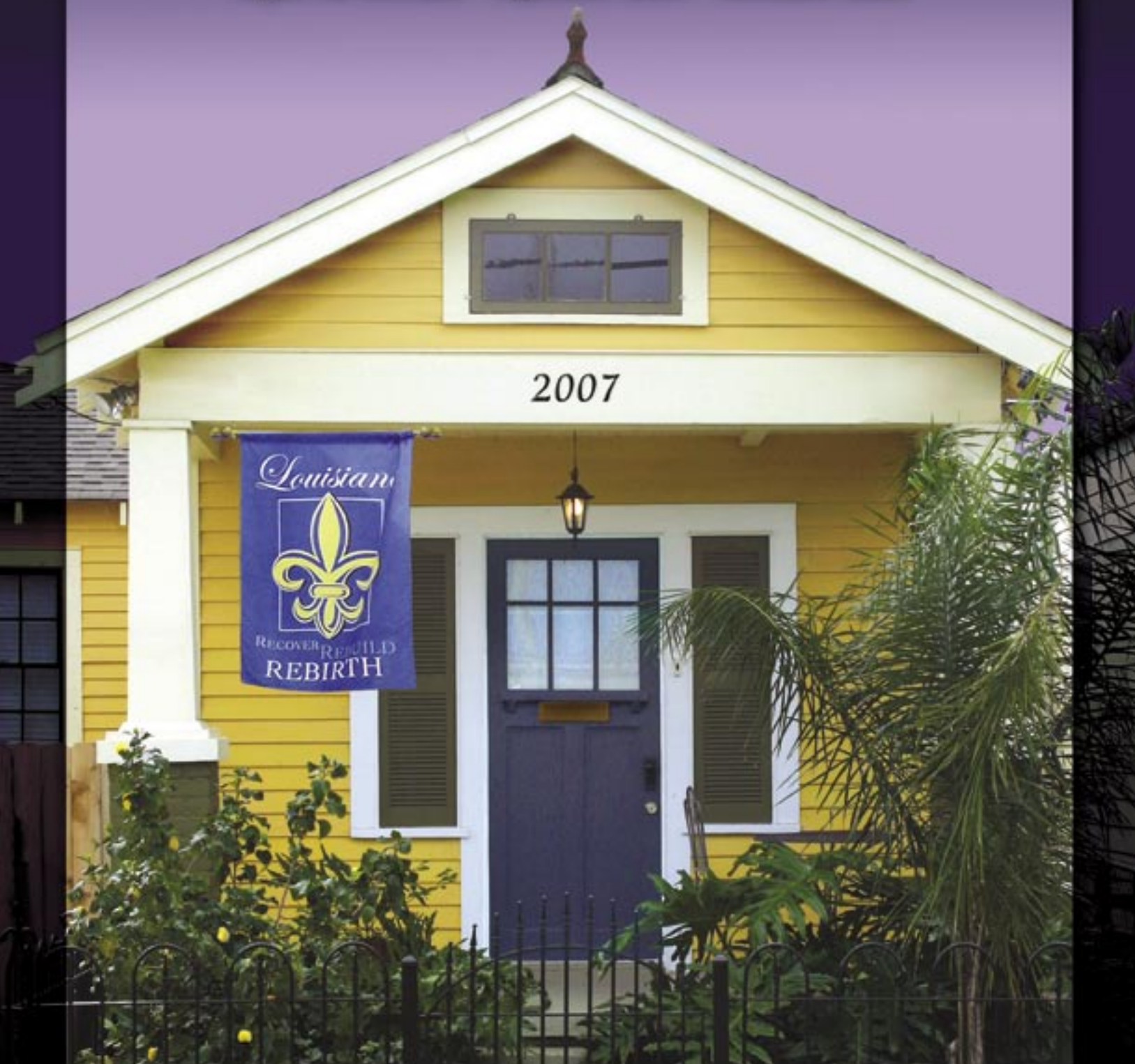


Still Committed to a Better New Orleans

Committee for a Better New Orleans/Metropolitan Area Committee

CBNO/MAC

Report on Activities - September 2005 - December 2006



2006 Board of Directors

Co-Chairs

Donald T. "Boysie" Bollinger, Co-Chair

Kim M. Boyle, Co-Chair

Board Members



Lauren Anderson	Sharon W. Leader
Florence Andre	Diana M. Lewis
Tracie Boutte	Carla Major
David J. Conroy	Yvonne Mitchell-Grubb
Dr. Peter W. Dangerfield, Jr.	H. V. Nagendra
Gerald J. Duhon, Jr.	Fr. Vien The Nguyen
Barbara F.D. Foundas	Ethel E. Nicholas
Dr. Norman C. Francis	William Rouselle
Ana Gershanik	Ashton Ryan
Norma E. Grace	Dr. Timothy P. Ryan
Mason Granger	Gregory St. Etienne
Cedric S. Grant	Mtumishi St. Julien
Cathy Herren	Stacy Simms
William H. Hines	Charlene H. Walk
Dr. Alex Johnson	Kurt Weigle
Donna G. Klein	

President

Keith G.C. Twitchell

**CBNO/MAC is a diverse community organization, a catalyst and convener,
working to bring all voices to the table to build a better future
for all New Orleanians.**

Message from the Co-Chairs

For the last sixteen months, our community has been shaped by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, and by our response to this epic disaster. CBNO/MAC too has been shaped by this unprecedented event: smaller board and staff, tighter budget, narrower focus.

Yet like so many people and institutions in New Orleans, we have strived throughout this period to influence the future of our city. From the Bring New Orleans Back Commission to the Unified New Orleans Plan, from public education to poverty reduction, we are working not just to rebuild our community but to revitalize it: stronger, smarter, safer, and as always, better.

In this Report on Activities, you will read of CBNO/MAC's specific projects and actions, and of the many partners we have engaged since the floodwaters receded. Of specific note, though, is our work with the Bring New Orleans Back Commission. Five present or former CBNO/MAC co-chairs served on the Commission, and various Board members served on every BNOBC committee. Going forward, we will be advocating for the best work in these plans to be implemented.

CBNO/MAC also led the way in calling for citizen engagement in the planning processes; more about this effort is found in the following sections.

As a broad-based community organization, as a convener and catalyst for meaningful change at systemic levels, CBNO/MAC dedicated the past year to bringing New Orleanians together to create a shared vision for our future. As the first full year post-Katrina ends, and a new year opens before us, it is time now to turn this vision into the reality of New Orleans as one of the greatest cities in the world. Now is when the hard work really begins.

We believe that the best way to honor those who suffered and perished from Hurricane Katrina is to seize fully the opportunities that exist in the wake of the storm. CBNO/MAC is committed to maximizing these opportunities, and to offering all New Orleanians the possibility of a better life in their home city. We hope you will join us this year in building a better New Orleans.



Donald T. "Boysie" Bollinger



Kim M. Boyle

Report on Activities

Neighborhood Planning

From its inception, a bedrock principle of CBNO/MAC has been ensuring that citizens' voices are heard as decisions are made about our city and its future.

Two events in November 2005 served as the foundation for CBNO/MAC's ongoing advocacy for an inclusive, powerful citizen planning process to guide the New Orleans recovery. The first was the unfolding work of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission. While many of the BNOBC committees made a concerted effort to include many diverse viewpoints, CBNO/MAC felt that a comprehensive input procedure was needed. The first call was for a citizen review period following release of the BNOBC draft plans; as the timetable for release of these plans slipped, the call morphed into a broader neighborhood planning process. This became a signature action item from the plans, leading ultimately to the Unified New Orleans Plan.

The second was the Recovery Conference convened by Governor Blanco and produced by AmericaSpeaks. CBNO/MAC was well represented at this event, and quickly recognized the power of the participation technologies pioneered by AmericaSpeaks. Less than two hours after the conference ended, CBNO/MAC was meeting with AmericaSpeaks to discuss the viability of a multi-city, real time public meeting, recognizing even then that many of our citizens would remain displaced for an extended period of time. Partnering with AmericaSpeaks and others throughout the following year, this vision for including our displaced citizens in the planning and recovery of New Orleans was finally realized in the UNOP Community Congress II in December 2006.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the Community Congress. By engaging displaced citizens in an organized manner for the first time since Katrina, this event raised the bar for all future recovery work. In addition, no public meeting in our city's history had ever brought together the quantity and diversity of New Orleanians who participated on that Saturday. These citizens came together and demonstrated that, despite our diversity and our differences, we share the same dream of revitalized neighborhoods and a rejuvenated city.

The neighborhood planning process has not been without its difficulties. False starts, divergent efforts, mistrust, and a lack of clarity about how the plans will work have all been obstacles to overcome. Yet as the process comes to close in early 2007, the people of New Orleans are more engaged in shaping their future than ever before. Talented and dedicated planners are working diligently to capture the voices of the people in a document that will be the guiding force in the city's recovery, and there is a renewed sense of energy, spirit and optimism that we will pull through this together.

Citizen Participation

The biggest questions people have about the UNOP planning process are, "How do we know that our plans will be implemented? How do we continue to make our voices heard?"

The powerful, comprehensive answer to these questions is the development and implementation of a formal Citizen Participation Program (CPP) for the city of New Orleans, modeled after similar programs that exist in many other cities.

A CPP gives citizens a greater say in city government decision-making and priority setting, and it gives government officials an effective means for communicating with the people.



Citizen participation has been a foundation of civil societies for over 2000 years. This first century B.C. Roman coin portrays a citizen voting in an election.

CBNO/MAC has developed a working model for a New Orleans CPP, based on national best practices research and extensive local citizen input. The model may be viewed on our web site, www.cbno.org.

Throughout the past year, and through every stage of neighborhood planning, CBNO/MAC has introduced the CPP concept and model to a vast array of citizens and stakeholders. As a result, there is general consensus on taking the momentum generated by citizen engagement in the UNOP process and building on it to move into implementation of a New Orleans CPP in 2007. A citizen-stakeholder steering committee is being organized to oversee implementation, and CBNO/MAC will make staffing this project its top priority for the year ahead.

Education

Less than ten days before Katrina struck our region, CBNO/MAC hosted its second highly successful Education Summit. Bringing together more than sixty entities working in public education – nonprofit groups, administrators, unions, and the School Board – the Summits produced a consensus set of strengths and weaknesses within the public school system, and a widespread commitment to focus on these in setting future work priorities.

Perhaps no system was more completely devastated by the storm than the public schools – and perhaps no greater opportunity now exists in its wake.

As everyone involved in public education struggled to re-establish their footing, CBNO/MAC convened its third Education Summit in June 2006. The School Board, Recovery School District and Algiers Charter District all gave presentations on their status and plans; in addition, the BNOBC Education Plan was presented to the group. Out of the Summit came a renewed commitment to collaboration, with a specific focus on connecting resources to schools in a way that would bring some efficiency to the current chaos.

At the Summit, a working group on policies and resources was formed. This group developed a methodology for assessing needs at individual schools, and at year's end is completing that assessment. It is also completing a comprehensive resources list, so that needs and resources can be effectively matched. Once completed, both of these will be maintained and regularly updated in partnership with Communities in Schools.

Equally important, the group engaged the governing jurisdictions for the public schools to develop a comprehensive, unified set of policies to guide the use of outside resources in the schools. These will be finalized in the first quarter of 2007, and adopted for the 2007 – 2008 school year.

These two projects will greatly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of bringing community resources to public schools throughout New Orleans, regardless of whether they are School Board, RSD or charter schools. Creating this level of unity is a precursor to a second CBNO/MAC 2007 priority, which is to bring all stakeholders together to begin discussing the design and establishment of a completely new public school system, and how to put it in place by the time the current state mandate expires.

Housing and Poverty Reduction

Coupling these two issues may seem unusual, but worldwide experience has made clear that home ownership is one of the most vital steps out of poverty for any family in any city, country or continent.

In January 2006, CBNO/MAC had the opportunity to engage with the Fannie Mae Foundation on a variety of subjects. Out of these conversations came increasing focus on the housing crisis in New Orleans, but placed in the context of overall efforts to address the city's poverty economy. CBNO/MAC provided the Foundation with a copy of its Asset-Building-Based Employee Benefits model, developed before Katrina in collaboration with Total Community Action.

Subsequently, the Fannie Mae Foundation has convened a working group that includes CBNO/MAC, the Federal Reserve Bank, GNO Inc., major New Orleans employers, and additional housing and economic experts. Beginning in August 2006, the group has met repeatedly to develop comprehensive short and medium term approaches to the housing crisis, with an emphasis on providing housing for citizens today while providing a path out of poverty in the near future.

Mixing creative use of resources, innovative tax policies, employer-assisted benefits programs, and multi-partner, public-private collaborations, the group's work is currently being put into a complete package and will be presented in its final form in early 2007. And, while getting roofs over people's heads is the immediate objective, CBNO/MAC and its partners firmly believe that the home ownership component of the solutions being presented will have a significant impact on the systemic poverty that has plagued New Orleans for so long.

On another front, CBNO/MAC has also worked with the Episcopal Diocese and Trinity Episcopal Church, along with a variety of other community partners, to help mold the rental housing component of the Road Home program. With its focus on the doubles, triplexes and fourplexes that typify the historical character of New Orleans neighborhoods and housing stock, this program gives top priority to small landlords rehabilitating their properties. This not only increases the number of rental properties available for citizens moving back to the city, it helps revitalize neighborhoods in the process. With rent to own incentives also part of this program, it also provides another opportunity to increase home ownership in New Orleans.



Metropolitan Leadership Forum

With the 2005 MLF wiped out by Hurricane Katrina, the 2006 Forum took on an even greater urgency, while also providing an opportunity to add some new components.

The 45th Leadership Forum began as always with a bus tour of the city, which this year was a sobering and thought-provoking experience. Session topics this year included Human Relations, Housing, Education, Public Safety, Economic and Workforce Development, Regionalism, Transportation, Health Care, and City Management; this last session was again conducted in the City Council Chambers, with a very frank discussion between the Forum participants and Mayor Nagin and his executive staff.

A new element of this year's Forum was a class project. In fact, there were two class projects: participants were given the option of choosing Education or Housing, and then asked to develop

their own projects. About half the group spent a weekend volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, while the other half spent a Friday afternoon reading to young children and then gave their Saturday to working on repairs and improvements to John McDonough High School.

The enthusiasm with which the participants dove into these projects was most heartening. Both groups did PowerPoint presentations for the Forum on their work, during which they reported forging much closer relationships with their classmates as well as feeling like they had truly contributed to the rebuilding of New Orleans. Most indicated a desire to continue volunteering on their respective projects.

Indeed, this year's 29 graduates were in general a remarkably engaged and energetic group, and give us all good reason to be optimistic about the future of New Orleans.



List of 2006 Major Supporters

Chase National Bank
Entergy Corporation
Greater New Orleans Foundation Rebuild New Orleans Fund
Ray G. Kern
J. Thomas Lewis Fund
Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation
McGlinchey Stafford
Mercy Corps
New Orleans Fair Grounds
The Board of Directors, CBNO/MAC
The Citizens of New Orleans

CBNO/MAC

Committee for a Better New Orleans/Metropolitan Area Committee

3023 Ponce de Leon
New Orleans, LA 70119
(504) 943-7970
info@cbno.org
www.cbno.org