

**LAND ASSEMBLAGE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING  
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

**October 27, 2006**

A meeting of the Board Of Directors (“the Board”) of the Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (“LARA”), a Texas non-profit corporation created and organized by the City of Houston as a local government corporation pursuant to the Texas Transportation Code Annotated, Section 431.101, et. Seq., and the Texas Local Government Code Annotated, Section 394.001 et seq., was held in the Houston City Hall Annex Council Chambers, Public Level, 900 Bagby Street, Houston, Harris County, Texas, on Friday, October 27, 2006. Written notice of the meeting, including the date, hour, place and agenda for the meeting was posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Board members in attendance were:

Reginald Adams, President  
Cheryl Armitige  
Jolanda Jones  
Teresa Morales  
Tyrone Dorian  
Craig Presley  
Jeremy Ratcliff  
Yolanda Black-Navarro  
Reverend James Nash

Board Members absent were:

David Collins, Chairman of the Board  
Ray Fisher  
Antoinette Jackson  
James Harrison, III

Others in attendance included: Steve Tinnermon and Pat McFarland of the Neighborhoods and Housing Division of the Mayor’s Office; Jim Lemond, Monique Saulter, Cantrell Dumas and Archana Singh of Winstead Sechrest & Minick, P.C., the Authority’s General Counsel; Leah Stolar of Linebarger, Goggan, Blair and Sampson, L.L.P.; and Lynn Henson of the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Adams, who conducted the meeting in the absence of Mr. Collins, at 2:10 o'clock p.m.

**II. Review and approval of Minutes from the August 25, 2006 Board meeting**

Upon a motion by Mr. Dorian, seconded by Mr. Ratcliff, the Minutes of the August 25, 2006 Board meeting were unanimously approved.

**III. Old Business**

**a. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Morales presented the Treasurer's Report and explained that the large accounts payable balance resulted from LARA waiting to receive funding. She also noted that separate accounts have been created in order to keep funds for different purposes separate. After motion by Ms. Armitige, seconded by Mr. Dorian, the report was approved.

**b. Auction update by Linebarger, Goggan, Blair and Sampson, L.L.P.**

Ms. Stolar reported that LARA acquired 22 properties (12 through strike-off and 10 through purchase) at the September tax auction. She added that roughly 60 properties would be available for purchase at the November auction.

**IV. Committee Reports**

**V. New Business**

**a. Consideration and possible action to purchase Houston Hope display exhibit panels for marketing purposes**

Mr. Tinnermon addressed the Board and introduced Susy Hargrove, who directed the Board's attention to the informational panels on display at the back of the room. She stated that the display panels, along with props such as a mailbox containing information flyers, are part of community outreach efforts and provide information about the Houston Hope program. Ms Hargrove added that panels in Spanish are in development. She then proposed purchasing six additional panels, to add to the existing group of four. She explained that the panels will be displayed in churches, grocery stores, malls and other locations. Ms. Hargrove stated that as each panel costs roughly \$2200, adding six more would cost a total of \$13,200.

Mr. Adams noted that the panels are well-designed, but suggested displaying the LARA logo more prominently. He also suggested putting together a flyer with

information about LARA that could be placed in the mailbox. Ms. Jones asked for clarification as to whether the panels would be portable. Ms. Hargrove replied that the panels would be portable, and would be displayed in different locations each week. Ms. Jones then asked about the cost of updating the panels. Ms. Hargrove replied that changing information on existing panels costs approximately \$200.

Mr. Tinnermon stated that the four existing panels were paid for by the City's Department of Housing and Community Development. He added that board members could carry the panels with them when they made informational presentations to community groups. He added that the language on the information panels is directed towards building interest in the community and identifying potential homeowners. As redevelopment process continues, the panels will evolve and may display floor plans or photographs of the model homes. Ms. Black Navarro asked whether the cost is based on the quantity ordered. Ms. Hargrove responded that the cost is based on the cost of the initial four panels, but that a reduced price may be possible when ordering additional panels.

Ms. Jones suggested adding a panel in Vietnamese, as well as Spanish and English. Ms. Morales asked that the finance committee review the invoices for the panels.

After a motion by Ms. Jones, duly seconded by Ms. Armitige, the Board authorized the purchase of Houston Hope display exhibit panels for marketing purposes

**b. Authorization to secure Phase I Environmental Surveys for next round of LARA parcels**

Mr. Tinnermon addressed the Board and reported that environmental assessment surveys have been conducted on approximately 200 lots thus far. He stated that the City of Houston's Building Services Department pursued potential contract proposals to conduct surveys on an additional 116 lots. Mr. Tinnermon introduced Mr. Gabriel Mussio, an environmental manager with the City's Building Services Department. Mr. Mussio reported that he asked two companies to submit proposals to conduct the surveys for LARA.

Ms. Morales asked if the new proposals indicated that the surveys would cost the same as the surveys performed on the initial group of lots. Mr. Mussio stated that price would be the same and that he considered the proposed price to be very reasonable. He added that representatives from the two companies were present, and introduced Mr. Eric LeBrock from Technology Serving People, Inc. and Mr. Rao Somepalli from Rao Environmental.

Ms. Jones inquired as to whether either company had made any problematic findings while conducting the surveys on the initial lots. Mr. LeBrock stated that in the initial group, he found only relatively minor problems, although there were a few properties on which dumping had taken place. He stated that one property contained

suspected asbestos material in the form of floor tile that had been dumped on the property. Mr. LeBrock added that there were other lots that he found to be within the radius of unresolved underground storage tanks, but that overall, the problems were relatively minor.

Ms. Black-Navarro inquired as to the next step for the properties on which environmental problems were discovered. Mr. LeBrock stated that the suspected asbestos problem should be resolved. Mr. Rao then addressed the Board and stated that his company performed environmental assessment surveys on 101 properties, of which four had minor problems. One lot is located next to a gas station, one has an oil spill on it, and two others have minor issues. Mr. Rao stated that he has recommended Phase II Environmental Studies on 3 or 4 lots. He added that he also found some of the properties to be illegally occupied. Mr. Tinnermon stated that the city, through its Brownfields program, possesses funds to conduct the Phase II environmental assessments.

After a motion by Mr. Harrison, duly seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board authorized Phase I Environmental Surveys for the next group of lots.

**c. Consideration and possible action on appointment of CPA firm to prepare LARA's annual audit**

Ms. Morales addressed the Board and stated that she felt that the firm of Mir, Fox & Rodriguez should conduct the annual audit. She added that the firm conducted the previous year's annual audit, and that next year LARA would have ample time to issue an RFP for a CPA firm to conduct the next audit. Ms. Black-Navarro inquired as to whether the fee would be the same as the fee for the previous year's audit. Ms. Morales replied that the fee would be \$1000 less. After a motion by Ms. Black-Navarro, duly seconded by Ms. Jones, Mir, Fox & Rodriguez was appointed to prepare LARA's annual audit.

**d. Discussion of Open Government Training requirements for board members by General Counsel**

Mr. Lemond addressed the Board and presented the open government training requirements. He stated, that as he had earlier informed the Board, completing the training takes 2 hours and is required of public officials under state law. Mr. Lemond distributed a procedure handout, which provides a step by step guide to the training. He explained that there are 2 phases of the training, which is provided by Office of Texas Attorney General, and which can be accessed via the Attorney General's website.. He added that similar procedures applied to both the Public Information Act training and the Open Meetings Act training.

Ms. Armitige inquired if Board members who completed the training last year were required to repeat the process. Mr. Lemond replied that the training is good for the term for which a member was appointed, meaning that if a Board member completed the training in 2006 he or she would not be required to complete it again. He added that his presentation was directed largely to members who did not complete the training last year and to new appointees. Mr. Ratcliff asked to whom members should provide the

certificate received upon completion of the training. Mr. Lemond replied that the certificate could be brought to him, Pat McFarland or Steve Tinnermon.

Mr. Lemond then addressed the Board regarding the matter of the Public Information Act. He stated that the act allows for the disclosure of certain information, such as a phone number or address, to a requesting member of the public. He stated that unless board members specify in writing that they do not wish for this information to be given out to the public, then in the event a member of public asks for the information, it must be disclosed to them.

At this time Ms. McFarland distributed a form on which Board members could elect to have certain personal information withheld from the public. Mr. Lemond requested that the Board members designate whether or not they wished for certain information to be withheld.

## **VI. Chairman's Report**

In lieu of a Chairman's Report, Mr. Tinnermon addressed the Board. He introduced Chris Butler, a new member of the LARA team who is serving as a special assistant to the mayor and will work on construction activity. Mr. Tinnermon explained that Mr. Butler's background is in construction management and he will play a key role in overseeing the construction aspects of LARA's redevelopment efforts.

Next, Mr. Tinnermon discussed the Critical Home Repair Program, which has been funded by City Council for \$5 million, with additional funding by the Houston Housing Finance Corporation (HHFC). Mr. Tinnermon stated that properties that are on the same block face as lots LARA is redeveloping would be the targets for home repairs. The critical home repair will include weatherization, painting and resealing. He stated that repairs would begin within the next 30 days.

Mr. Adams asked if the program will target certain neighborhoods. Mr. Tinnermon responded that the program would begin repairing homes on the block faces on which LARA has begun building housing. Mr. Adams inquired as to whether homeowners would incur any costs, and how the homeowners would be selected. Mr. Tinnermon replied that homeowners would not incur any costs, as assistance is in the form of grants to seniors or the disabled. He added that homes will be selected based on the results of surveys, and that HHFC and the city will monitor the vendors doing the work. Mr. Adams then asked if LARA would incur any costs for the program. Mr. Tinnermon replied that LARA would not incur any costs as the Department of Housing and Community Development will fund the program, along with the HHFC.

Mr. Tinnermon added that Rebuild Together Houston will be responsible for identifying contractors and that the program would not accept applications in areas in which LARA has not begun construction so as to avoid the creation of a waiting list. Ms. Black-Navarro asked Mr. Tinnermon whether sufficient funds were available to provide repairs to all the homes identified as being in need of repairs. Mr. Tinnermon stated that

all the repairs to be made are minor in nature and would total approximately \$7000 per house. Mr. Ratcliff stated that he has involved in similar programs and that they tend to focus on minor, but critical, repairs like wheelchair ramps. Mr. Tinnermon thanked Mr. Ratcliff for his help in organizing the program.

**VII. Public Comments**

There were no comments from the public.

**VIII. Executive Session**

No matters were posted for discussion in the Executive Session and no Executive Session was held.

**IX. Adjournment**

On a motion by Mr. Ratcliff, seconded by Ms. Jones, the meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

**Minutes prepared by:**

**Jim Lemond and Archana Singh  
Winstead Sechrest & Minick, P.C.**

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

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Reginald Adams, President

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Jolanda Jones, Secretary