ward of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for an overview of the federal actions on levees. Mr. Ward gave a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment L). This presentation relied heavily upon images and maps.

Mr. Isaacson thanked Mr. Ward for his diligence.

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco inquired about the status of levee strengthening in lower Plaquemines Parish. Mr. Ward responded that the discussion on those levees had been deferred until June.

Mr. Rene Cross inquired whether the CPRA was consulted during the federal levee planning. He

inquired into the difference in estimates. Mr. Ward responded that he was not sure in regard to the CPRA inclusion. He continued that the original estimate was very quick, whereas the second estimate was more detailed and thorough. Mr. Cross and Mr. Ward continued to engage in an exchange regarding the outlook of levees in lower Plaquemines Parish.

Mr. Isaacson clarified that as the Corps of Engineers moves forward in developing levee protection, they would be consulting with the CPRA and Plaquemines Parish. Mr. Ward confirmed this.

Mr. Ward noted that the CPRA Technical Report is viewed as the ultimate answer. It involves a much heavier component of wetlands restoration.

Governor Blanco inquired whether the supplemental monies for levee protection were going to be included in the Supplemental Appropriations Legislation “that is currently going through Congress.” Mr. Ward responded that he was not sure if it would be included in this legislation or future legislation.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. inquired who the “they” were that Mr. Ward referenced. Mr. Ward responded that by “they” he meant the administration. Mr. Leger then sought clarification on the level of levee repair. Mr. Ward explained that because of new data, the 100-year storm level has changed and the levees will have to be bigger and better to protect from such a storm.

Mr. Rod West inquired how “lesser protection” is better. Mr. Ward responded that the levees are better than what they were before. He included that the risks are greater.

Mr. Isaacson clarified that by June the levees would be at better levels than they were pre-Katrina/Rita. Mr. Ward confirmed this.

Mr. Cross inquired why the levees in Plaquemines Parish could not be certified if they are back to pre-storm levels or even better. Mr. Ward responded that the new analysis shows that the levees in Plaquemines Parish are designed for a 100-year storm which is lower than the current model.

Mr. Leger sought clarification on the selective armoring of levees. Mr. Ward noted that there is not enough money to armor all of the levees. Mr. Leger inquired whether the MRGO levees were being armored. Mr. Ward stated that armoring that section is part of the plan. Mr. Leger and Mr. Ward engaged in a lengthy discussion on the future of the levees in New Orleans.

Ms. Dale Atkins inquired whether the people of New Orleans would be protected by June 1st if another Katrina hits. Mr. Ward responded that the levees would be at their pre-storm levels and thus there would be no additional protection.

Ms. Donna Fraiche sought information about where the eye-wall design levees are located, if the surrounding communities have been informed and whether this was an issue strictly related to Louisiana. Mr. Ward stated that the eye-walls are potentially located everywhere the construction method was used. He was not sure of all of the locations. Mr. Ward continued that many of the walls have been tested by conditions very near their design conditions.

Mr. West inquired when certification of the levees east of the industrial canal could be expected. Mr. Ward responded that 2010 would be the likely date for that certification.

Mr. Isaacson and Mr. Leger discussed the difficulty in deciding whether rebuilding should be allowed

during the time that the levees are being rebuilt.

Mr. Isaacson thanked Mr. Ward for the work that he and the Corps of Engineers are doing in rebuilding Louisiana.

Mr. Isaacson recognized the Governor for her comments.

The text of Governor Blanco's remarks is as follows:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to give you a very brief report on how our recovery continues to move forward.

As many of you know or read, I met Tuesday with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff. He was here in Baton Rouge and we discussed a number of issues regarding the recovery and preparing for the next hurricane season. We talked about evacuations of special needs populations extensively, about the evacuation of the city and urban areas of the region as well.

I do want to say that we talked about something that has come to the front today. Recovery, as we all know, means stronger, higher levees that will withstand; restoration of housing units which we have been working very much on; it means standing business back up; it means standing a better health care system up than the one we had before; and yet the one issue that we were dealing with since the day after the hurricane hit that we continue to deal with, which impedes our ability to proceed is debris removal. The problem is the cost of removing debris will eventually come to us. We will have a significant cost sharing if indeed we cannot get past where we are. I made a strong case for FEMA to extend the deadline from which they will cease paying 100% for debris removal. I have asked for a number of extensions over these last several months and did get an extension of June 30th. That is right around the corner when you really start looking hard at the calendar in relation to what we have left to do.

I have asked Secretary Chertoff to once again extend the 100% reimbursement past the end of June. Actually, I've asked him to extend it through the next hurricane season. We don't know if we will get an extension right now. We are making great strides in debris removal and recovery efforts at the local level. We have already hauled away over 25 times more debris than they removed from the World Trade Center in New York after 9/11. Even with all of the work already completed, we are only 58% of the way done. That's the crux of the matter. Most of the debris that was removed was vegetation. We still have a tremendous amount of debris to be removed from the neighborhoods from houses that collapsed on themselves.

There is something that I think citizens ought to know. Currently, if they have a collapsed house that they know cannot be rebuilt and it is sitting on their property, if they make the request now for removal, that will be 100% covered. It will not cost them any money. But after this time expires, it will may cost the individual citizens to remove the debris off of their private property. This is something that I think we all need to be cognizant of and speaking for. Encouraging people who need to have debris removed off of their property to make that request now.

We are asking that the deadline for 100% be moved and that is important to our recovery because the local communities do not have the 10% of hundreds of millions of dollars. I am in constant contact with our local officials who continuously cite the need to extend the 100% reimbursement period. We have circulated a letter that we have been getting their signatures on today. I told the secretary that I would follow up with my request in writing. All of the parish leaders are signing the letter requesting this. I am

going to continue to press our case and hope that we can get yet another extension.

I continue with the LRA's invaluable help to move our recovery forward in two other important areas: our housing plan and the levee situation. I want to say special thanks to you for the work that the Housing Task Force and Chairman Walter Leger have done. We have a solid housing action plan. It is not going to make everyone thoroughly happy because it is a housing plan. And it is not a plan that rewards people because they have had a hardship but a plan to get housing back up. We cannot do double indemnification. We cannot give them money if they have got insurance to cover some of their damages, according to federal law. There are lots of questions. It is not a simple, easy housing plan because every, single individual has a different and unique situation that they are dealing with. Their marks may be high; the neighbors marks may be low. Some have lived in their house a very long time; some have lived in their house a very short time. Some have big equity; small equity; big debt; small debt. All these are very different circumstances.

We are well in progress. The public comment period has just ended. Now our families need the legislature to give it approval after you give it approval. You are considering all the things that were commented on during the public comment period. After that, we will submit the plan to HUD.

I think that speed is very important but answering questions and concerns from the public and the legislature are just as important as a timely launching of the program. I think that we must have an effective and equitable plan to send to Washington for approval. A lot of the components of our plan are reflective of what the federal government and HUD requires and views as appropriate housing. Legislators have expressed some concerns and asked some pretty tough questions along the way. I think that this is a good thing. We must relieve their concerns and answer their questions and make adjustments where it is appropriate, where we can, and stay within the confines of all the things we know have to be a part of the plan.

The Corps of Engineers has made some adjustments of its own. We just heard the report that it will take approximately \$4.2 billion to do all of the levee systems the way that we believe that it ought to be done. I am very impressed with the way that they are armoring and strengthening the levee system. I have been onsite. If that doesn't hold up, I don't think we can build a levee system to hold up during a hurricane.

We do need President Bush to put that money in an appropriations request to Congress. I would hope sooner rather than later. As soon as these questions are answered in the minds of our citizens, they can make sensible decisions about their own futures, homes, businesses, and lives. I am hoping that we could get at least a huge portion of it in this emergency appropriation. That would solve a lot of the crisis.

We have to keep fighting every inch of the way. We cannot relax. All of us would like to relax into a system that allows us to really do solid planning and give comfort to our citizenry. We are just going to have to keep pushing for Plaquemines Parish to be a part of the strengthening of the levees and we are committed to doing that. We all have to work together to accomplish these things. We cannot let one piece of the picture go by the wayside.

In his speech in Jackson Square last year, the President promised to do whatever it would take to rebuild. In my book, he has taken very serious positive steps toward that. We have to make him realize that we are one. Our people are one. Some of us live in political subdivisions called parishes, but we are all Louisiana citizens and citizens of the United States of America.

If we look at population along the Mississippi River from Minnesota to Louisiana, there are some lightly

populated communities that demand a lot of miles of levee systems for not only the population but what is going on in the economy of the region. There are lots of other criteria that should be taken into consideration.

I think that we are moving forward. I know that our Congressional delegation wants the \$4.2 billion for the entire levee structure in Southeast Louisiana and I am certainly more than willing to continue to fight to do what is right to protect and restore our coast.

We have taken some bold steps in the last week and month to secure funding for coastal restoration. We have certainly picked up some strong allies in our fight. I will continue to fight for the money for coastal restoration. We all understand that that is our frontline defense against the ravages and strength of these natural forces that are continuously coming at us. The more coastline we lose, the more vulnerable our urban areas are. Our populations get more and more exposure as long as we are not restoring the coastline. We have to protect South Louisiana from the ravages of hurricanes and through the coastal restoration efforts.

I again want to thank each and every one of you that serve on the LRA for the work that you've been doing and the work that you are going to continue doing as we move this recovery forward. I think that not all citizens understand the complexity of what we are dealing with and we are not necessarily going to get 100% appreciation, but I guarantee you I understand the difficulties. It's a yeoman's task and I appreciate the work you are doing.

Mr. Isaacson thanked the governor for the work that she has been doing.

Dr. Norman Francis returned to chair the authority.

ii. FEMA Flood Maps

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Gary Zimmerer with FEMA for a report on the flood recovery guidance advisory base flood elevations. Mr. Zimmerer presented a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment M) to give this report to the authority.

Mr. Sean Reilly inquired whether the LRA should require parishes to adopt base flood advisory elevations sooner rather than later. Mr. Andy Kopplin noted that in December the LRA voted for parishes to participate in the hazard mitigation grant program, they would have to adopt the latest flood advisory information that was conveyed to them through the Governor's Office on Homeland Security.

Mr. Walter Leger, Jr. and Mr. Zimmerer engaged in a lengthy conversation that involved Mr. Leger asking several questions of Mr. Zimmerer in regard to flood elevations and rebuilding.

Mr. Kopplin commented that FEMA and the Corps of Engineers were asked to testify so that information could be explained.

Mr. Leger apologized to those who may have taken his statements as offensive. He noted that he does not feel that good science is being relied upon.

Mr. Reilly noted that his concern was one of safety.

Ms. Donna Fraiche stated that she felt there was a need for more information before citizens could make

decisions regarding flood elevations and rebuilding. She thanked Mr. Reilly for bringing up the discussion.

Mr. John Landry inquired about base flood elevations (BFE) endorsements. He also asked for clarification on the term "above grade." Mr. Kopplin responded that LRA encourages the adoption of BFE but does not require it. Mr. Zimmerer responded that above grade is the highest point on the lot and does not have a relation to BFE.

Mr. Rene Cross inquired whether people have a choice of how high to build. Mr. Zimmerer responded that the maps are specific and that there is not a choice of how high to build.

Mr. Rod West noted that the LRA members have knowledge gaps with the FEMA flood maps and levees.

Mr. Reilly stated that the information gap may be more of a concern for homeowners.

Mr. Kopplin sought clarification on where the information for the new maps came from. Mr. Zimmerer responded that there are many elements combined for the information.

Mr. Cross inquired as to why elevation advisories would be reduced. Mr. Zimmerer noted that individuals are responsible for deciding and that keeping higher elevations provides for more safety.

Mr. Leger sought clarification on the current law. Mr. Zimmerer responded that the current law is based upon what ordinances the parish has adopted. He noted that flood insurance could not be taken away.

Mr. Cross inquired as to how premiums would reflect elevation changes. Mr. Zimmerer responded that premiums could go down with higher building.

Mr. Reilly sought clarification on the elevations once the levees were certified. Mr. Zimmerer responded that it would depend on the analysis of the levee.

Rev. Harry Blake noted his confusion.

Dr. Francis noted the need for more clear information for homeowners.

Mr. Kopplin noted that the guidance is clear but inquired whether it was the best idea.

Mr. Landry noted the need for common sense in rebuilding.

Mr. Reilly inquired whether any required elevations should be made permanent.

Dr. Francis thanked Mr. Zimmerer for his report.

b. Update on America's Wetlands Campaign for Outer Continental Shelf Revenues

Dr. Norman Francis recognized Mr. Val Marmillion of the America's Wetlands Campaign, for a Powerpoint presentation (Attachment N) that gave a brief description of the previous campaigns that the organization had sponsored. He then continued by updating the board on upcoming campaigns and events that the campaign is sponsoring.

Dr. Francis thanked Mr. Marmillion for the work that he and the campaign have been doing.

Mr. Rene Cross echoed Dr. Francis' sentiments. Mr. Marmillion assured the board that they would continue the fight for OCS revenue sharing.

Mr. Sean Reilly inquired about the momentum of the America's Wetlands campaign. Mr. Marmillion noted that there is a momentum and with time there will be more.

Mr. Cross inquired whether the storms will increase funding. Mr. Marmillion noted that more funding will be generated; however, the desire is for preemptive measures. Mr. Cross noted that flood protection is not just about levee structures but also through marsh and wetlands.

Ms. Donna Fraiche noted her excitement to hear about the partnership among the other Gulf Coast states. She inquired as to how much money would be needed to improve the Louisiana coastline. Mr. Marmillion thanked Ms. Fraiche for her comments and noted that the original amount was \$14 billion; however, due to hurricanes and continued erosion, the amount continues to rise.

Mr. John Landry inquired into the Chesapeake Bay area and its importance versus Louisiana Wetlands. Mr. Marmillion noted that the Chesapeake Bay area people are very concerned about their water resources but are learning from the America's Wetlands campaign.

Dr. Francis thanked Mr. Marmillion for the work that he and the campaign continue to do for the state.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no further public comments.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dr. Norman Francis announced the following meeting dates:

Wednesday, May 17, in Baton Rouge

Thursday, June 15, in Baton Rouge

Thursday, July 6

Thursday, August 10

Wednesday, September 13

Thursday, October 12

Thursday, November 9

Thursday, December 14

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Kopplin, Executive Director

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Date approved: _____