

EXHIBIT A TO RESOLUTION C-6830—PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS:

Review of the information available to date regarding the processing of the Covington Trace Ridge Apartments showed actions by the Parish President and his staff beginning in 2022 to commit parish funding and issue permits and approvals without notice to the Council or the public. Actions taken by the Parish President and his staff in processing the Covington Trace Ridge Apartments permits, in light of known concerns of overdevelopment parishwide and, specifically, Districts 1 and 2 in light of the multifamily development moratorium, were contrary to the principles of open, fair and transparent government. The permit process should be revised to require written notification to the Council of developments of a substantial size or value to ensure adequate public notice and opportunity for input. In addition, steps should be taken to ensure that the use of grant funding by the Parish Administration is done with appropriate reporting and legislative oversight.

The above Preliminary Conclusions are based on the following Findings of Fact:

1. On June 24, 2022, Parish President Michael Cooper along with his staff met with HRI (developer) to discuss a proposed development referred to as the Covington Trace Ridge Apartments (CTRA or development). The development as presented required multiple variances to be obtained for the 5 acre site located on the Bogue Falaya River.
2. On June 29, 2022, the HRI president confirmed in an email with Parish staff that a different design and reconfiguration of the project may be possible and, on August 8, 2022, an email to staff from HRI was sent thanking the staff member for meeting and the feedback on CTRA.
3. On January 11, 2023, a revised site plan was presented by HRI to the parish staff showing a reconfiguration of CTRA from one large building into three separate buildings, consisting of townhomes and apartments for a total of 100 units. The new site plan eliminated the need for any public hearings on the development under parish rules.
4. On February 16, 2023, an email to various staff members reflects the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's position that the traffic in the area of the development is congested and there are crashes noted.
5. On April 4, 2023, Councilmen Dean and Fitzgerald posted for public notice a proposed moratorium for multi family development in Districts 1 and 2 which included the area of the development.
6. April 2023 drafts of a cooperative endeavor agreement between HRI and the administration show a pledge of \$1.5 million in parish funds towards the CTRA project without any notice to the Council.
7. On May 9, 2023, a meeting with the Parish President, HRI, staff and Councilman David Fitzgerald was held to unveil CTRA. In the meantime, a demolition permit and land clearing permit were issued by the administration.
8. On May 23, 2023, CTRAs attorney requested a formal opinion be issued by the Director of Planning and Development confirming that the site of the development, zoned Highway Commercial 2, was appropriate for the multi-family development, requiring no planning or zoning review or variances. The opinion was provided to the Council for the first time at a hearing on June 1st by the CTRA attorney.
9. On June 1, 2023, at the Parish Council's regular monthly meeting, a moratorium was adopted for a six month period, regarding the development of multi-family in Highway Commercial 2 within Council Districts 1 and 2, effective at once. Four days later the administration issued a building permit for the renovation of an existing structure at the site.
10. Requests for information on the permitting process by Councilman Fitzgerald and staff were met with a complete suspension of communication with the Council, including cessation of meetings, emails, calls and electronic access to files. This action was taken by the administration with the knowledge and consent of the Parish President.
11. A search of parish records revealed never in the history of past executive parish presidents has any project of such a serious nature been processed in such a manner despite the promises to the general public of transparency.

Documents supporting these Findings of Fact can be found at: www.stpgov.org/government/parish-council.