

Housing and Community Development Department

Hurricane Ike Round 2

Disaster Recovery Program

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

City Hall Annex

MR. RACKLEFF: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be with you tonight. My name is Neal Rackleff, I'm the director of the Houston Department of Housing and Community Development. We appreciate your attendance very much and are grateful that you've taken the time out of your busy schedules to meet with us and go through an overview of the needs assessment and some of the rules of the program for our Hurricane Ike Round 2 Disaster Recovery Program.

We would like to recognize Council Member Jerry Davis who is in attendance here. Appreciate his presence. And I know that -- I believe Council Member Wanda Adams' office is represented. Thank you. And also former Council Member Sue Lovell is in attendance as well. We appreciate having all of you -- are there any other government officials who are in attendance that I have neglected to mention? We will move on.

The purpose of tonight's public hearing is for us to give you an overview of the needs assessment that has been conducted in facilitating our disaster recovery Round 2 program. We will report on the findings that we have pulled together in the needs assessment, and we're giving members of the public an opportunity to comment on those.

In terms of ground rules for the proceedings tonight, it's important to note that the public comment period will be just that. We will receive public comments. It will not be a question and answer format. In the event that you do have questions, if

there are individuals, for example, who have concerns about specific issues regarding their own homes or how they might apply for assistance or any issues that are germane to the department and that relate to how we can better serve you, we will have individuals in the back of the room that will be available following the conclusion of the hearing to meet with you and to address those questions on an individual basis and make sure that we do the very best that we can to serve you and to meet your needs.

I will provide a little bit of background information on the Disaster Recovery Round 2 Program. As most of you I'm sure are very well aware, on September 13th, 2008, the City of Houston suffered through the disaster that was Hurricane Ike. There was a tremendous amount of physical property damage and individuals who suffered and were injured as a result of that calamity. We know that, in looking at both the property of renters and homeowners, that the storm involved damage in excess by some estimates of \$4.6 billion. The primary focus of the Disaster Recovery Round 2 Program is to provide relief to very low income, low and moderate income individuals whose homes have unrepaired damage as a result of Hurricane Ike. This will be done in the single-family realm primarily through rehabilitation. I would add extensive rehabilitation or reconstruction of an applicant's home or relocation for an applicant to an area of higher opportunity. If we could go to the next slide, please.

The funding breakdown of the dollars that have been allocated from the General Land Office to the City of Houston are shown on the slide before you. The City of Houston received approximately \$152 million in funding which was actually appropriated by Congress and then allocated by HUD to the -- and administered to the General Land Office of the state of Texas on behalf of the -- those who suffered negative effects from the hurricane. The disposition of those funds and the allocation of them are indicated in the chart. Single-family home ownership funding is approximately \$63 million. Single-family rental funds is approximately 64 million. Multifamily rental activities have been allocated approximately 52 million. And the LMI subsidized rental in partnership with the responsible housing authority funding is approximately \$30.2 million.

Now, historically, when there were discussions regarding how the amount of funding would be allocated as respecting single family versus multi-family

housing, meetings were held with -- looks like we're making sure we have no viruses in our program. Glad we're clean. So moving on, there were meetings between the mayor of the City of Houston, Annise Parker, and high level officials at HUD led by Assistant Secretary Mercedes Marquez and some of her key leaders and also representatives of TOP or the Texas Organizing Project, who all came together and worked out an arrangement regarding the allocation of funding between single-family and multi-family dollars. In those negotiations, the result was that the mayor decided that it would be appropriate to allocate more resources to single-family activities than to multi-family activities and as a kind of quid pro quo for that because initially the city's position was that more of the funding could be most effectively utilized through the multi-family program. The mayor and the other participants and stakeholders in those negotiations decided that we would go ahead and use the single-family resources in particular in a concentrated and focused manner. So the idea was the amount of single-family dollars that we have is finite. It's a limited resource. We estimate that we will be able to rehab or reconstruct between 400 to 500 single-family homes depending on how things shake out as we look at specific damage to homes that are -- and homeowners that apply to the program. And we recognize that we will help a finite number of families, but the hope was that if we concentrate those resources, we could do more to help a small number of communities. So if we were able, for example, to concentrate out of 400 single-family homes, let's say 100 single-family homes in one community, and then work intelligently with the multi-family dollars that we have available and concentrate say a strong multi-family development in the same community, then we could -- we could generate a certain amount of momentum to allow us to be able to do comprehensive revitalization.

The other commitment that the city made in those discussions and in subsequent discussions is to allocate additional resources beyond the Disaster Recovery Round 2 funds that are available to supplement those resources and allow us in those focused instances to be able to do true comprehensive revitalization. We have worked very diligently with stakeholders. We have done our best to listen to groups throughout the community. There have been a long and extensive public input process which has involved over ten public meetings. I would add that we greatly appreciate LISC. They greatly conducted those meetings and did a fantastic job, and in those meetings we heard responses from CDC's, from

homeowners associations, Super Neighborhoods, interested citizens, generally, and really received a great amount of input in helping us to figure out how to do this focused kind of approach. Our goal is to do everything that we can to help the families who are in need as efficiently and expeditiously as possible and compassionately as possible and also to really do comprehensive revitalization in a limited number of neighborhoods. We think that we can achieve that. We don't think we can do it in a vacuum. We appreciate your input. We have worked closely with Texas Low Income Housing Information Services, Texas Appleseed, TOP, the other groups that I mentioned that we did over ten public meetings and those public meetings included over 500 unduplicated participants. So we're moving forward with our community together in an effort that we feel is somewhat unprecedented in the city, and we will continue to move forward in a collaborative way and we are being as transparent as we possibly can be. And we believe that we are on the cusp of doing some things that are historic, will be tremendously beneficial and really do something that just hasn't been done in the city before and we are excited to work together with you on that.

So with that, I will turn the time over to Dr. Henson who will walk through the methods that were used for coming up with the focus and concentrated approach that we are attempting to use.

>> DR. HENSON: Good evening. The following slides are the DR2 methods used for selecting Super Neighborhoods most impacted by Hurricane Ike. Next slide, please. There were several pieces of criteria and data that was needed. The GLO, Texas General Land Office, provided data as well as the Office of Emergency Management. This was provided to us to actually help us select Super Neighborhoods. The home opportunity or HOP guidelines which we used, those are required for the areas as well. And we had input from the Texas Organizing Project, as well as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. They actually assisted in making a very inclusive decision-making process. Next slide, please.

So the three pieces of primary data that was used in the select of the Super Neighborhoods which were most impacted was FEMA-designated high risk areas, areas prone to flooding, areas that had a high minority concentration of 65 percent or more, and areas that had high poverty concentration of 35 percent or more. The key here is that the census block groups needed to have all of these in conjunction

so "and" being the key conjunction for these three pieces of primary criteria. Next slide, please.

So the unit of measurement was the census block group. So what is a census block group? I'm going to give an illustration just so we're understanding the unit of measurement. Clearly census block group is within a census tract boundary established by the U.S. Census Bureau and the census tract boundary is within a zip code boundary, just a brief illustration for everyone, next slide.

So everyone is very familiar with zip code boundaries. We all have a zip code for where we reside. Next slide, please. So census tracts are within zip code areas.

And census block groups which is where we're measuring all the data and doing all the analysis throughout this process, the census block group is within those census tracts, the census tract boundaries.

So the 65 percent and more minority concentration throughout the City of Houston as illustrated in this map, these census block groups have 65 percent or more concentration of minority groups.

These census block groups have 35 percent or more concentration of poverty within the census block groups.

And these census block groups represent the high risk 100 year flood plain areas. So these are the census block groups that the flood plain areas existed in. So those are the three primary pieces of criteria.

So we had some additional data that we used. We used above average damage with some of the data that the Texas General Land Office provided us as well as the Office of Emergency Management. So we looked at above average damages within a census block group. So these were the ones that had above average damages within them. Next slide, please. And these would be the census block groups that had above average requests within the census block groups.

So the next series of slides are the Super Neighborhoods and areas that were identified after this process. So there were nine Super Neighborhoods identified: Acres Homes, Independence Heights, Northside Village, Greater Fifth Ward,

Denver Harbor, Magnolia Park, OST/South Union, Sunnyside and South Park. These were the three -- the nine identified after the process. Next slide, please.

So there were 14 neighborhoods that actually met the City of Houston Housing and Community Development criteria and Texas General Land Office program criteria. And there were 14 of these neighborhoods, and those neighborhoods are Acres Homes, Northside Village, Trinity Gardens, Kashmere Gardens, Settegast, Greater Fifth Ward, Denver Harbor, Magnolia Park, Greater Third Ward, MacGregor, OST/South Union, Sunnyside, South Park and South Acres/Crestmont.

So the Texas Organizing Project through their process proposed five Super Neighborhoods which were identified in their public workshops, and those were Acres Homes, Independence Heights, Denver Harbor, Greater Fifth Ward, and Sunnyside. So through an inclusive process, we took all these Super Neighborhoods -- next slide -- and the outcomes were the same Super Neighborhoods I mentioned in the previous slides, but we had to have four areas. So the areas are Acres Homes is one, Independence Heights as another, another being Northside Village, Greater Fifth Ward, Denver Harbor and Magnolia Park clustered in one area and OST/South Union, Sunnyside and South Park clustered in an area. So the four areas are based on an agreement prior to the process where we needed three to four areas. So we took as many of the Super Neighborhoods and we were able to collapse them into these four areas within the nine Super Neighborhoods. So the primary criteria again, and the additional criteria fit in all of these Super Neighborhoods within clustered block groups.

So there was more community input through public meetings from February to August, about a seven month process. So these meetings were to identify nodes. There were approximately 13 public meetings and these nodes would be node candidates. So a node was considered to be an area within Super Neighborhoods that was identified by the community based on their criteria, the criteria was also established by the community. Over 500 community members attended these meetings and the outcome of the meetings produced these node candidates. And these are the meetings, from February to August, that went all the way from the beginning of the year through summer. At the end, the final nodes or the final node candidates were decided upon, and by August 30th going into September, that process had been completed.

So the next slide are the node candidates which were identified in those public and community meetings, the work groups and the community meetings. A total of 35 node candidates: Acres Homes had nine; Independence Heights had three; Northside Village, four were identified; three were identified in Greater Fifth Ward; two were identified in Denver Harbor; one was identified in Magnolia Park; five were identified in the OST/South Union; and five were identified in Sunnyside; and three were identified in South Park.

So the community decided to tier these nodes. As you can see there is a red -- the red nodes, gold is yellow nodes and there are green nodes, and they tiered them based on red. The red nodes being Tier 1, which was their first choice. Tier 2 would be their second choice and Tier 3 being their third choice. And this was all produced by the community. Next slide, please.

So we got to the City of Houston's needs assessment. This need assessment was the starting point for all the housing activities. It was a requirement of the program guidelines and the document actually tracks the demographics, the damages caused, income categories by area median family income and the intended uses for the Disaster Recovery Round 2 funds. So the purpose of the needs assessment was that the disaster recovery funds would be targeted in two ways: First, there would be targeted areas identified with the combination of program criteria and public input. Second, by income category based on the amount of damage that occurred at the time of the storm. This needs assessment will help direct program funds and serve as the basis for outreach and planning for housing in Disaster Recovery Round 2.

Also as you can see, the same three pieces of criteria were used in the needs assessment. This needs assessment includes the criteria that came out of the HOP guidelines. So that would be the census block groups with high concentrations of minorities, census block groups with high concentrations of poverty and FEMA high risk areas that were enhanced with demonstrated flood areas. And of course again these would all be in conjunction. So the needs assessment data, the income data more specifically, told us where housing activities are required to meet the national objective of benefiting households below 80 percent of the area median family income, AMFI, which was established by HUD as categorized as very low, low, and moderate. Very low being up to 30 percent AMFI, area median family

income. Low income being between 31 and 50 percent AMFI, and moderate being between 51 and 80 percent AMFI. Now, the table below shows the percentages. Those percentages add up to 100 percent of the very low to low to moderate income households in the City of Houston. And those are the percentages of those income levels based on the income allocated by income categories.

So the damage data that was reviewed was the HUD/FEMA/GLO data which also includes the Office of Emergency Management data, the Houston-Galveston Area Council data and LJA. This data provided us with the overall damage amount to help us determine how to meet the targets -- or the income targets consistent with the damage caused by the storm in the LMI national data. So shortly after the storm, LJA went out and did field surveys, and this data has become very valuable. It observed the physical damages of the residential properties in the City of Houston by parcels. Because they were direct observations in the field, the data provided a great source for looking at damages. So the following map that follows after this slide represents the total housing damage observed in the field survey by LJA.

Now, if you can see, you see a lot of green, but the most damages are the red and the yellow, and these were measured by overall damage levels. So your highest levels of damage would be those in red. And these are parcels. So the pieces you see red and yellow are where the most overall -- the overall damage levels are highest. And of course green being where the overall damage levels are lowest. And these are the physical residential damages in Houston by parcels. So the city's needs assessment used this more robust criteria to help identify the flood risk areas looking at these parcels. So we could address the issue concerning lack of participation by flood prone area populations in federal programs, so the Harris County floodways and floodplains maps accounts for areas which may flood, physical residential damage data collected shortly after Hurricane Ike by LJA is valuable in showing where the actual flooding occurred. And the combination of the physical residential damage data and the 3-1-1 flood reports clearly identifies areas of flooding within the City of Houston, and the next slide, shows where the documented 3-1-1 flood calls exist in the city.

And this map actually shows us where the observed flooding from Hurricane Ike by LJA exists and if you could go back to the last slide for a second, please. Just



for comparative. And go one forward. So this is the combined of those two slides. So this is the combined flood risk data throughout the City of Houston. On the backdrop you'll see the floodplains as well in the light blue. Next slide, please.

And I will turn it over to Mr. Tinnermon for discussing the outreach plan. Thank you.

>> MR. TINNERMON: Thank you, Dr. Henson. Our next steps talk a little bit about our targeted outreach criteria and this includes creating an outreach plan that specifies target areas to reach potential eligible applicants. The outreach plan will include the available funding amount for each income level and we're looking at three categories from 0 to 30, 31 to 50, and 51 to 80. Targeted areas of outreach and then specific plans for targeted activities such as door to door canvassing. This program is different from the Round 1 program in that it is not a first come first served program, and persons will not be served on that basis. Additionally, application processing priority will be given to households with members who are elderly and/or disabled.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to Brenda Scott.

MR. RACKLEFF: And I would like to add just one point to that, when we -- Mr. Tinnermon mentioned the program -- and we're referring to the single-family aspect of the program -- will not be done on a first come first served basis, it's important for folks to recognize that the Disaster Recovery Round 1 program, it was administered that way by the City of Houston. Disaster Recovery Round 2 Program is a new program with many substantial differences, one of the substantial differences is that it does not permit us to do -- to administer the program on a first come first serve basis, but rather requires that we do targeted and proactive outreach in order to determine who will be served and how that will unfold.

MS. SCOTT: At this time we'll take a three minute break. At the end of that period, we ask that you come back and we'll begin the public comments.

(recess -- three minutes)

MS. SCOTT: We're going to start. We're about to begin the hearing. Hello. Before we start, I just wanted to call your attention to one of our handouts that contains an error. If you have it, it's the one that refers to the links where you'll be able to find documents that relate to this hearing and our needs assessment. If you have the link sheet, we ask that you mark through the first link on there. It is an error. The responses will be posted on the third link, the [www.houstontx.gov/housing/Ikerecovery.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/housing/Ikerecovery.html). We wanted to call that to your attention if you go looking for that link that doesn't work looking for the responses. Y'all ready?

My name is Brenda Arnold Scott. I am the Deputy Assistant Director of the Planning and Grants Management Division, and I'll be your hearing officer for tonight. I also would like to call your attention to another handout you should have that's entitled Public Hearing on the Hurricane Ike Round 2 Phase II Needs Assessment and there are some general guidelines there. I will not recite them, but I ask that you look over them and be mindful of them. We want to thank you in advance for observing them and we just would like to call particular attention to cell phones. If you have a cell phone, we ask that you put it on vibrate, or that you turn it off. Those who will be speaking this evening should have already signed in and if you would like to speak and you haven't signed in, we ask that you do so.

When I call your name, please come forward. You sign in outside of that door at the desk. And I think most of you did when you registered, and if you didn't and you would like to speak, we ask that you do so. You have three minutes, and we do have a time-keeper, so we ask that you observe the time and be mindful again that this is not a question and answer session. And any written responses to comments, again, you'll be able to find them posted on the links that we have listed on the handout that we've given you.

So I will call the first person. Diana Lerma, will you come forward, please.

DIANA LERMA: Hello. Thank you. My name is Diana Lerma. I'm the president of the Lindale Park Civic Club and part of the Northside Village. I'd like to say that it was good to hear this afternoon's dissertation, and I think truly we do fit the goal which seems to be to develop in an area concentrate on a comprehensive revitalization and a focused effort. I can't imagine any place other than the Northside Village that doesn't already fit that criteria. We certainly are perfect for

your mold. We're low to moderate income. We fit the criteria of 65 percent of racial and ethnic minorities. We have a concentration of 35 percent in poverty. Additionally, we've been working on some recent enhancements in our community such as the METRORail, which is due to be completed in 2015, Davis High School has been set for reconstruction and allowed \$47 million by HISD approved bond in 2012. We've got the great Castillo Community Center being developed which is underway by Harris County, and those are just a few things that are helping shape this neighborhood to fit the exact same thing that you're talking about. Concentrate in an area, make it as productive as possible, and I think things like the rail, revitalizing our schools, helping our low to moderate income continue to stay inner city so that they can get downtown and grab those jobs, so that we can walk to grocery stores, and utilize the neighborhood as a way that suits everyone. I can't imagine any place else that's doing that -- well, certainly the entire inner city and I think you'd be well served to consider us for that. So I appreciate your time today and hope to hear that we are a yes in that candidacy. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you for your comments. Ms. Debbie Allen.

DEBBIE ALLEN: I would like to pass at this time, thank you.

MS. SCOTT: I think this is Sal De George.

SAL DE GEORGE: That would be me. My name -- I'm a priest. I'm at St. Patrick's Church on Northside. I just found out I live in Northside Village. I didn't know that. I was walking around Allen Parkway, that's why I'm dressed this way, and I might have dropped into the wrong meeting; however, you decide that. We have a dire need in our neighborhood for low income -- not affordable -- low income housing for single mothers with small children. Sociologically if that need isn't met, everybody knows what the outcome of that is for the children and the individuals. Some of them are in a situation where they have damage to their homes. It seems to me they should be given kind of a priority which I'm sure you have that factored in all of the statistics you have been giving us. But whatever it is, if this program has a few dollars and change left over for new single parent with small children housing, low income, we'd certainly like to put our ticket in that basket to get some of that housing, because it's a terrible, terrible need in those inner city neighborhoods. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, sir. Mr. Alvin Byrd.

ALVIN BYRD: That would be Byrd.

MS. SCOTT: I'm sorry.

ALVIN BYRD: That's okay. First of all, thank you for having this forum tonight, and director and Mr. Tinnermon, since Fifth Ward has already been selected, I'd like to use my 30 minutes to comment on --

(bell ringing)

(laughter)

ALVIN BYRD: First of all, let me just say we're excited about the fact that Fifth Ward will be working closely with the -- with the Father and folks on the east side of Houston. One of the things we're concerned about, and let the record reflect, that we're actually behind Hurricane Ike. It's been -- what, five years now -- so we want to make sure the body or the applicants take a real good look at the extensive damage that has exceeded those numbers that were initially done.

Right now, Fifth Ward is experiencing one of the -- probably the most exciting times in its history where we are actually in need of a new infusion of dollars to accelerate what we are already trying to do. So my comment is in regards to the draft is that we are on board and we appreciate it. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Byrd. Ms. Lovell.

SUE LOVELL: I'll pass, thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Mr. John Henneberger.

JOHN HENNEBERGER: Good evening, my name is John Henneberger. I'm the co-director of the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service. I'd first like to thank Dr. Henson for that excellent presentation. I think the City of Houston should be commended. This has been a remarkable planning process which certainly sets the bar for how this type of disaster planning should go forward. That said, I have a number of technical concerns regarding the needs assessment process which I will supplement in writing, but I just want to get a few of them out there on the record.

The first is that the needs assessment fails to provide an analysis of nonhousing needs, infrastructure needs. We believe that's required. The rental housing need assessment uses the same percentage data as the owner occupied assessment. We don't think that's consistent with the state guidelines. The income targeting formula the city has relied on in the needs assessment we believe is not the correct one, and we submitted a technical memo to Mr. Andy this afternoon outlining our concerns regarding that. The special needs populations for rental housing, we don't believe has been adequately addressed in the needs assessment. It's important to note, and the needs assessment should reflect that regarding the affordable rental housing the rents must be affordable, not simply a set aside of units, but rents must be affordable for that housing to meet the population's needs. The rental housing needs need to be calculated separately from the owner occupied needs. The capital needs of public housing are discussed in the needs assessment. Those needs are not -- the capital needs of public housing are not an eligible activity under the disaster recovery program. However, creating public housing units that can serve the need of disaster victims are an eligible activity, and the rehabilitation of public housing damaged and not covered by insurance is also an eligible need, but we believe that perhaps the needs assessment does not properly capture that. The LJA data is extremely useful in determining geographically where funds should be targeted, but it does nothing to help us identify the income categories to which the data needs -- the division of funds need to be made. Data from FEMA on claims made on the basis of income needs to be incorporated into the needs assessment. Units can only be counted as very low income or low income if their occupancy and if they are occupied by those populations in their occupancy restrictions and there are rent restrictions also. So in forward calculating the benefits of the Round 1 program to subtract out of the Round 2 targeted needs, that needs to be taken into account.

Two more: We did not see in the outreach plan that the outreach plan was posted for comment. So I'm assuming there will be another opportunity to talk about that. And elderly and disabled targeting cannot be -- cannot disadvantage families with children or that would be a fair housing violation. And we will submit those in writing to you. Thank you very much.

MR. RACKLEFF: But other than that, it's okay?

JOHN HENNEBERGER: It's great.

MR. RACKLEFF: Thank you very much, Mr. Henneberger. We appreciate your input.

MS. SCOTT: And I'm going to try to pronounce this next last name, so if I mispronounce it, please forgive me. Jason -- I think this is Holoubek.

JASON HOLOUBEK: Good evening. I am Jason Holoubek, with Avenue Community Development Corporation. We've been active in central Houston neighborhoods, such as the Northside Village, for over 20 years now. We've been to a lot of public meetings and we've seen a lot of city programs and like to start off by just saying that we've been impressed with the level of outreach activities for this particular program and have just enjoyed working with the city and seeing all the information presented the way that it was, we think that was done very well.

I really only have one comment. We've already seen the presentation and we know how the neighborhoods and the nodes were selected based on need. I would like to say that the amount of money we're talking about seems like a lot until you realize how big Houston is. So I would like to stress the importance of selecting areas, selecting projects that are in areas where there is already other significant public and/or private investment, particularly investment in the infrastructure. We do have in some of these neighborhoods what amounts to a massive investment in transportation with public rail. There is a lot of other exciting things going on as well, and we think you'll get a real synergistic effect by locating some of these projects, putting some of this money into work in areas where you have these other investments already taking place. Thanks.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you. Next speaker, Jon Cooper.

JON COOPER: I just have bad handwriting. My name is Jon Cooper. I am from Northside. I'm part of the Super Neighborhood 51 Council in Northside. I don't know where the Northside Village place is. I have two general comments: One, I'm one of the community members who was part of those meetings that the presentation referenced, and I'm pleased to see that our high priority node recommendations in Northside seems to coincide with the areas that had this mix of low income individuals, requests for aid, flooding needs, and racial

demographics. And so I hope we can see some real benefit to that simply because we seem to have some under -- understanding between planning and between what we initially chose.

The second one is your presentation also described relocation of residents to areas of greater opportunity for a small program for that. And I think we have a great deal of opportunity coming up. The speaker from Lindale pointed out that we do have the light rail coming through, and that is a great opportunity to keep people -- transportation costs down and help them move around the community at large better, not just around the neighborhood better. So I would very much advise you that when you're thinking about that, if someone wants to move, that's their business, but for them, I'm glad you have money to help them. Please don't move them someplace where they have to pay more for their transportation and their housing. If we can take advantage of the infrastructure we're developing now and keep them in housing they can afford, their actual costs of living is going to remain lower and it will be very helpful to them. And I say this probably affects other neighborhoods that might want to be speaking here today, too, but just please keep that in mind. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you. Mr. Kevin Hamby.

KEVIN HAMBY: No, thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Jeff Piaff.

JEFF PIAFF: No, I'll pass.

MS. SCOTT: Dorothy Norris.

DOROTHY NORRIS: Hello, my name is Dorothy Norris, and I represent South Union for the South Union Residential and Investors Association. We are actively seeking investors in the area who will build houses and accommodations for the elderly, and one of those groups is the Watermark Residential. I've reviewed their plans. I've showed them to the neighborhood and within a two or three hour period I got over 100 signatures from the neighborhood that this is wanted. If necessary, I can get 100 if you need it. This is low income housing for the elderly. We have an extremely high elderly population, probably 40 percent of the neighborhood. They are living in houses that are inadequate, unhealthy, and most probably should be

torn down. We have over 90 percent of the population in South Union is at poverty level. They have difficulty getting food, much less paying rent. Many of them can't pay their taxes. This area is prime location directly across from million dollar homes and apartment units and things across 288. We have absolutely the best area to develop because nothing has been done in over 70 years. We were the very last landowners in the City of Houston to get electricity after that storm, to have tree removal. We had to get out and do our own. People were cooking on camp fires. They couldn't get to the disaster relief areas so that they could get the ready meals, and these people want development. We are actively seeking developers and people who will build in the area affordable houses, anything to help the area. The people want it. We have a civic association, but it's not formal as yet. In 15 months they have not been able to decide on bylaws. The civic association is actively working against any development. I have no reason to understand why this is so except that it is. They refuse to listen to any of the developers and people of South Union want it. And we would like for you to consider us and keep us at the top of the list because this area has never received any significant funds for building. Thank you very much.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

MR. RACKLEFF: Thank you very much.

MS. SCOTT: Bridgette Murray.

BRIDGETTE MURRAY: Pass.

MS. SCOTT: David Goswick.

DAVID GOSWICK: Pass.

MS. SCOTT: Ms. Ruby Mosley.

RUBY MOSELY: Good afternoon. I want to thank you all for having this meeting, but I also want to recognize the fact and say thank you for coming to Acres Homes. We appreciate that. I'm going to be brief but firm. We've got problems on top of problems. One of the things that I would like to ask if at all possible, that we move as swiftly as we can in getting applications -- if we can get the list going and have them ready when the applications are ready if they are not



ready. So that we can move as swiftly as possible in trying to get some of the homes that have been damaged, many of them still have the blue tops. We've had people that have had to move out, move into -- with family members and et cetera. The other thing is that we've got a lot of infrastructure problems, and when you came out and met with us, I realized the fact that housing was our number one, but we also said infrastructure. One of the other things that we're trying to do is maintain a residential community rather than a commercial community. We've got an elementary school that's sitting out there that is what someone called a flood area. What caused the flood areas and the problems that we cannot get the funds that is needed or the manpower or whatever and we don't want to have to take the news media and carry it out there and put on a show for everybody to see. Flood ditches are not maintained. The curbs are outdated. Elementary school sitting in what is called a floodplain area. Senior homes are sitting in some of those areas. A whole list throughout the city because they contact me of people that have had damages to their homes and been on the list from five to seven years. The other thing is that I've been here long enough to know and been with the company -- the agency, we are trying and we do not need to see a shut down. Whatever we can do to help, yes, or close up -- I mean close down. Whatever we can do in the community to help move forward we will do so. We have an elementary school out there moving on quickly, and I'm going to see that the president of the Acres Homes citizens council and the president of the Super Neighborhood get you all of these issues in writing to you. But we have an elementary school down there -- out there that halfway from the Main Street up to the school is one way. The other is two way, and it's causing problems with traffic. That's just to name a few, but we need your assistance. And we have other speakers, too. Thank you.

MR. RACKLEFF: Thank you, Ms. Mosley.

MS. SCOTT: Ms. Ruby Bennett.

RUBY BENNETT: My name is Ruby Bennett and I'm also from the proud neighborhood of Acres Homes. And we are so glad that you all decided that you will try to do something for us, the stepchildren. We have so, so many problems, and even when the people come out like housing problems, and they come out -- the people with all these blue tops, like Ms. Mosely say, it's just putting a bandage on it. The houses -- when they supposedly finish or do what they can and say they

run out of money. The poor -- the seniors are in worse shape than they were when they first started. They don't know what to do. They don't know what happened. They can't understand what the so-called contractor tell them because nobody is trying to tell the contractors to treat the people fairly and all like that. Then they tell you you have to get back on the list, we can't do anything for you. And one of the major things I find out -- I've been in Acres Homes all my life. One thing we can always say we've been high and dry. We haven't been in the flood area, but all of a sudden, they came out and they widened West Little York Road and made it a cement holding pond. And then they put retention ponds at the housing --

[ INDISCERNIBLE ] -- and they put a hold over there supposed to hold water. Green all the time, even when it rains six months.

Then we have White Oak Bayou, nobody would dredge it out. Nobody would dig it out, and when they came to do White Oak Bayou, they told us they were bypassing our area and they told them to head to Tomball. So the only thing I'm saying is we don't want to be bypassed. We are loyal citizens. We are very, very, very proud of our neighborhood. As a matter of fact, not many neighborhoods can say they are over 100 years old. We celebrate our centennial. We need help with all this flood, and then tell us when they put us in the flood zone and FEMA didn't tell us, and Hurricane Ike came and say you all don't qualify. Here we are out here and nobody wants to help us because we got put in a flood zone, and all our life we didn't know we was in the flood zone, and then we have to fight to try to say what can we do, how do we get our houses fixed? We want a decent quality of life, a good quality of life just like everybody else and we have all kind of problems out there. You name it, you can find it in Acres Homes. The reason they call us Acres Homes is because we are single-family houses. We don't need multi-apartments or stuff like that. We are proud of our land. We are proud of our houses, and all we want is a little bit of help because we have tried our best to keep our houses and our neighborhood very, very, very good. And when the disaster come and then you count us out. Please count us back in and that little money you're giving us, some of these houses need a whole lot of money and they don't have income, but they need money and they need help. And we thank you all so much for putting Acres Homes on the list, but please remember, don't just give us a bandage, try to help us solve our problems.

MS. SCOTT: Mr. Charles Ingram.

CHARLES INGRAM: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for this forum. My name is Charles Ingram. I'm the president of the Acres Homes Citizens Council which consists of 17 functioning civic clubs. Due to two deaths, we have 15 functioning at this time. What everyone has spoke about, we need it all. We started out behind. We were annexed in three phases in 1976 and we started out behind. Acres Homes is considered agrarian because of the massive lands -- lots are concerned. We sit in three school districts. Acres Homes normally does not flood, but when the infrastructure starts coming in and removing vegetation, and when you remove vegetation, any elementary person knows you put cement down, water flows faster, and therefore you've created a flood zone. Our streets have been narrowed. They are very narrow. We need those widened, and that's in our CIP that will be addressed, but I'm here most of all because we have disenchanted -- they feel disenfranchised, many of the homes that were damaged in Ike. Now, those blue roofs are no longer blue on top anymore. They have blown away. The walls, et cetera, has been just in terrible shape. So if you're going to improve a situation and area, why not start here where there was damage and then that will go on to the child, the grandparents, the children and go down and speaks volumes for the City of Houston. But don't just take the money arbitrarily and give it over here when they don't need it. I'm saying that in this part, these individuals are on a fixed income and they didn't fix it. They need help, and we've come to you. You all have the forum and everyone has addressed what we need. We need transportation. We need the rail. I can go on and on.

Whatever you name, Acres Homes need it. It is an oasis in the middle of Houston.

You don't know the vantage point, 10 minutes from downtown, sits in three school districts, I can go on and on. I would not stay anywhere else but Acres Homes, but we need help from the city. We have 17 civic clubs and we've done well with working with the people as well as working with the city. So with the money HUD or what have you, let's do first things first. These individuals have put in applications. They feel that y'all have not responded. You all -- we feel like we are out here by ourselves. And do you know if you put apartments or what have you in a single dwelling and income -- and unemployment is 11 to 13 percent, what you've done, you've created a slum. You've created a slum. Who is going to stay there but prostitutes and drug heads. So let's do first things first. Attract

people to the Acres Homes community. That's money for Houston. Acres Homes on Little York and West Montgomery sits with 52,000 people and we are looking over somewhere else, 100 years that we've celebrated. And we are still standing and we just need some assistance. Let's do first things first. Hurricane Ike, they did not wish it upon themselves. It happened. It occurred. We need help now. We will pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, but we need the boots. We need the strap.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, sir. Mr. Eric Johnson.

ERIC JOHNSON: I'd like to thank council first of all for having this forum as well as the speakers previously. My name is Eric Johnson, and I am with the South Union Civic Association in South Union, a newly formed fledgling association. However, we have a big heart for our elderly. And to speak to the elderly, these were not just a demographic. These people were not people who are just of age, no, these were our former teachers, police officers, firefighters and those who contributed to the Houston that we have today. And to bundle them all up and put them in a facility, a multi-family facility I think is a disservice for those who have gone before us and paved the way for those of my generation. So aiming at a couple of meetings here, I've found that -- I've heard that the single-family developments would be a priority. And I would like to say that our civic association is not for that. We are for maintaining the dignity of our elders who have built most of those homes in South Union from the ground up and we believe in legacy. My wife and I are transplant to South Union and it was because of legacy, keeping what was in the family in the family. And we believe that to do more a service to our seniors is to help them either build or refurbish their current homes, not to tear them down and put them into a multi-family property; but to help them retain their dignity and transition into the next world with dignity by having the current home that they have owned for more than 60 -- 40, 50, 60 years from here on out. So I would present this to you guys to consider having single-family dwellings being a priority in South Union. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Ms. Kathy Blueford-Daniels.

KATHY BLUEFORD-DANIELS: Thank you and thank you for the opportunity to stand before you all. Let me just say first that fortunately I was privy to be a

part of the planning for -- the end of the planning for the most part initially that was going on. We didn't know anything about it, but when we did we came and we fought. We fought for Fifth Ward, Settegast, Kashmere Gardens, Acres Homes, all those places because let me just enlighten you a little bit in case you don't know, all the places I just named, they are on the map. They still have ditches. Ms. Mosley talked about the infrastructure. We have serious problems with infrastructure out there in all those places. The roof -- somebody mentioned about the tarps, there are no blue tarps, there are only rentals. And in these poor communities, and they are primarily poor, these people are primarily seniors. So to relocate them would have devastating effect. However, they need the help because they don't have the funds or the insurance to go and repair the houses anyway, these areas I just mentioned are also food deserts. So anything that you all can do to help and target these areas that would bring some attention and some redevelopment to our areas would be most appreciative. During Hurricane Ike, I myself lived on the northeast side. I didn't have power for 11 days. I wished we had a generator. We shared and we ran extension cords to several houses, as dangerous as it was, that's what we did. We had to go into survival mode.

As you're making these plans to move forward, please be considerate of our seniors. These areas have 20 to 30 percent seniors located in those areas. So to have them uprooted would just absolutely be devastating. So please consider concentrating on these areas first. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you. Are there any others? Would you get their names on the list?

JERRY DAVIS: Good evening. Council Member Jerry Davis here. I just wanted to say a couple of words. One is I understand the logic behind what the gentlemen from the Avenue CDC stated about putting money into places where other development is occurring. But at this point in time, some areas you have to -- the government's purpose is to place money into areas to bridge the gap or to jump start development. And so as many people want to put money into these areas where things are occurring, but in the Acres Homes community that's been selected and certain parts of the Fifth Ward and the Trinity Gardens areas where development is not occurring, we need to be cognitive of starting development in an area. So as you all deliberate and look through the applications I want you to

also take that into consideration. I also want to say that I would like to echo the sentiments of my constituents in District B such as Ms. Mosley, Mr. Ingram, Ms. Daniels, we do not want more apartments. We need more homes. And we need your help with the homes of the citizens and their homes that need to be repaired. So thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, sir.

ANDRE WAGNER: Greetings. My name is Andre Wagner, and I'm a graduate student at Texas Southern University. And one, let me say I appreciate the work that you all are doing, director and deputy directors and also the work of the committee. And I applaud you and I applaud the work that's been done. But in that aspect, I must ask and I do believe that when looking at one of the Calculuses that you all put together, you all noted that the Third Ward community has received quite an amount of devastation as well and also fits in between two of the criteria that was noted previously -- over a 65 percent minority population on a census -- by census block district and also a 35 percent poverty rate. And as such I think that the Third Ward community is a wonderful receiver of that help. While that is not to take away from any other community, and quite honestly, being a visitor of the Hiram Clarke -- of Southside, South Union, also of Acres Homes where I have many members of my family who reside at, I completely understand what the Calculus in others areas that were awarded, but if possible, I hope that a third round could be looked at or some other form of help or assistance be given to the Third Ward community. Previously I heard that possibly a reason for the Third Ward community not being highlighted was the fact that it's a large renting population. I hope that is not the case, but what I would ask and perhaps I can have a conversation with anyone sidebar later, but what work can be done for the Third Ward community because that area was extremely devastated. I remember being an undergraduate student at that time, and many of those homes are still rotting out today and I ask for that help, if not today, perhaps another round. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you. If there are no --

OSCAR VEGA: Good evening. My name is Oscar Vega. I'm a full time online student and got off of work. I'm a part-time worker and got off early today in

hopes of getting an application for some help. I do take care of my grandmother, and it's getting harder as the house falls apart. I'm not a carpenter, so if you guys could please hurry up with whatever help you have. I've seen houses getting built in Independence Heights with so much technology that my grandma could benefit from. If I'm at work, I can go online and look at the cameras and see how she's doing and make sure she's safe. And we need homes like that in our neighborhood. I'm located in Northside off of Irvington, close to Lindale Park. So whatever help you guys got coming, please hurry. I appreciate your help. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Are there any other speakers?

PAULINE BROWN: Good evening and thanks for the opportunity to voice my opinion. I'm Pauline Brown, and I represent the MacGregor Palm Terrace Civic Club and I would just like to echo the same sentiments that I have heard others echo, and that is we are not agreeable to multi-family homes in our area. In the last couple of months, I have gone to three different meetings where developers have come into the neighborhood, tried to seek our approval to build multi-family homes in the area. And I just feel like that would displace a lot of our senior citizens who cannot afford to go into the apartments. Their income are limited already, and I think they would be better served if they would stay in their own homes, but they do need help in getting those homes repaired. Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Are there any others? If there are no other speakers, we just want to take this opportunity to thank you for coming out and to let you know that your comments are important to us, and we want to thank the staff as well, but our director has some closing remarks and he will adjourn us.

MR. RACKLEFF: Thank you very much, Ms. Scott. Again, thank you very much for your participation. We really appreciate all of the comments, both pro and con. We appreciate constructive criticism. Our goal is truly to try to help as many people and as many communities as we possibly can. We recognize that there are communities that have been suffering, that Hurricane Ike happened a long time ago, and that we need to get rolling and do as much good as we can as soon as we possibly can, and I want each of you to know that I'm personally committed to that and so is our staff and our team.

A couple of just general observations, there was some reference made to us not moving people to certain areas that are outside of where they would have to drive further to get to areas of employment, et cetera. The program as established now provides choice where the individuals who are recipients of the assistance provided by the program, so individuals will have the ability themselves to choose where they want to go and we don't dictate for them what neighborhood they go to or do not go to. So they are within a large area. If an individual wants to move someplace further out of the central part of town, that is their choice and their right.

Another thing I would mention is that with regard to multi-family development, I think there may have been a little bit of confusion in some of the communities that we work in, in that we're right in the midst of the housing tax credit season, and that overlaps what we're doing with Disaster Recovery Round 2, and often communities -- I know from past experience -- become a little bit alarmed because they might get five or six different applications for multi-family developments in their community. They may not be aware, as some of us are who work in that industry, that all of those applications will not receive credits, that of the many applications now there may be one or two that do, but we see this every year where people become concerned about the proliferation of applications and they are not sure what that all means. So that is something that's an educational process that we need to help with more.

I also, you know, recognize that we have heard from many community members in certain communities that do not want multi-family housing and others that do. One thing that I will point out, too, is that in some of the discussions we've had with the public in the past, there may have been the impression conveyed that in every instance we're going to cluster single-family around multi-family development, that won't be -- that's not our plan presently. We plan to use a portion of the single-family housing to put in some community or communities which would not be clustered around multi-family necessarily, and I suppose for communities that don't want multi-family in their community, that could be comforting. I will tell you personally we are committed to serving the approximately 50 percent of Houstonians who live in multi-family housing in addition to serving those who live in single-family housing and it's often the case that their voices are not heard, that they aren't at forums such as this and the importance of replacing some of our aging and blighted multi-family housing stock with high quality, good housing for



people of low and moderate income is really important and is something that we will continue to strive to achieve.

Finally, we have limited resources. I think everybody understands that. We have endeavored to be very straightforward and transparent. We don't have enough resources to revitalize all the areas in Houston that are in need of revitalization. We don't even have enough money to make a dent in the giant picture there is out there. However, we do believe that we can make a very significant difference in a small number of communities and that necessitates us narrowing our focus more and more, and we recognize that that means that some communities will receive that focus and some won't at this time. And there is no way around that reality if we want to really do comprehensive revitalization in a focused way.

So while we recognize that's a -- that's a huge challenge and a tough nut to swallow for many communities, we don't know any other way of going about it than doing it that way. What I hope we can achieve is that we can have the courage to work to designate the fewer number of communities and use the resources in a concentrated way so that we really achieve lasting and substantive economic revitalization which promotes racial integration, economic diversity, and achieves many values that I think probably all of us share. And that we can set a pattern in the future for how to go about achieving revitalization in a more focused way and a more intense way and a more lasting way than we've historically been able to do it. So this is a very complicated process.

We are having to work with HUD, with the Texas General Land Office, with stakeholder groups from all kinds of different constituent bases, working with city government. We have federal, local and state procurement and other guidelines that we need to adhere to that we're legally bound to adhere to, and being a recovering lawyer, I can tell you this is the mother of all legal challenges in terms of trying to harmonize the requirements of all of these disparate programs and put a lot of the square pegs in round holes or round pegs in square holes. I'm not an engineer. I'm an English major. Whatever the right metaphor is there or analogy, and so we recognize that it's an imperfect process, that we're moving forward in the best way that we can, and we, again, appreciate your critiques and your sincere comments and criticisms to help us do what we're doing better, and our commitment to you is that we will try to achieve a result that will be of maximum

benefit to communities in the City of Houston and we, again, appreciate your time and your participation. And with that, we will adjourn.