

DANA General Meeting Sep. 2023

September 9, 2023 10:00am

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Councilmember Joe Giarrusso, District A	2
1. Budget process - proposing to lengthen time for budget approval so that council has reasonable time to review and respond	2
2. Code enforcement - creating a single department instead of having responsibility spread over several departments for efficiency	2
3. Q&A	3
Leon Roche - running for Judge, Criminal District Court, Section I.	4
1. Bio	4
2. Sentencing	4
3. Bond setting	4
4. Rulings of the Court	4
5. Operations of the Court	4
Matthew Willard, State Rep, District 97	5
Register to Vote	5
Homeowners insurance crisis	5
Constitutional Amendments for October	6
Constitutional Amendments for November	7
Nakeila “Nikki” Polk, director of Roadworks Nola (504-658-8718 npolk@nola.gov)	7
Overview	7
Q&A	7
Cameron English, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Engagement	9
Grants available	9
Q&A	9
NOPD 3rd District	9
Shelby Wynne, Program Manager for Family Connects New Orleans	9
Contact information	9
New postpartum support program overview	10
Connect to resources	10
Night Out Against Crime	10
City Park Master Plan Survey	10
Issue with flooding due to grass clippings in drains	10

Attending: Eraina Jessie, Hannah Ligon, Cathy Boutte, Jake LeBeau, Wayne Benjamin, Jean Hood, Mindy Milam, Cameron English, LeeAnn Moss, Pamela Harris-Coward, Gabriela Chavez, Emily Painton, Rep. Matt Willard, Cm. Joe Giarrusso, Monique M., Yvonne Batiste, Naomi Stephenson, Nikki Polk, Shelby Wynne, LeeAnn Moss, additional call-in neighborhood members

Councilmember Joe Giarrusso, District A

Two charter amendments on the ballot ([see full presentation](#))

1. Budget process - proposing to lengthen time for budget approval so that council has reasonable time to review and respond

- Currently, only have **25 calendar days / 12 working days** for allocating and approving \$1.5 billion budget for 62 agencies
- Proposed, **60 calendar days / 39 working days** for this process



\$1.5 billion



 **60 days/39 working days**

 **62 city agencies**



- Shreveport and Lafayette have a 3.5 month process, Memphis has 2.5 months.
- Also propose to help focus departments to 7-slide presentations with red/yellow/green light summary of accomplishments toward last year's goals with last year's money

2. Code enforcement - creating a single department instead of having responsibility spread over several departments for efficiency

- Currently: not a single department
- Proposal: a department
- It creates a new department and streamlines all the work being done so it can be more efficient
- Code enforcement is responsible for lot abatement and mowing, mow to own program, fighting blight, imminent danger conditions, healthy homes ordinance (rental buildings inspections), commercial and residential problem properties.
- Current function of Code Enforcement:

Too many departments

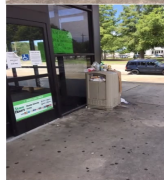
- ❖ This is where Code Enforcement lives:
 - ❖ Office of Community Development
 - ❖ Downtown Development District
 - ❖ Department of Safety & Permits
 - ❖ Law Department
 - ❖ Office of Economic Development



- Who do you call to handle an issue like this today? Answer is unclear, and since no one department owns the process, getting it handled is inefficient and lengthy

Quality of Life

- ❖ Code Enforcement also now handles:
 - ❖ Commercial and residential nuisance properties
 - ❖ Trash, debris, refuse, and discarded items
 - ❖ Overgrown vegetation
 - ❖ Graffiti



3. Q&A

- Question: If passed when will this process start and do they have enough employees to handle the tasks?
 - Answer: no, not now, but if they have their own department that gets dedicated funding, they can hire for this.
- Question: How to contact the outreach specialist for construction to reflect enforcement of the measure passed that we should be able to contact specialists and contractors directly?
 - Answer: City council is investigating how this gets enforced since it's been 2 months since it was passed, and the Roadworks website still doesn't have this contact information listed
- Question: Is there a number I can call for any of these organizations?
 - Answer: Roadworks has a phone number and you can also call 311. We're asking for more specific information to be publicly available so neighbors will be able to contact the correct person directly.
- Question: Who do we call about Winthrop Street? Still have some sitting water after a hard rain.
 - The number listed on the Roadworks website is 504-658-ROAD (7623)

Leon Roche - running for Judge, Criminal District Court, Section I.

1. Bio

- a. He's from the West Bank, proud graduate of St. Augustine class of 2000, went to LSU then Loyola Law School. Worked at public defender's office for 13 years for people who cannot afford a lawyer. For the last two years, has operated his own law firm. 15 years in total practicing law at Criminal District Court. Feels he can impact our local justice system most effectively in the following ways:

2. Sentencing

- a. Ensure those who commit violent crimes accountable and giving commensurate sentences for those committing crime
- b. For non-violent crimes, seek alternate methods such as drug court, veteran court, mental health court to help people with resources they need to get back on their feet instead of throwing them away into a jail cell.

3. Bond setting

- a. Every person that's out on bond has conditions of bond, like they cannot use drugs or commit another offense
- b. He wants to use conditions of bond to help people help themselves, especially for juveniles and younger folks. So if they're on bond, enrolling in school and getting a trade can be a condition of their bond. Consequences of violating bond would be jail, but those who make positive choices will have a path to restoration.

4. Rulings of the Court

- a. Ensure people are not receiving wrongful convictions
- b. Higher courts often find errors in lower court rulings
- c. Leon Roche wants to ensure we're getting it right the first time by reducing these errors
- d. Important that we have judges that know the law and are willing to make the right calls

5. Operations of the Court

- a. Wants to implement a system of e-filing to modernize
- b. Keep the Zoom platform so people can telecommute to court for preliminary matters
- c. But trials will be held in person
- d. Firm, right timelines on discovery forces the state to give evidence to defense so they have time to build cases, so that we can keep the docket moving and prevent people from sitting in jail for years awaiting court

Note: Leon Roche's opponent was also invited to join but did not attend.

Matthew Willard, State Rep, District 97

Thanked all for re-electing him without opposition, so he will be representing us for 4 more years!

Register to Vote

Putting out a call to action to ensure everyone on this call is registered to vote and goes out and votes. Please get your family and friends registered to vote for this cycle. Electing a new governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, legislative seats (reps and senators), and more this fall.

Important dates:

- Early voting starts **September 30th**
- Mail-in ballots due **October 13th**
- Election Date **October 14th**

Homeowners insurance crisis

Dillard University hosting two separate sessions to go over Fortify Homes Program (result of his previous bill) to ensure you get lowered insurance rates if you have a fortified roof. Everyone should apply for it, because it's the one thing you can do to lower rates.

- Wed Sep 20 @ 11am
- Sat Sep 23 @ 11am

Both at John Georges Auditorium on Dillard campus

[Link to register](#)

Constitutional Amendments for October



Election: October 14, 2023 Proposed Amendments

No. 1: Do you support an amendment to prohibit the use of funds, goods, or services from a foreign government or a nongovernmental source to conduct elections and election functions and duties unless the use is authorized by the secretary of state through policies established in accordance with law?

[Act 200 of 23RS](#)

No. 2: Do you support an amendment to provide that the freedom of worship in a church or other place of worship is a fundamental right that is worthy of the highest order of protection?

[Act 30 of 23RS](#)

No. 3: Do you support an amendment to require that a minimum of twenty-five percent of any money designated as nonrecurring state revenue be applied toward the balance of the unfunded accrued liability of the state retirement systems?

[Act 107 of 23RS](#)

No. 4: Do you support an amendment to deny a property tax exemption to a nonprofit corporation or association that owns residential property in such a state of disrepair that it endangers public health or safety?

[Act 48 of 23RS](#)

Prepared by House Legislative Services, Louisiana House of Representatives

2 of these (1 & 2) are COVID-related. The members who successfully got these on ballot tried for previous 3 years.

1 - relates to expanding early voting and drop off ballot locations as a result of COVID. There were nonprofits and folks trying to aid in those efforts, like Mark Zuckerberg providing money to states to aid in elections during COVID. Some folks didn't like the expansion efforts. This amendment will prevent nonprofits and philanthropic endeavors to provide funding for making elections more flexible and accessible. "Foreign government" language is a red herring, nobody is offering this.

2 - Limitations on how many people could gather due to COVID, and there was a pastor in Baton Rouge who ignored state fire marshall's warnings and executive orders put in place and was jailed. This is a response to the state preventing in-person gatherings during a pandemic.

3 - Up to a certain amount of non-recurring state revenue (typically applied to infrastructure like SWBNO) will tie the legislature's hands for how it spends these funds. Legislature can already do this, and did it this year because they had a lot of one-time money this session.

4 - Effort by Cm. Helena Morena and Rep. Jason Hughes to prevent apartment complexes throughout the city from renting while in deplorable conditions being administered by nonprofits that refuse to clean them up by revoking tax exemptions for organizations acting in this way. If this passes, bad actors would be eligible to have property tax exemption revoked if city council votes to do so.

Constitutional Amendments for November

Please see the [full document that includes November amendments](#) without any analysis of them.

Keep an eye out for a non-partisan evaluation of these amendments coming out soon which will give additional information and an email from Rep. Willard with additional information.

Sent a response from department of insurance to Ms. Cathy Boutte about fortified roof program.

Nakeila “Nikki” Polk, director of Roadworks Nola (504-658-8718 npolk@nola.gov)

Overview

As the director, she has assigned outreach specialists for every project to work with residents before, during, and after construction process. Works closely with Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Engagement. [Link to map of area with construction projects.](#)

Q&A

- Question: Eraina lives in N. Salcedo one-block in DeSaix. Has tried calling Tiffany, and Roadworks without ability to reach anyone. Someone knocked on her door at 7am with no prior notice telling her to move her car. After speaking to a supervisor she was told she wouldn’t have to move that day, so it worked out that day. Since then, they’ve dug up the whole street. Now it’s in a holding pattern because of a tree. Concerned about how her block is being treated.
 - Answer: Nikki will follow up with Tiffany and ensure she reaches back out to Ms. Eraina. Unlike Fire/Water, Roadworks has only one line for the entire city, and voicemail often fills up even though they check it twice a day. Working to get second line added in the next 30 days.
 - Answer: Next issue is problem we’re having across the board to ensure that DPW and contractors notify people at least 72 hours ahead of time. Working with partners in DPW and legal to ensure there are teeth in the contract to enforce

this. Don't have the staff to canvas for every single block themselves, so they have to depend on the contractor, and they're working to improve it.

- Question: Hannah Ligon - When will bike lanes be striped on DeSaix again?
 - Answer: Striping typically occurs at the very end of the project from Safety and Mobility Team and Traffic Engineering. In a holding pattern not only in DeSaix but on AP Tureaud and Bayou St. John B. Don't have anything signed off on for DeSaix that will allow her to coordinate the striping with Safety and Mobility.

- Question: Rachel Borne - more asphalt needs to be placed on Winthrop Place because 124 and 120 has water sitting there for days, and the sand is coming down, and what's not going into the drain is going into the house. The street isn't level, and when it's raining it stays there for days. Ajenave (sp?) is the outreach specialist for Bayou St. John Group E, which is moving on schedule. Nikki will get with Ajenave and see what the paving schedule is.
 - Cameron English will get Rachel's information to send Troy and the field team out there to look at that.
 - [Link to info about Winthrop Place project](#)

- Question: Mindy - First, on DeSaix on the first block off of the bayou, heading toward Gentilly on the neutral ground side, on Tuesday September 5th, water pooled a lot there. Since it's brand new, should be draining properly. Secondly, very grateful for work done on Roger Williams. Had to dig up the area between sidewalk and street, and there was so much clay in the dirt they used to fill that it wasn't level. In their contract, is there any kind of standard of how they leave that area? Is it acceptable to leave it in much worse condition than it was prior to it starting?
 - Answer: Would like to have a picture of what it looks like, it could be that it was a result of how they had to rebuild the utilities underneath, so sometimes unable to make things truly even, and she wants to do a deeper dive on the conditions before and after.
 - Answer: Yes there is a standard, but also contractual guidelines with the city for the right of way. They're supposed to use seeding for most FEMA funded projects and have to maintain the area until the grass grows back. The final inspection hasn't gone through, so it would go onto a list of items they would flag. So before anyone hires a landscaper, contact Roadworks to look into what the plans are for restoring it. Cameron was in touch with Ace about the issue and was looking into it but didn't have all the info at the time. Cameron will continue to work with Ace on this.

Cameron English, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Engagement

504-617-3879 Cameron.English@nola.gov

Grants available

Neighborhood enrichment grant for green infrastructure and overall beautification projects. Deadline is Friday, September 15th. Jake LeBeau has information.

Q&A

- Question: Yvonne Batiste - lives on Roger Williams at the corner of Tunica. Wants to make certain that work is completed. They asphalted between DeSaix and end of street. But at end of street put down shells instead of asphalt. Wants to know if it's completed or not. The right of way is just sand and have driven a big vehicle and there's a sink in the ground now, and she wants to know if they will come back out. There's sitting water that stinks by the drain there. Wants to have someone come out to evaluate the right of way and whether or not they will complete the street with asphalt instead of just shells where it backs up to dental school property.
 - Answer: Cameron to contact Yvonne to follow up: 504-919-4931 and email is ycbatiste@hotmail.com.
- Question: Naomi Stephenson - issue with electrical wiring in front of her home. Has called Entergy and Cox Cable. Someone came out, cut wiring, wrapped it around the pole. She unwrapped it from the pole and threw it away. There is another wire now that is in the tree, and she cannot prune the tree without knowing who to contact.
 - Answer: Naomi will call Cameron directly to get help with this.

NOPD 3rd District

Captain Contreras planned to attend but couldn't join at the last minute due to a shooting this morning. She passed along the [NONPACC presentation for August](#) for everyone's information.

Shelby Wynne, Program Manager for Family Connects New Orleans

Contact information

FCNO@nola.gov 504.658.3266

Gabriela “Gabby” Chavez, Data Specialist and Program Support Specialist for this program.
Gabriela.chavez@nola.gov 504.330.0221

New postpartum support program overview

anyone who gives birth at Ochsner Baptist or Touro who is a resident of Orleans Parish will have opportunity to have an RN come to their home, check on mom, take her vitals, check on baby, weigh and measure, and do a comprehensive home assessment for air quality, materials for anyone in the home on smoking cessation or answering questions about potential mold, mildew, lead paint. 2 hour long visit.

Connect to resources

Nurse sits with mother and other folks in home. Answers questions, makes phone calls to resources to ensure that people are on the line picking up and getting resources they need. Whether job placement, help with food, help with diapers, etc. Has developed a comprehensive agency-finder to ensure there contacts. They can receive 3 visits. About a month after, they will receive a phone call to ensure they were happy with service received and have had all questions answered.

Night Out Against Crime

October 17th, 5-8pm at DeSaix Circle, will provide snacks and water, neighbors are welcome to bring chairs and a potluck dish if so inclined.

City Park Master Plan Survey

[City Park Conservancy organization has a survey out - please complete](#)

Issue with flooding due to grass clippings in drains

Wayne asked that we please don't blow your grass clippings in the drain.

Question from Cathy: Can we purchase some signs to put out? Or can we go after landscape companies that continue to do this?

Yvonne to piggyback on this: After it rains, leaves collect at the drain and we need to get out there and brush them out and sweep them up, because after every rain it's an issue.

Hannah is concerned putting out signs to become a secondary trash issue.

Yvonne commented that it is a city training issue that city workers don't blow the trash into the drain. Cameron English will reach out to city departments to help with training.

Perhaps we could survey the neighborhood and ask if they prefer planting trees or something else for our grant. Will send out the question to all and request that everyone sends it to their neighbors since we only have so many people's emails.