

**Transcription of Public Comments at the Library Board of Control Public Forum
Catholic Life Center
November 7, 2006
7:00-9:00 P.M.**

In Attendance

Library Board of Control

Georgia Brown, President
Dan Reed, Vice-President
Dorothy Stepteau, Treasurer
Katherine Auer
Stephen Moret

Library Administration

Lydia Acosta
Mary Stein
Patricia Husband
Brenda Lovett
Mary Stein
Rhonda Pinsonat

Cyntreniks, LLC

Brace Godfrey, Jr.
John Schneider

Moderator

Frances Smith

Special Assistant Parish Attorney

Nikki Essix Manuel

Attendance: 212 plus library staff

Georgia Brown

Mrs. Brown welcomed the public and thanked them for coming to the meeting. She said the Library Board would function as observers and listeners at this meeting. They want to hear what the public has to say. Mrs. Brown reminded all who wished to speak to sign in at the tables in the lobby. Also cards and pencils were available for questions or comments. All questions would be answered at this meeting, or if time ran out, on the Library website. Also, questions could be submitted on the website.

Mrs. Brown introduced the Moderator, Mrs. Frances Smith. We are fortunate to have her here as a private citizen. She is the Assistant and Council to the President of Southern University. She holds four degrees; a bachelor's, two master's degrees, one of which is in library science, and a law degree. (applause by the audience)

Frances Smith

It's wonderful to see members of the community so interested in libraries. Young people are holding information at their finger tips with their I-Pods, their cell phones, and blackberries. They have immediate access to information. However, when the lights go out and the batteries wear down, libraries are always a good fall back. We are here tonight because we know there are questions, questions, questions about what is happening. We have a wonderful group of public spirited citizens serving as your Library Board of Control. They value the information and the comments and the concerns that the citizens have on how they perform their work, and the decisions they

have to make on the placement of libraries throughout the community and parish. It's an opportunity to hear what you have to say. They will not answer your questions tonight. Introduced the members of the Library Board, the Library Director, the Parish Attorney, and the principals of Cyntreniks, LLC. (applause by the audience)

We want to go over a few of the ground rules for handling the rest of the program. The yellow sheet provides the guidelines. The auditorium has been set up in such a way that those who want to ask questions, or address concerns, have one of three choices to make; and that is, in which line are you going to stand. There are three lines and we are going to rotate how you are going to be called so each group has a chance to speak. We ask you to come to the microphone and speak into it because this meeting is being recorded. We have time limits for each speaker of two minutes. When you come to the microphone, please give your name and address. This is so we have a record in order to contact you, and as a public body it is important to have a record of who the participants are. You will not be allowed to speak a second time unless everyone has had a chance to speak and there is still time available. You will not be permitted to extend your time or assign it to another speaker. Because of the number of people present, we would like you to write your questions on the cards should you not have time to speak. Give the card to a member of the staff on your way out of the meeting. Those questions will be placed on the website and answered on the website.

Do you have any questions about the rules?

Jerry Davis, 1921 Rosace Drive

Yes, a lot of people are very concerned about a lot of the issues being presented tonight and two minutes seems to me to be a very short time. We have a very long time in our lives to live with the library, and we'd like more than two minutes. If we run out of time tonight, having us submit questions in writing is not the same as having a chance to make comments and submit questions face to face. I would recommend that you have another meeting at another time, so that we can have the opportunity to speak out loud.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much for that comment. (Applause from the audience) The members of the Board will take due notice of your comment, and during one of the time periods when we have a break, someone will tell me whether or not that is going to be an option because I can't address that. It's my understanding that we have had a number of community meetings. There have been opportunities for persons living in the various communities to express themselves to the Board. And at a point in time, there's a time for the Board to begin to make some decisions so that we can move forward. But your voice is going to be heard in that regard.

Unidentified Female Patron

Ma'am, they shut out the voices at every meeting. They have not been able to speak up. Even the civic associations want the Main Library at Independence Park. (not speaking with a microphone-audio too low)

Frances Smith

Ma'am, one of the other issues that we are going to have to be clear about is respect.

Unidentified Female Patron

(Interrupted Frances Smith with comment I respect...)

Whether you respect the rules or not, and there are so many here that desire to be heard, those persons who come to the various stations in the lines here will have the opportunity to be heard, and if we have a number of people expressing the same sentiments you have, surely they are going to hear you and act accordingly. At this point in time, is this about the rules? (Male member of the audience interrupted Frances Smith asking her to repeat what the woman's question was as he could not hear her.)

Frances Smith

She had some concerns about people wanting to speak about where the location of the library should be. She'll have the opportunity to express herself when she comes to the microphone to tell...

Unidentified Female Patron

(Woman got up, interrupted Frances Smith, and started to speak into microphone. I want the library in Independence Park. (Frances Smith interrupted her) the Main Library where everybody can go. (Others in the audience made comments)

Frances Smith

I said when you get the opportunity to get in line and speak, then you will be able to express yourself in that regard. (Audience made comments) In order for us to be able to get through this tonight, I'm going to say another time that the one thing that I hope we can do is to be respectful of each other's opinions. And there being no more questions, we would like to ask if you would start to get in line. The blue is for Goodwood, the red is for other locations or concerns, and the purple is for downtown. So if you would get in the line where your concern is and you can come all the way to this mark. If you would do this orderly. (People getting in lines) May we please have your attention? So that everybody can be heard, we will start with the other line, the next person to speak will be from the downtown, then Goodwood, and we'll rotate in that order throughout the night. Would you please give your name and address?

Valoie Nelson, 1636 Great Oak Drive

My library is the Bluebonnet Library. The question I have is the last hearing I attended I understood that the Board was going to locate the downtown library. They were planning to buy the old post office facility for 8 million and they were going to build a new library down there with a big parking lot to service all the downtown visitors that came there. Since then I understand that there have been a lot of changes. I don't think I've been updated. I think Brace has done a study that said the Library doesn't have enough money to do all they projected to do. So has there been any consideration of financing all these plans and is there any presentation that the Library Board would like to tell us about?

Frances Smith

The questions are going to be directed to our consultants to be answered tonight. The questions to the Library Board will be answered on the website. (Members of the audience shouted no. Public meeting.)

Brace Godfrey, Jr.

In so far as your question requires a response from the study, there are a couple of things I'd like to make clear. Number one, in terms of the introductory remarks of Cyntreniks, our role was of an objective assessment of the ten-year capital improvement program. The actual decision, downtown, Goodwood or not, Cyntreniks is not a part of that portion of the debate. The Library Board is going to have that debate in another session. But the assessment did come up with several findings. One of them was financial, and it did extensively deal with what that ten-year capital outlay program looks like in terms of the projects and the desire to have and what that means time wise and so forth. Our two volumes go into that very, very extensively, and to be quite frank with you about the conclusion you drew concerning the adequacy of the millage, you are absolutely right. We do point out that there are some issues that the Board will have to deal with in terms of completing those projects both on the basis of time as well as on the basis of acceleration, not acceleration; or whether or not the Board also looks at some more creative ways of dealing with and leveraging the money that is available. Those are the decisions that they will have to make. And so, you do conclude properly with regard to that. The only comment made in the last meeting about the downtown post office was we were asked to look at whether or not if the Library, and then again that is not our role, if the Library Board decided to do a downtown site, were there sites that would meet the requirements based on the square footage, the foot print, and so forth. And so that was the only comment made. (interrupted by applause)

Frances Smith

Thank you. Goodwood. Oh, I'm sorry. I said downtown.

Jerry Davis, 1921 Rosace Drive

Again, my name is Jerry Davis, and I live at 1921 Rosace Drive. If you build it, they will come. We all agree that that notion works, but sometimes it doesn't work. Sometimes they don't come. The original downtown library was closed. The State Library downtown is virtually empty; the existing downtown library is virtually empty because they haven't come. The data shows that library patrons will not go downtown at this time. No studies show the downtown library will garner increased usage. No study has recommended a downtown library. All you have at this point is the Downtown Development District sales pitch. That's not a bad sales pitch, and I don't knock... (interrupted by applause) I don't knock the Downtown Development District for making the sales pitch, but that's all you've got. So, if the Main Library is built downtown and if they don't come, my question is what is Plan B? What use will you then make of that facility? How would you dispose of it? And what would you do with my library system then? It's a 60 to 90 million dollar gamble to build a downtown main library at this time in contrast to that example that gamble, I offer you a certainty. And that's the Goodwood Independence Park region. You know they come to Independence Park.

They've done so for years. No study suggests...

Frances Smith

Your time is up, sir. Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Jerry Davis

Do I just get back in line?

Frances Smith

You can get back at the end of the line. Goodwood? (male member of the audience shouted blue, blue.)

John Berry, 1520 Aberdeen Avenue

I'm John Berry and I live at 1520 Aberdeen Avenue. I would just like to give a little history, and set the tone for tonight. If I happen to run over a few seconds, just please let me finish. I have a statement here. It's just two pages. We're all here tonight to discuss the siting of a new main library. Some believe one should be built in the downtown area; and others believe the current main library should be built where it is in Independence Park. From the beginning of the process initiated by the Library Board of Control and pro-Downtown Development forces almost two years ago, there has been public opposition. That was evident in the Board's own internet survey in which seventy-seven percent of the respondents were against moving the Goodwood Main Library. It was evident from the majority of follow up e-mails, letters and phone calls to the Library in opposition. It was evident from the number of letters to the editor of *The Advocate* in opposition. Recently the number of citizens opposed to such a move has increased dramatically. The reasons given are many. Basically, they are one, the move from a geographically central location which is demographically much closer to parish residents than it is to downtown Baton Rouge. Two, the unnecessary spending of millions of extra dollars on a downtown location versus rebuilding at Goodwood slash Independence. And three, the chance to rebuild in Independence Park on a tract of land donated free of charge by BREC. In editorials and letters to the editor by downtown main library advocates from almost two years ago through this very day we the opposition have been cast as some bothersome, backward and older group standing in the way of progress.

Frances Smith

Fifteen seconds, sir.

John Berry

I would appreciate (applause from the audience). I will quote a few examples of this from *The Advocate* of March 6, 2005. "They are older people manifestly set in their ways, their reasons for opposing a downtown move are not compelling."

Frances Smith

Your time is up, sir. (applause from the audience)

Elwin Bobby Burns, 1914 N. 37th Street

My name is Elwin Bobby Burns. I work for the Library. I realize that we live in a representative democracy. Pray for me that repercussions are not handed my way because I dare to exercise my constitutional right to speak. Now, Mr. Godfrey, Mr. Schneider, I don't see in heavens name how you can sit there and tell us that you are objective when some feel you could be a silent partner in what you and the Library Board have already decided as to where the Library is to be placed. Now, my suggestion is and I learned 14 years ago. Someone told me, "He said, Bobby, you should compromise." I am suggesting that we compromise. Those with the money and the amount of money that you stated that you would like to go downtown and you said you are probably going to change it so people can change the name because somebody will probably give money, go downtown. Those of us who want it to stay in Independence Park, let us not call it the Main Library because the name on the front of the Main Library where I work says the East Baton Rouge Parish Library. We will have a compromise. If you go downtown and nobody uses it, praise the Lord, you will have it. And, if you have it in Independence Park, and we use it praise. (15 seconds) Those with the money and the money you plan to spend downtown, go downtown. The money you plan to put it in Independence Park as Mr. Palmer said he will give the land we could have two. Thank you. That's a win-win situation. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you very much, sir. (applause from the audience)

Denise Porter, 3124 Perkins Road

My name is Denise Porter. I live at 3124 Perkins Road. I am a homeowner and a tax payer in East Baton Rouge Parish, and I am absolutely in favor of a Main Library downtown. The Goodwood site is just simply better suited for a regional library. Central offices for City-Parish services should be located in the heart of the city, and in Baton Rouge that's our downtown area. The Library, the Main Library is going to be a main depository for the information and our history of Baton Rouge, good, bad and indifferent. Most major cities throughout the United States and minor cities for that matter, have their main libraries in their downtown area. They are culturally and architecturally significant. That's what we need in this community. Because libraries are an essential part of any thriving community, and should be centrally located for the good of all, please don't let planning mistakes guided by race and class in the past, to guide our future. Thank you. (applause from the audience)

John Rogers Smith, 7251 Palmetto Drive

My name is John Rogers Smith and I reside at 7251 Palmetto Drive. I voted for the library renewal tax last year. I think each of you know the importance of education, literacy and good government for the future of our community and its residents. That importance has received the emphasis by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, our local news media, and I believe it is well recognized by everyone in this audience. However, it has been completely ignored in your explanation of your plans for future libraries. If this discussion was more about what would really serve our community's needs for improving literacy in the community, that's the one factor that city government can

actually contribute to relative to education, I believe you would find a very different answer, and I believe you would conclude that the imaginary of a downtown library is totally irrelevant to the real economic needs of the community. State laws say that libraries are to be an irreplaceable source of knowledge resources for self-improvement, self-government and economic self-sufficiency. The proof that the concentration of more library resources downtown would be like stealing them from us, the public, is the fact that there is already 170,000 square feet of library space downtown that have less total circulation than the branch libraries in Central, and Greenwell Springs. The proof that a central, attractive, accessible location like Goodwood was the right choice years ago and is still the best choice now, is that it almost has twenty times the circulation of the downtown River Center Library and several times the circulation of the larger and newer State Library downtown. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Your time is up, sir.

Len Sedlin, 12897 Goodwood Boulevard

My name is Len Sedlin and I live on Goodwood Boulevard. I'm a retired professional engineer who has used all of the library facilities both State downtown and downtown library and Goodwood and so forth in my career. I have a proposal that assuming the library has to go downtown, and the taxpayers have a lot of money that they don't want to see wasted on a stand alone library, why not emulate the Shaw Center for the Arts where there's a public and private partnership that's producing outstanding success. And by emulating the Shaw Center, why not talk to the powers that be at the State Library and start, and put together a joint venture, a cooperative agreement for the East Baton Rouge Parish Library system to operate the State Library, to expand it moderately as needed and to operate the combined facility for seven days a week as we presently do. It would certainly be a lot cheaper on the taxpayers to put together a joint venture and basically expand the downtown library moderately as needed. But then take over the operation of the entire facility. You're right across the walkway from the new State Museum. Think of all the synergism that you could have there. And nearby are already existing parking garages. So I'm offering this idea that I've kicked around in my mind for some time, but I think it's something that Cyntreniks and others perhaps should look at as an alternative. I prefer to use my engineering talents to do the best cost benefit analysis available. And certainly it's not a 90 or 100 million dollar cost to do this. Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Sir, your time is up. Thank you.

Bill Good, 711 N. 6th Street

My name is Bill Good, and I live at 711 n. 6th Street. I hope that the city will place the new Main Library downtown. It is my firm conviction that the downtown location would help the city to rise to the greatness that it has long deserved. Without a thriving core of cultural, educational governmental and entertainment resources, Baton Rouge will never

be the destination that it could be. A decision to locate the new main library at Goodwood would harken back to the tumultuous 60's when good middle class folk abandon downtown and headed for the burps leaving in their wake urban blight. Now, some modern cities including Baton Rouge are starting to heal and are looking to a vision called smart growth where a consolidated core of cultural resources are located in downtown. With combined with enhanced public transportation, adequate parking and security, this will provide regular benefits for all of the citizens of our far flung and diverse parish. The Goodwood location may currently have higher use statistics, but this does not accurately reflect the potential increase in use from throughout our parish, if the facility were properly sited near the heart of the city rather than in one of its suburbs. Yes, I want to see more diversity in our Main Library and I want to see more underprivileged kids having an easier time accessing these resources. And I firmly believe that older middle class people will still manage quite well to find their way in their automobiles to a downtown library. I am opposed to a retreat into the parochial past. In order to move forward we must do so...

Frances Smith

Sir, your time is up. (applause from the audience) Thank you very much. (Unidentified female patron approached microphone who had spoken out of order at the beginning of the forum) Ma'am, I'm sorry to have to say this but you had your time at the mike.

Unidentified Female Patron

You told me that I could get into line.

Frances Smith

After all the rest of these people who have not had an opportunity to speak.

Unidentified Female Patron

But we do have many underprivileged children at Goodwood, and the downtown library is only...

Frances Smith

Ma'am, I would appreciate it very much if you...

Unidentified Female Patron

But you told me I could speak...

Frances Smith

You have already taken the mike when we started and you used your time. I'm sorry. (Unidentified Female Patron sat down.) The next one for Goodwood. Thank you.

Connie Breaux, 3751 Valentine Road

My name is Connie Breaux. I live at 3751 Valentine Road. I'm a life long resident of Baton Rouge. I am President of the Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Civic Association. It's an organization that's been around since 1973 and presently we have 75

homeowner association members which takes a lot of people into consideration in this parish. I won't go back and repeat a lot of things that the other people said and there's more to come. But I would like to tell you my perspective of this. Of course, some of this is from the Federation as well. One thing I have to say is very simple. If it's not broken, why do you want to fix it? (applause from the audience) Also, I'm going to run out of time, so keep your applause til later thank you. Another thing I would like to say is if I owned a business downtown because I keep hearing about the children and downtown and so forth, if I owned a business in the vicinity of Goodwood unfortunately I couldn't be in two lines at the same time, but we're not an advocate of the fact that the Library should be at the Goodwood site. We're saying somewhere in the vicinity of an area there. But if I was in a business in that area I would not want an icon such as the Main Library taking away from me. There are many businesses that have put years and years of money and time in that location. Let's leave their icon alone. Another thing I'd like to say is, I drive around thinking a lot and if you are at the traffic light at Lobdell and Goodwood and you stop, take a look heading south and you will notice left is the Goodwood Library and straight ahead is the Towne Centre. Now tell me where is there a better location than that? Also, I'm a tour guide. I cannot go back downtown, and say, "O.K. folks this is our library."

Frances Smith

Time is up. Thank you very much.

Stan Hurder, 1506 Glasgow Avenue

I'm Stan Hurder. I live at 1506 Glasgow Avenue in Southdowns. I support the construction of a new library in the middle city area to expand access to our students and our elderly people. I think if it's in mid-city it'll help the community college, it'll be accessible to the McKinley Middle and High School, Capital High, Catholic and St Joseph's, and many elementary schools. I think if you'll study the location of the students and the citizens and base the decision upon that, so that a new location is accessible, that will still benefit the heart of Baton Rouge, the mid-city area that will increase access to the library services. Thank you for being here. And you run a great library system.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much, sir. (applause from the audience)

Davis Rhorer, 227 Florida Street

Davis Rhorer, 227 Florida Street. I'd like to address if I could, my first my comments on the Cyntreniks study, and in the recommendations that they made where there was a financial shortfall to meet the 10-year capital improvements goal. I'd like to offer for the Board's consideration what we have done downtown with several projects that was alluded to earlier, but I'd like to list those. The Shaw Center for the Arts were both state, local and private funds were used to create that magnificent building which is now considered one of the 12 great pieces of architecture of the world. The planetarium at the LASM used state, local and private funds. The River Center used state and local funds. The brand new Capital House which is now the Hilton Hotel used again a number of

different funds through the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and state funds. New market tax credits which were also mentioned in the recommendations are a great source of revenue. They're making the old King Hotel downtown come back to life as well as the Welsh and Levy Kress building. The seven sites that were presented in the plan I'm happy to tell you that we've studied those and when I had the privilege to speak at the eight public hearings on this, the nineteen different entrances and exits into downtown as well as the four interstate exits that we have down here make all of those sites accessible. And I think will easily work for you with the goals that you have as a Board set forth for free parking and easy access throughout the parish. I'd like to comment just a few things about some of the things that were said, that were said around downtown, about downtown. There have been no rapes, and no murders in the Downtown Development District. We are an area of ten churches, several daycare centers two elementary schools. We have twenty-five schools within a two-mile area including Baton Rouge High. Thank you so much for allowing me to speak. (applause from the audience)

Joe Richard, 1068 Colonial Drive

My name is Joe Richard. I reside at 1068 Colonial Drive. I'd like to reiterate the obvious that there are two libraries downtown that are very lightly used, primarily because there is no parking. The libraries that are used heavily by the city-parish are free parking libraries. As I recall the library, and I'd like to remind everyone, the library tax was passed when it was first passed the City-Parish funding was withdrawn from the library. When they built the parking garage the parking at the Convention Street and Third Street which was originally promised by Downtown Development District that it would be free parking after 6:00. That's not so because the bonding when it was done provided that there had to be a charge for parking and there's no free parking. Where are you going to park if you have a downtown library? I favor the Goodwood Library. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much, sir. (applause from the audience)

Howard Hershberg, 9771 Jefferson Highway

Thank ya'll for letting me address. I'm fairly new to the Baton Rouge area. I've only been here for four years. But when I discovered the Goodwood/Independence Park Library it became both

Frances Smith

State your name and address.

Howard Hershberg

Oh, I'm sorry. Howard Hershberg, and I live at 9771 Jefferson Highway. Sorry. I work at the Department of Natural Resources. As I said, a fairly new citizen to Baton Rouge. I've been here four years. One of my first discoveries was the East Baton Rouge Parish Library at Goodwood. And since then it's become both indispensable and a wonderful institution for me. I've had many free classes there from LSU professors, local resources, people are always friendly and knowledgeable. My feeling has already been very

strongly stated by several people previously probably much better than I can say it. I strongly feel that the first choice would be to either renovate Goodwood to current standards and bring it up to date. And the second choice would be to build a new library at Independence Park. Unfortunately, if the library is moved downtown, I will not patronize it nearly as much; not just to be stubborn, but just because of the convenience or inconvenience of it, and as the other gentleman said the lack of parking, etc. etc. as I said previously, Goodwood is a wonderful institution. The East Baton Rouge Parish Library system is fantastic. I came from New Orleans. It's a big city, but I got to tell you I think East Baton Rouge runs a much better library system. And I do hope you will keep it in the Goodwood/Independence Park area. Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you.

Boo Thomas, 2101 Parker Street

I'm Boo Thomas. I live at 2101 Parker Street. And for the last fifteen years I have been working on trying to build community. Seven of those years was when I was the founding director of the Mid-City Redevelopment. I worked 60 and 80 hour weeks to make sure that our first neighborhood beyond downtown would come back to life. We see great things happening there. I then went to downtown because I realized that the only neighborhood that we can call our own is downtown, that every person in this room has a connection to our city center where our city services are, where our state government is and where our federal government also presides. I really appreciate everybody in this room and the comments they believe so passionately about one or the other. What I totally believe in my heart, is that no one loses in this. Goodwood is getting one of the finest libraries and it will have the parking it needs and it deserves and it's going to be in a park-like setting. That's a win. I think if you took any of the new libraries, any of them, look at Bluebonnet and put it in downtown, and had all the features that it has, you'd have the same wonderful success as Bluebonnet. And I think that we have that opportunity to make our downtown library; it doesn't have to be the Main, we just need a good downtown library that provides the services, that provides the parking that everybody needs. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. (applause from the audience)

Ray Heil, 8632 Wartelle Avenue

My name is Ray Heil, and I live at 8632 Wartelle Avenue and I'm a life long resident of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. And, I'll be writing a check every month for the library tax that was passed. The reason...the present library...Can you hear me?

Dan Reed, Board Vice President

It's once a year.

Ray Heil

O.K. The present library located at Goodwood, years ago many of you remember it was downtown. And they decided wisely to move it to a central location which it is a central location today. The location where they are, serves us 360 degrees in relation to the various people who will come to that library. You move that library downtown you are right on the edge of East Baton Rouge Parish. You'll be serving a 180 degree area there. To the south Louisiana State University has their own library, to the north Southern University has their own library. To the north you have the industrial complex, so out to the east and southeast where the majority of the parish has grown, that's where all the people are. And this issue called *Neighbors* which is printed for the various homeowners associations here in Baton Rouge. The Greater Baton Rouge Civic Association unanimously recommended that the library stay where it is on Goodwood Boulevard. Now, what does that made of? They said that's seventy homeowners associations. Well, what does that mean? That's 160,000 people. Probably a lot of them are going to be writing that check, paying taxes like I do every year. And...

Frances Smith

Fifteen seconds.

Ray Heil

And it's our desire to keep our present library at its location which is centrally located in East Baton Rouge Parish. Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you very much.

Kyle Moppert, 2170 Terrace Avenue

My name is Kyle Moppert. I live at 2170 Terrace Avenue, and I'm vehemently opposed to downtown, but I was..I kind of changed what I was going to say because I just followed Boo and Davis. I know both of them. I've been on boards with both of them. They're wonderful people. They're paid to bring things to downtown Baton Rouge. My question is (applause from the audience). I did some research the other day on this and I found out that ...I missed the early part of this...I want to back up for a second. I missed the early part of this because I had to run children as we do all over town all day long. We almost never run downtown. But we do go downtown. We go...I just dropped my daughter off in Manship Theatre. But we dropped her off and we're going to get her out. Going downtown during all of the events Davis and them bring makes it more difficult to go downtown with your children. My real question is this, when I read the paper I saw that one of the Board members is a member of the Downtown Development. Is that true? (applause from the audience) Nobody here is...May I ask very quickly what your jobs are?

Georgia Brown

No. We would like to...We wouldn't comment...

Kyle Moppert

Well, I read somewhere in the paper that somebody. (Members of the audience offered some comments.)

Brace Godfrey, Jr.

I think that may be referring to me, sir.

Kyle Moppert

O.K. What are you associated with...

Brace Godfrey, Jr.

Yes, I'm Chairman of the Downtown Development District.

Kyle Moppert

And you're...what is your (laughter and applause from the audience)...So, wait a minute. My question is you're part of the decision making process, correct?

Brace Godfrey, Jr.

No, sir.

Kyle Moppert

What are you doing?

Brace Godfrey, Jr.

The job that my company has was a critical assessment of the 10-year capital improvement program. It is not our job at all to deal with the question of whether or not the library's built downtown or not. As a matter of fact, if you look in our study, the only comment about one or the other, acknowledged the dollar, the lesser dollar amount at Goodwood. That is the only comment that we made one way or the other.

Kyle Moppert

But here again, but here again, you have a vested interest, you have a vested interest in downtown, you are part of this new thing. I find this, I don't think that it's right for someone to be a part of this who has a vested interest. If they have a vested interest, I think it's unethical and that's all I have to say.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Jason Collins, 847 Maximillion Street

My name is Jason Collins. I live at 847 Maximillion Street.

Georgia Brown

Will you please speak into the microphone?

Jason Collins

Sorry. My name is Jason Collins. I live at 847 Maximillion Street. I live downtown. I work downtown. I have clients downtown. And, just based on the previous gentleman's comments, I just want to tell you we all have a vested interest in downtown and seeing it develop. (applause from the audience) I feel very strongly that the library facilities as they are downtown are maybe not patronized as much as they could be because they are already under funded, sort of a dingy place to go. However, my wife and my three-year old and I, we all make the trek there on a regular basis. We would definitely support and patronize and go to a downtown branch. We have been waiting a long time for some new facilities.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much.

Coleman Brown, 836 Futon Street

Hello, I'm Coleman Brown. I live at 836 Futon Street. Sadly, I look around the room and I don't see any children here. I have four children and they're in four different states all across America as we speak. How many people here have been to the downtown library this last week? (audio low, couldn't hear) Three, four people. This last month? How many in the last month? The last year? How many people were at the downtown library last year? That's good, that's pretty good. O.K. How many people have been to the Goodwood Library the last week, or month? O.K. That's great. Just about everyone here. Ya'll been here all year, too, I guess. I have an architect that works with me and he goes to both facilities on a regular basis every week. And I asked him how many people went downtown when this first came up. He said one, two or three on Wednesdays when he went. But he also goes to Goodwood Library every Saturday, and he said there was possibly hundreds of people there. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you, very much. (applause from the audience)

Kathy Wascom, 1255 Aberdeen Avenue

Kathy Wascom, 1255 Aberdeen Avenue. And I am very much in support of a downtown library, and a renovation at Goodwood. But the library that has been left out of the discussion is the Southdowns Library; and that is a library that I hope to see built fairly soon. I think it will relieve some of the problems at the Bluebonnet with the traffic over in that area and in the development over there. So I look forward to a Southdowns Library to help many of the people in my area also. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you, very much. (applause from the audience)

Jack Whitehead, 11909 Bricksome

Good evening. I'm Jack Whitehead, my professional address is 11909 Bricksome. I'm an Old Goodwood resident. I'm here in support of the downtown library. This is part of a bigger vision and a bigger plan for our city. My wife and I chose this as our home.

She's from New Orleans; I'm from Lafayette. I had the good fortune to attend graduate school here and we decided this is going to be our home. We like it here. But what I see as the vision of this Library Board, and thank you for your time and public service to do this. This is very important to the rest of us as citizens and taxpayers. I see this as part of a vision to help cure some of the problems we have in the Deep South and in Baton Rouge. It's a lot different than 50 and 60 years ago. I believe that what you are attempting to do with downtown, and I think it's very important, is to help curb the urban blight. Part of the vision for other projects that have been developed... Baton Rouge today downtown is so much different than when I finished law school some 20 plus years ago. It was terrible. It's a wonderful place to go. It's vibrant. No, I'm not in New York City. No, I'm not in San Francisco. But it's a nice vibrant feel and place to be where you enjoy going and see many cultural events. I see this new library as being part of that plan and a part of that vision; a part of the change in our community so in 25 years when my son's my age people will say this is a great place to be. Thank you for your time.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Hazel Hardy, 1227 Beckenham Drive

I'm Hazel Hardy, 1227 Beckenham. I just have been going to the Council meetings, the Board of the Library since September. And I just have seen that they are very partial and only will listen to downtown. In fact at that meeting, one of the meetings I was told, "Well, you should know that the Board feels very much unanimously for downtown". And that was said to us as we were leaving the Board meeting. Downtown used to have all of the doctor's offices, they had movie theaters, they had department stores, they had all the amenities that the community use. Now all those have all left, the latest being *The Advocate*. And I just think that when people have to make a special trip downtown to go the library that that is not credible, that I feel like it should be out in the community where parents can go and run errands, take their children by the library, do other things such as shop, take them to the doctor, whatever else their needs are. And I have one statement, the Goodwood Library is doable now with the land offered from the Recreation and Parks without infringing on the playing fields and gardens of Independence Park. With the escalation of construction costs (poor audio quality) I feel the Goodwood Independence Park site be their first priority.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience) Just a moment. (poor audio quality) We would like to give everybody who has not had the opportunity to speak on any of the issues the opportunity to speak before the people who are coming for the second time. If time allows for you to come back for a second time, then we will respect that. So if anybody,

Jerry Davis

Who will the next speaker be? When will the next meeting be?

Frances Smith

Those persons who have not had the opportunity to speak first, we would like them to come to be sure...so that everyone will get a chance. At the end...We heard your question (referring to Jerry Davis) and I'll ask the Chairperson to give us that information so that we can share that with you. But, right now we would like to have all the people who have not had an opportunity to speak yet to have the opportunity to speak before we can (poor audio quality). So, if there are no more in the other location, we'll go to downtown.

Curtis Fletcher, 12425 Mallory Avenue

Curtis Fletcher, 12425 Mallory. I work downtown. I try to use the library downtown. And all the times I went to it, I managed to find a metered parking place one time over a several year period that was close enough to use to get to the library. I have a handicap license plate. It's even difficult to use the State Library even though they have like 20 handicap parking places. So my main concern is whether you build a library downtown, you keep the one at Goodwood, I would definitely like to see the details of your parking, your public parking, not metered parking, but your public parking and your security; a good lighted parking lot, internal, external video for security with security guards because if you don't think you're gonna have those kinds of problems, you check with the downtown library in New Orleans. See what kind of problems they have. I know we don't have as many problems as they do particularly downtown, but if you don't provide good security and good parking, the library's never going to be used, I don't care where you put it.

Frances Smith

Thank you, very much. (applause from the audience)

Bill Smith, 1912 College Drive

I'm Bill Smith. I live at 1912 College Drive. And I'm just really confused because if there are so many people that want to come down to the riverfront downtown, why is there not an Albertson's or a Bass Pro Shop or Barnes & Noble (applause from the audience, couldn't hear all the business establishments he named), Cabella's, Dillard's, Home Depot, Lowe's. Piccadilly was on Third Street when I moved to Baton Rouge in '54, and they've moved out to Cortana Mall and other places. I just don't understand how their marketing people can be that dumb. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you so much.

Mark Goodson, 10627 Millwood Ave

Good evening. I'm Mark Goodson. I live at 10627 Millwood Avenue. That's in the Bluebonnet area. I'm not originally from Baton Rouge, and one of the cities I had the privilege to live and work in is Little Rock. And, if any of you have been there recently, you know that its downtown is doing quite well. But eight to ten years ago, their library system decided to rehabilitate an historic warehouse and locate their main library in the new downtown. At that time they were actually one of the very first developers. And

since then, there has been quite a revitalization. They now have shared parking at the library that they use to support patrons who like life there. But it also has done good things for the library itself. Their membership has increased significantly. I think that's due to increased access at the downtown library. I mention Little Rock because Little Rock is one of the cities that we're losing our young urban professionals to now. And it's the responsibility, I believe, of the library system and the taxpayers to invest in our future. I think a main library downtown would be a symbol that we are ready to invest in our future. And I think that, well, I just support downtown. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you so much. (applause from the audience)

Linda Pace, 9155 Redbud Street

My name's Linda Pace. My address is 9155 Redbud Street. I work for the State. I work downtown, and as a State employee and a downtown employee, I have access to the State Library as do all of the other State employees who are down there now which is a majority of the State employees. There's no need for the parish library to be there. If the library is built there, it will be for tourists; it will not be for the residents of the parish. The library at Goodwood is centrally located in the parish. It should be renovated there and will be for the residents of the parish, and not be for tourists. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Kathleen Callaghan, 715 Dehr Avenue

Hi, I'm Kathleen Richard Callaghan and I live at 715 Dehr Avenue in the Garden District. I'm located between downtown and Goodwood. And on a personal level, it really doesn't matter to me where the Main Library is located. But this is not really about Goodwood and it's not about downtown. It's about Baton Rouge as a whole. I'm also a taxpayer as so many people like to remind us. But libraries are not just for taxpayers. They're for the community at large, even those who do not have an income and they need the resources of a magnificent library downtown. A lot of people are under the misimpression that Goodwood is going to be moved somewhere. It's not. It's going to stay; it's either going to be renovated or rebuilt. It's going to remain a magnificent facility for all in that area to use. And that's what regional libraries are for. Downtown has been characterized as the living room of our community, and diversity is important. A magnificent main library is a logical component of downtown. I forgot to add that I'm a licensed landscape architect and planner in addition to being a lawyer. So I've studied this before. Other cities have recognized the importance of having a large main magnificent facility downtown. Nashville, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City just to name a few. Downtownlibrary.org-there are lots of links on that. I encourage everyone to look at photographs of libraries elsewhere. For those who like to do research, and genealogy and history, the ancient library at Alexandria, Egypt was known as the Temple of the Muses. It was a research center, a museum, a venue for celebrating the arts and scholarship. And that's one aspect of the past that we should return to. I disagree with those who say the library is not a destination or a recreational center. It is and it can be.

I think we should build a spectacular main library downtown. Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you so much. (applause from the audience)

Sue Bartol, 9477 W. Damuth

Good evening. My name is Sue Bartol. I guess there's stickers all over me where I want them to remain. I live on West Damuth in the Broadmoor area. I think what we need to do is distinguish between image and function. It's nice to have beautiful things downtown, and nice things to go to, but when you're talking about a library this needs to serve the community or children in the schools. It has a more functional role, so that needs to be in a central location, and the last time I looked at a map that's not downtown where the river is. The other thing to make that point more clear is I think to the whole community driving's pretty important. Where's the DMV? It's down by Independence Park. O.K. So, and that's important to everyone in the community. So I think we need to look from a functional point of view. The other thing is who in here will feel O.K. with their high schooler driving downtown in the evening to do their research projects? (applause from the audience) I wouldn't want my elderly parents who use the library driving down there, having to find a place to park, and going down there in the evening either. So, these are, I think real concerns. If you are going to build a downtown, you have to be really good at making sure you answer those concerns because otherwise it won't be used. Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Frances Smith

Thank you.

René Singleton, 710 North Boulevard, #2

Hello, my name is René Singleton. I live at 710 North Boulevard right on the edge of the CVB and Beauregard Town. That's downtown. And I'm in favor of a downtown library facility. I'm from another state. I was raised in Florida. And one of the first things that impressed me about Baton Rouge was the parish library system. I've been here about twenty years, and I have seen new facilities built in Baker and Zachary, and Bluebonnet at and Greenwell Springs, and at Carver; and just all over the parish. And I never heard when you all were talking about building any of those anybody counting the books that might be used, and counting patrons that might go to them. I think that this Library Board has a wonderful vision. I trust you. You have my full confidence. I have always voted for your tax revenues. I think you're sane people. I don't think all of a sudden you have lost your mind. I have sung as a musician in every branch of this library system, and I have used every branch as a patron. And I can go to Bluebonnet and not begrudge Greenwell Springs. So I'm not sure why a downtown library facility is a problem. I think it's a very good thing, and as a person who lives downtown, I am in favor of anything like Andre Stuwani said when he came to talk to us about our Horizon Plan for downtown, anything that will slow down the traffic downtown. And I think a wonderful facility is a good thing. So you have my support.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Anthony Musso, 12119 Oakhaven Avenue

My name is Anthony Musso, and I live on 12119 Oakhaven Avenue. And the reason that I'm here tonight is I read in *The Morning Advocate* Monday that over 88,000 people use the downtown library the first ten months of this year. About two months ago I was summoned for jury duty. (laughter from the audience) Three hundred of us were in the Centroplex for the initial meeting. Then 300 of us went through the tickers that count you in the library downtown. (applause from the audience) We had a number of people who were smokers who went in and out for three hours. You had people that use the rest rooms; went in and out for three hours. And I did this for a couple of days. So, if you look at that number, 88,000, I would guess, I don't have any firm figures, that probably 40 to 50 percent of those visitors were for jury summons. Now, to me this is under utilization of a downtown facility. And this is why I'm in favor of a Goodwood site.

Frances Smith

Thank you so much. (applause from the audience)

Jamie Griffin, 1950 Chevelle

Good evening, my name is Jamie Griffin. I reside at 1950 Chevelle in Goodwood. And I'm in favor of the downtown library. I hope no one gasps. No, there's a lot of interesting things about me. One thing is that in 1999, I was President of the Louisiana Teenage Library Association. I'm passionate about libraries. Another thing that's interesting is that I didn't live in Baton Rouge before 1999. I lived in Houma, Louisiana. I found my place in this city. I love this city. And, now that I live here, I decided I'm going to stay here, I'm going to make it the best darn city it can be. That also means that I'm going to live, pay taxes here, hopefully, for a very, very long time. And I think we have a bigger vision for Baton Rouge that we all have to listen to. Part of the thing that I notice is that we fill up a lot of libraries for a lot of people to this Board's credit. Congratulations! But it's a lot of the same people. The demographic in this room is a very, very unique group of people. It's not young people; it's not racially diverse people. It's not socio-economically diverse people. And if we don't build something in the future, something new that really gets in touch with those people then this room will be the only segment of our community, albeit a small portion that pays taxes, that gets to utilize the services of a great system that Lydia and her team have built. And, so my thing is that there is very, very good news! Young people love this city. We're going to make it a great city. We're going to pay taxes. And, even better news, we can have a Goodwood library and we can have a downtown library. Is it going to be easy? Absolutely not! Are the tax money that we have collected so far and that we will collect in the future going to pay for it? Probably not! So we have to work hard; we have to work through the challenges. But I believe this community can do it. And I believe in all the great projects you've done. Thank you so much.

Frances Smith

Thank you so much. (applause from the audience)

Fred Hebert, 1722 S. Tamarix

My name is Fred Hebert. I've been a member of this community for 84 years. And I've used the library. I've seen what Davis Rhorer has done downtown. And it's fantastic. (poor audio quality) I remember we used to meet at the old Capitol House, and I hope we get to meet there again. Davis helped us get the woman's clubhouse downtown. But downtown is great, and there are many, many great edifices there, and it's wonderful. And the Library Board, the public has committed confidence in your judgment, and you're very wise to get all these people together to share their thoughts with you. The thought I want to share with you mainly is that you have tentatively decided to spend 80, no 75 percent of the capital improvement funds given to you by the taxpayers for a project which is just a big edifice downtown. You've got Carver Library which is downtown. It's got plenty of parking spaces. The only justification I picked up says you can have more people downtown if you have more parking space. Terrace has worlds of parking space. And talking to Mary Stein, and Trey (poor audio quality) and Davis Rhorer, I know that the City wants to have the space the library now occupies for governmental functions, and I think that Davis has ruled...

Frances Smith

Sir, your time is up. Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Jeff Fleur, 13735 Shady Ridge Avenue

Jeff Fleur, 13735 Shady Ridge Avenue. And I first want to thank you for all the books you supply my child. He's only four years old, and I'm missing story time to be here. But I feel like it's important to be here to let you know through his eyes what I think the next generation sees in its library. You know I've seen Matthew go down to the LASM where you have multiple experiences with the train, the planetarium, the early learning depot, the art gallery. What an opportunity we have as a community tonight to build a new library that I can go to a window and show him the Old State Capitol and then go experience it. Where we can look out a window and see the new State Capitol. Read about Huey Long. Go see in person the State Capitol that man built. Read about the Mississippi Bridge. Go out and let him touch it. All in an experience going to the Main Library in a downtown area. That is an unbelievable experience for a child in this next generation. Let's not lose the opportunity in this community to build a world-class facility that everyone will want to come and visit whether you live in the community or not. We create something that promotes education and the experience of education. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Harvey Landry, 12411 Langer Avenue

Hello, I'm Harvey Landry. I'm at 12411 Langer Avenue. We understand that if you build the library, the main library downtown, Goodwood would still be a fine facility. We understand that if you build the main library downtown, you would build a parking garage adjacent to it. Perhaps that would address some the safety issues. But, by the Library Board's own definition, the main library has the larger book collection, the

longest hours, and other amenities that the other branches don't have. And it's been said here, let's see, it's been said that the Main Library should be centrally located. Well, and that was stated by someone at the downtown proponent's side. Centrally located between the population center and the geographic center of the parish is approximately in Independence Park. That is where the Main Library should be. Now it's been said that locating the Main Library downtown would be an equalizer for the poor people who lack transportation. Poor people are not walking to the current downtown branch. They get in a car or a bus if they go. We heard about the statistics, but the statistics show they don't use it very much. Bus transportation is available to Goodwood as well as to downtown. Now we spent \$48,000 on this study to recommend only downtown locations. Why didn't we invest in \$2,000 to conduct a scientific survey to determine where the taxpayers prefer to have the main library? Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Loren Kleinpeter, 431 W. Woodruff

I'm Loren Kleinpeter. I'm 51 years old. I've had the pleasure of living in Baton Rouge all of my life. I grew up in Broadmoor. I guess that's where urban sprawl started in this community, where we rode downtown through the circle down Florida Street to get to the library we had there. We went under the stairs to the children's library and once a week the bookmobile came out to the shopping center and we children marched onto the bookmobile. It was a wonderful experience.

Frances Smith

And, what is that address?

Loren Kleinpeter

Oh, I'm sorry. I live at 431 W. Woodruff which is closest to the Bluebonnet Library. My office is on Lobdell which is about three blocks from the Goodwood Library. I own no property downtown. I have no vested interest in downtown. The only thing I really have an interest in is the betterment of the Baton Rouge community. And I'm also here, not personally, but as a spokesperson for A6. Speaking of the betterment of the Baton Rouge community, last night I was charmed to be at a wonderful reception for a gem of our community, Pennington Biomedical Center where a number of you were there. I visited with Hazel Hardy, with John Smith who spoke earlier. We talked not about our differences, but what we shared. They were in favor of a library at Goodwood, me being in favor of downtown. But we both said, we all said we favored what was good for the community. And Hazel said as long as there's enough money, she didn't care if there were two. In fairness I didn't read into that Hazel wanted her taxes doubled. She meant that if there was enough money with what we already voted. I woke up at 3:00 last night and thought what am I going to say that is going to convince anyone who is entrenched and my oratorical skills are not enough to do that. They're weak. But what I thought about was, oh, God. There's going to be something at downdowntownlibrary.org from the Salt Lake City Library tomorrow and I ask if we'll read it because you need to get the vision, you need to get the vision if you're in this room. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Samear Zaitoon, P.O. Box 23

My name is Zaitoon. I have a couple of pieces of property at 228 Maximillian downtown across the parking lot from the First Baptist Church.

Frances Smith

State your address.

Samear Zaitoon

This is 105 (poor audio quality)... This is my office address. I also live on Cedarcrest which is not very far from the Goodwood Library. Yesterday I came to the downtown Centroplex Library to return some books, and I got a parking ticket. (laughter from the audience) And one of the reasons why I decided to come to this meeting, if you're going to have the downtown library as the main library is you need to have an understanding with the parking cops. (laughter from the audience) Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Lori Melancon, 1237 Perkins Road #4

My name is Lori Melancon. I live at 1237 Perkins Road. I moved back to Baton Rouge as a young person, well I'm still a young person, about three years ago to work for REDDA, the organization that manages the Farmer's Market. That's in downtown Baton Rouge on Fifth Street, Fifth and Main. And one of the things that I did for them, is I did marketing, and we did a little research to see where our people came from. People traveled from all over this parish, and all over the Baton Rouge area, nine parishes all around the community to come downtown every Saturday. Locating a library... Yes there is a Farmer's Market near Goodwood. You were right. Know how many people are there? While their attendance is growing, it is not the thousands of people that travel downtown on Saturdays for community. Because we've created a sense of place, a sense of community, a sense of heart. And that's what our downtown location is. I travel all around the world and I know that downtowns are the hearts of communities. They're the places where the communities thrive. Your heart might not be located in the center of your body, but it is a place that pumps the blood, that creates the life for your body. And our downtown is that. That's why it is critical that we locate our library in downtown, in the heart of our community. I know you might not be too happy when I say this, but I am the future of Baton Rouge, I am a young person, and I will live here for a very, very long time to come. And I believe that I speak for lots of young people in our community when I say please consider downtown, consider the future of Baton Rouge, and consider the patrons that are yet to be born, and vote downtown.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Vern Amar, 2470 77th Avenue

My name is Vern Amar. I live at 2470 77th Avenue, and it's near the airport. So for all practical reasons, I don't have a dog in this fight. But I look at you folks up there and what I see is that you are responsible for us. And being responsible for us, I think it's very important if you look back at the people that have been up here to talk, there have been several people that have suggested to you that there is data. The reason I say that is that I am a retired engineer, O.K. I'm accustomed to dealing with data and information. And I think it behooves you to not only have the nice report that you have from Cyntrenik's, and these gentlemen here, but also the available data which I'm sure it is available at the library. That as many of the people have pointed out earlier, clearly shows that there is not a need for a new downtown main library. But what I implore you to do is take the time and sort this data because the data will tell you, dictate to you the road to take. And I know this was not part of the original (poor audio quality), this is not my printout, but this explores all the data that illustrates those points that most of the people have talked about tonight. And, while maybe you may take this and trash it, I'd like to give it to the moderator, and maybe in her good faith she will see that this data is used to help facilitate your decisions. And I think once you look at the data, the data will tell you where to go.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Jason El Koubi, 2210 Christian Street

Good evening, everyone. My name is Jason El Koubi. I live at 2210 Christian Street right between the Garden District and Southdowns. Great cities have great libraries. We're a great city and we're very lucky to have a great library. Thank you for your service. Thank you everyone for coming out today. It's very clear that we're all very proud of our library system. It occurs to me that not everything in Baton Rouge is quite as strong as our library system. Some of our institutions are quite weak, our student achievement lags our peer regions, most of the rest of the country. Our educational attainment among adults is among the lowest in this country. We have some great strides to make. One of the things I consider is how you go about trying to encourage this community to change its culture, to reach greater. Think about how to make advances in prosperity, make advances in intellectual achievement, and ultimately to achieve its greatest aspirations. How do you change the culture? I look around at other cities; other cities that have sparkling institutions; cities like Seattle, cities like New York, cities like London. All of them have absolutely sparkling libraries that not only serve their clients well, but serve their customers well. But also serve as beacons to what it means to be a great community, to be a community of sparkling lives. I think that what we need in this community is a real symbol of that vision. I think we need something that provides a sense of possibility of where we can go. I think we need a huge sparkling jewel in our crown as a city, and I think that crown is downtown. And I think a new main library is just what we need to provide a great sense of aspiration, a great sense of vision, and a great sense of hope of what we can become as a city. Thanks very much.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Kathleen Fletcher, 12425 Mallory Avenue

My name is Kathleen Fletcher. I live at 12425 Mallory Avenue here in Baton Rouge. Those of us that are vertically challenged have a little bit of a problem with the microphone here. I have one concern here. I'm a retired teacher. And since I've retired, I've been doing a lot of genealogy work. I understand that the genealogy library is one of the ones that would be moved to downtown. Will there be adequate facilities for those of us who are senior citizens and who are handicapped to get around through the downtown traffic which is a problem on its own, have parking and all of the handicap facilities that would make it a pleasure to go down there? Instead of, "I hate to go because of traffic, and the situation's so bad." Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Peggy Good, 711 N. 6th Street

Peggy Good, 711 N. 6th Street. I'm a Board member from the Spanish Town Civic Association. But I'm not speaking on their behalf. I'm speaking as a resident of downtown. It offends me this evening. I could not believe the attitudes about security. I couldn't believe the attitudes about people feeling that downtown is worthless. Ten years ago I lived in Kenilworth. And it was difficult for me then to get to the Main Library before Bluebonnet was built. It was easier for me to go downtown. But downtown I couldn't go because there was no parking. The facility that we have downtown is not adequate for residents. Yes, the State Library, that's great. But, unfortunately, I didn't work for the State. So I could not check books out. I'm speaking on behalf of a vision. Ten years ago when I came downtown, and bought into downtown, people looked at me like I was an idiot. People said, "Go down there, there's gun shots in the night, there's prostitutes, drugs, gays, blacks." I am offended today that these people here can not embrace the vision of hope, and the vision of people moving forward in a diverse community, and looking to the future, looking to what's going to happen with energy, looking to consolidating our culture, our art and our education.

Frances Smith

You have 15 seconds.

Peggy Good

All I can say is, "Yes, I have a vested interest and I have to tell Mr. Godfrey that I'm glad that you have a vested interest because it's going to take work. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Jeff Beary, 9311 N. Parkview Drive

(Video tape was changed, missing beginning of patron's comments)

When I go to the Goodwood Library, and have access to the amount of information at the Goodwood Library, I want to see that information grow. And, you know, be used by more people as time goes by. I feel like if you consolidate everything downtown, we're going to lose something in mid-city or you know what I call the heart of Baton Rouge. I guess for the record, I want to let everyone to know that I trademarked Broadmoor, "the Heart of Baton Rouge" recently because we are the heart of Baton Rouge. We are right smack dab in the middle of Baton Rouge. (poor audio quality) And this is what I'd like to see, I'd love to see more money poured into downtown. I'd like to see a revitalized downtown, I want to see places to go downtown, but there's no place to go. Keep things the way they are, please. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much, sir. (applause from the audience)

Herpreet Singh, 263 Westmoreland Drive

My name is Herpreet Singh, and I live at 263 Westmoreland Drive. I have been going to the Goodwood Library since I was two years old. I grew up in Sherwood Forest and I could not be more excited that the Library Board has already, as I understand it, is committed to completely renovating, if not rebuilding, the Goodwood Library. I'd like to dispel the myth that the Goodwood Library will not be a state of the art library. And thank you for that decision. And I still use the Goodwood Library today and I'm going to continue to use it as a taxpayer and a mid-city homeowner. But I am also excited and absolutely proud of this Library Board for proposing downtown as a location for a new and additional state of the art library facility. And I'm here to voice my unwavering support for that decision. Downtown is only site that makes sense for a library of the future. For one that captures our imaginations and displays in an iconic way how the roles and responsibilities of libraries are changing and growing; and one that is a cultural institution for Baton Rouge families. A library of this nature is not for one or two suburbs. It is for the entire community. So I would like to implore this Library Board to maintain your forward thinking stance, and to help Baton Rouge to continue to envision the countless possibilities before us and countless ways to achieve them. I don't know if there are any Metro Council members here tonight, but I am here to publicly ask them to support this progressive stance. And I am also here to ask those of you who will continue to utilize the wonderful existing libraries in our system and the renovated Goodwood Library...

Frances Smith

Your time is up. Thank you.

Herpreet Singh

to do so not to the detriment of the young families in Baton Rouge. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience) This is for persons who are coming to the mike for the first time only. Then we'll take people with second comments.

Chris Simon, 263 Westmoreland Drive

Chris Simon, 263 Westmoreland Drive. I don't know if I can say it as passionately as the other people who stood in this line before me. But I'd like to second everyone's sentiments. I think that all the cultural institutions we've got coming downtown are really shaping this city to somewhere that I want to be for a long time. And I think a new library downtown is a great idea. I think it's a...I don't know why everyone is so upset about this Goodwood Library. It's not going away. We're not going to come with sticks and pitchforks in the middle of the night and burn it down. It's still going to be there. Just give us a library downtown so that our city can grow for the future. Thanks.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

John Kent, 895 Dubios Drive

My name is John Kent. I live at 895 Dubios Drive. I've been involved in genealogy for many years. And I can remember having to go downtown to the genealogy library and what a joke it was; the parking was a problem. And here we are a city that's grown so. My business was originally on Third Street and in the 60's I had to move or go out of business. And nothing really has changed about business in downtown Baton Rouge in all these years. You walk the sidewalks and you don't see very many people. How the businesses put up with such few traffic I don't know. But why should we build a library downtown just to glorify that we're a river city? And all the people who will want to use it mostly live a great distance away either to the east or to the south. And it's getting worse by the day, month and years. People are not going to want to go downtown just for the heck of going to the library. They don't use it now. What makes you think if you build a glorious monument to yourself and Mr. Rhorer that they'll want to use that? Let's be practical about this, people. You're wanting to spend millions and millions and millions of dollars on something that you don't need to spend it on. You've got free land there out at the park. You can renovate what you've got and expand upon it for far, far less than what you'll have to spend downtown. And the people are there, and they'll continue to provide you with patrons at the mid-city library. They will never provide you with service downtown. You can check other cities and you will see that their downtown libraries are not well populated with people from the area. Thank you very much.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Ed Gaskin, 805 Ingleside Drive

My name is Ed Gaskin. I live at 805 Ingleside Drive. A little about myself. I'm not originally from Baton Rouge. I've lived here three years, and a year after I was here I followed the Library Board all over East Baton Rouge Parish. I mean all over. I hadn't been to some of these places like Central, and Green Springs, I think it is. And I

discovered some things about this city that I really would not have known otherwise. One of the things I discovered was that it has an amazing library system, and I think you should be congratulated on having built that. I would like to address downtown in a way that expands maybe the way we think about that function. That was one of the comments earlier. I think that's the best way for me to preface my comments. Downtown is the place that represents the legacy of Baton Rouge, its history, its culture, its civic life. I think to discredit it is a shame. It hurts all of us. It doesn't just benefit one place. It hurts the entire community. I remember as a child in Louisville going downtown with my mom to the library for children reading. And when I entered that place, the history and the culture and the civic environment of Louisville was right outside that door. The reason I went there and all of you go there for personal advancement continued right outside that door. It wasn't like going to a Loew's and picking a book off the shelf, and walking back to the parking lot. And, hopefully I got my spot right next to the door, and didn't have to walk too far. And then I could walk back to my car and go home and watch TV, and read the book. It's about a place with a context that supports the mission of personal advancement. History, culture, civic (poor audio quality)

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Aimee Marlborough, 14017 Jane Seymour Drive

My name is Aimee Marlborough. I live at 14017 Jane Seymour Drive. I'm a 33 year old mother of two. My 3½ year old daughter, Zoë, her favorite place to go is the library. My family visits the library every week. We think you have an outstanding facility, and outstanding programs. And I brag about the library system on a regular basis. I thank you so much for the job you are doing and I appreciate it. I've heard many people speak tonight and I appreciate how strongly everyone feels. I have a concern. It seems that some people who are speaking are saying that we don't have a downtown library. I think that we do. I thought that I'd been to it. As he had suggested, when I've been on jury duty, I think that's probably when I'd been in. And it was virtually empty. And I have to say I felt very... I have strong feelings about all the things that I have heard. I don't think that anyone is trying to say negative things about downtown. But maybe there somewhat a feeling of being unsafe. I'll be honest with you. The reason why I felt unsafe in the library was because I was the only one in there. (applause from the audience) It was not about the population demographics. I bring my children to a nursing home every week and we like to be around people whose skin are different colors, and who are different ages. I don't like this idea that a library is only for older people. My children are in the Library all the time. Maybe some people who are parents couldn't be here tonight because they have to be home taking care of their children. I'm just asking you to realize that we're not against a downtown library. We have one. And you do plan to renovate it and I appreciate that. But, please, keep the Main Library where the majority of the people are living at the Goodwood area.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

William Perry, 13115 Cod Avenue

Hello. I'm William Perry. I live at 13115 Cod Avenue in Baton Rouge, 70815. That's in Sherwood Forest Subdivision. I presume that if you build a library downtown you'll have associated with it a parking garage with either free or reduced price parking. I would like to recommend to the Board that when you size this facility, you double it. Because there's nothing that drives demand like free or cheap. So forewarned is forearmed. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Kathy Guidry, 1433 S. Flannery

Hi, I'm Kathy Guidry. I live at 1433 S. Flannery. I've lived in Baton Rouge for the past twenty-five years. I'm from New Orleans, and the best thing that I found and still is the library system. I absolutely love it. The Library is wonderful. And my question after listening to people talk tonight is, is the goal of the main library to curb urban blight or is it to give the taxpayers a centrally located, convenient library to enjoy for the people who will use it? Downtown is a lovely library. I lived here many years before I ever went to it. And it was only because I had jury duty. And I was so surprised how lovely it was. But, again, I only used it when I had jury duty because it is very inconvenient for me to go downtown to use the library. When we passed the tax last year, we were promised new facilities in the southern and eastern part of the parish. If you spend almost 72 million dollars on a new downtown library, there will be no money left to build these branches within the ten years as promised. And so many of the taxpayers that are going to fund these they'll be young people who are growing up and will be leaving the city. And you have older people who unfortunately will be dying, and not have the opportunity. They'll have financed this and will not have the opportunity to use these branches. As a practical matter, families and everyone, we have a budget. You have a certain amount of money. I understand that costs have risen since Katrina has hit. So you have to change, to downgrade your expectations, and if you want to renovate the downtown branch, have a main branch and...

Frances Smith

You have 15 seconds.

Kathy Guidry

...set up the other branches. Again, it's a wonderful idea, to have a really nice downtown area, but is the money there? Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Derrell Cohoon, 714 N. 5th Street

For the record, I'm Darrell Cohoon. I reside at 714 N. 5th Street in downtown Baton Rouge. Originally I didn't intend to speak tonight, but I just felt compelled to. And Madame President and Members of the Board, I'm a vested interest. Oh, my God. I've

got to admit to you. I've lived and worked very hard in Baton Rouge for thirty-five years, and pay taxes. By the same token, five years ago my wife and I decided to move into the frontier of downtown in Baton Rouge. And we moved here for a reason because we saw a community down here that was a little different than when we lived in the burbs. It was a community that was together, a very diverse community, but one that worked together. And I got a feeling that it was the way Baton Rouge was at one time or perhaps could have been at one time. Within the last year my mother has decided, 79 year old mother, has decided to move downtown. And, God love her, she knows all the neighbors and they all know her. And I guess that's another reason that we love being down here is because we all have front porches, and we know how to use them, and I think that that represents something that we've gotten away from in Baton Rouge. And I think we got away from it perhaps when we lost sight of the river. And we need to change that back. Let's talk about this crime issue for a minute. I walk my dogs at 5:30 every morning all through downtown and I've never been accosted and I've never had...

Frances Smith

You have 15 seconds.

Derrell Cohoon

...so crime is a code word unfortunately. And that's disturbing. I think crime, the biggest crime in Baton Rouge are probably the parking violations. And I'm sure you're going to cure that problem when you move downtown. Thank you very much.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Mona Roberts, 15862 Geraldine Drive

Hello, my name is Mona Roberts and I live in River Oaks in the eastern end of the parish. In 1961 Can you hear me?

Frances Smith

Give us your address.

Mona Roberts

15862 Geraldine Drive. In 1961 when we built our home we had there was a bookmobile as someone else mentioned at Little John and Florida once a month. And we were told we would have a library soon. We still don't have one. Jones Creek has one, Greenwell Springs has one, Goodwood has one. And we have 72 million dollars. Couldn't we just have, and we know how to read, we really do. And we would like to have a place that we could go. But nothing has come down Florida Boulevard, nothing. And I would just like, if there is any left over, after you build this grand library, it would be nice to have something out our way. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Marsha Reichle, 1025 Broadmoor Circle

My name is Marsha Reichle. I live at 1025 Broadmoor Circle. I, too had not expected to speak, but no one has addressed what I'm feeling which is that I was stiffed by the Library Board; not by you personally, by the previous Board. Originally I voted for a tax because we desperately needed a new library at Goodwood. It hasn't happened yet. Other libraries were pushed ahead of us. They had a need. There was nothing out there. I could understand that. But each time we cleaned the table, we would think this our chance, this is our turn. We're finally going to fix up our library. No, God knows where you found all of these branches. But you found another one. And so this time we knew it was our turn. There could not be anyone, you know perhaps Southdowns was going to slip in. But we thought maybe we would get that shabby building fixed. But, no, no. But suddenly we're going to build a monument downtown. And I know that I'm the demographic that is denigrated. I am a chronic voter. I know *The Advocate* dismissed me as a mere reader. No, I'm not one of those hip people who wants to meet in the new library. I know I'm not your target. But we really need a new, fancy Goodwood Branch. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience) I remind you that we have this facility until 9:00. So, if you can make your comments as short and succinct as possible, we would appreciate it, so that everyone will get a chance to say what they need to say. Thank you very much.

Pat McCallister LeDuff, 2643 70th Avenue

Pat McCallister LeDuff, and I reside at 2643 70th Avenue which is also in North Baton Rouge. And, so I don't have a vested interest in South Baton Rouge, but I have a vested interest in Baton Rouge. And, so I stood to say that I got a call today about a reminder about this meeting. And I was for the Goodwood Library. But, after making several calls to some young folks in high schools and middle schools, I said I've always gone to Goodwood. I've taken my children to Goodwood. They said, "That's right, Ms. LeDuff, you took the kids to Goodwood, but we want to go downtown". And, so when I heard the people say what about the children, it was really interesting that when I talked to the young folks they were ready to go downtown. So I think this meeting is really, really great because we have some great concerns. I have some great concerns seeing young people downtown. But, if that's where they want to be, then in order for us to grow Baton Rouge, then we need to address the concerns that have been stated here tonight, and we need to move forward. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Becky Moppert, 2170 Terrace Street

Guess where I just came from? Downtown. I just picked up my daughter from the Manship Theatre. We do a lot of theatre things down there. She has rehearsal. And guess what? There ain't nobody there folks. I go there all the time for rehearsals, I leave, I usually get there at 6:00, leave at 8:00. There's nobody there except on Thursday,

Friday, well, some Thursdays, a lot Friday, Saturday. They're partying. But during the week during rehearsals, I mean I watch where I park, I watch my bag. Am I accosted by people? Yes! And that's not to speak ill of people who do not have a home, but am I asked for money? Yes! Am I for Downtown Development? Yes! I think it's great everything that we've done. I love it. It's wonderful, but I still want my main library elsewhere. Here's Baton Rouge. Here's the river. Downtown. Ain't in the middle folks. I go to the library four or five times a week. I've got four kids and two of them staying with me right now. I go to the library a lot. I don't want to go downtown. Oh, excuse me, I live in the Garden District, 2170 Terrace Street, so I am close to downtown, I am close, but that's not where I go. That's not my route. Most people's route is like this. Most of it is not from here to there. So I would prefer the Main Library to stay where it is. I've also spoken to a lot of the librarians who are also kind of in favor of that, too. And, it's the truth. (applause from the audience) I think it's also a misconception that you say you all knew, you all knew. You voted for this. No, I'm sorry. The public's perception, at least my perception, and I'm not stupid and I do read the paper, was not that it is downtown, and there's no question about it. My perception was it was still up in the air. And, also, the other thing is branch libraries, I hand it to you, Board. I've gone to all the branch libraries. They're wonderful. My daughter tours with the Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre. They are wonderful. But they're not the Main Library. They don't have the selection, they don't have this, they don't have that, they don't have the other. I go to Bluebonnet all the time. But where do I go; where do my children go? Always to the Main Library.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Charles Dent, 535 Cornwood Drive

My name is Charles Dent, and I live at 535 Cornwood Drive, 70806, and I'd like to address my comments to the Board, the Consultants, and to Downtown Development District and Mr. Davis Rhorer. I'm very pleased with the things you have done for our library system. For the last few years, I think it's wonderful all the new libraries that were built throughout the parish. They are used and they are wonderful. They perform a function. I think that that's where you should put money that you have given control over is to build facilities that would be used by the people in the areas where they're built. If you want a showplace downtown, Mr. Rhorer and the Downtown Development District have done a wonderful job of building several of those. And I'm sure they will continue to do so. I am very pleased at the progress of our downtown area. But a library is not what they need. They need places for people that will be down there. We need libraries where the people are. If you are leaders you won't look around at what the other cities are doing and copy cat that. You will use the vision to find what the people need, the people who are paying for it and the people who use it. That's leadership; not following the others around. (applause from the audience) The people who use our libraries are by and large not wealthy people. They can't afford to go downtown to use the Shaw Center, the expensive restaurant atop that. They usually don't go to the planetarium. The store keepers have moved out of downtown to where the people are

buying their products. Look at our schools. Why don't we build a school downtown? It's an educational system like the library system is. Let's do like the schools. Build them where the people are, where they will be used. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience) (John Berry approached the microphone) Has everyone here been heard at least already one time? I'll give you thirty seconds. Then we'll set up our questions and comments. You only have thirty seconds.

John Berry, 1520 Aberdeen Avenue

You promised two minutes.

Frances Smith

Thirty seconds. (Someone in the audience said, "That's not what you said.")

Jerry Davis, 1921 Rosace Drive

That's not fair.

Frances Smith

It's my understanding that we only have two minutes left in this facility.

Jerry Davis, 1921 Rosace Drive

With due respect, Mrs. Smith, you took seventeen minutes to introduce the Board and set the ground rules. We got two minutes to speak our heart. That's inappropriate.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much.

John Berry, 1520 Aberdeen Avenue

In thirty seconds I cannot say what I have left to say. So I'm going to skip all the comment. I want you all to go read *The Business Report* today that J.R Ball, his opinion that he wrote about the older people. I want you to read what Lanny Keller's editorial about what he said about the older people. It is not complimentary. It's all about the Library. So I will sum it up with this statement. We're talking about the youth. One might say to our youth, these men and women are you, but with double the experience in life. Instead of talking about building the library for our youth, we should be building for all of our citizens.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much, sir. (applause from the audience)

Bill Good, 711 N. 6th Street

I'm Bill Good, 711 N. 6th Street. I want to respond to a comment from the "Citizens for Main Library Independence" dated yesterday. It says that "Picture the ground floor of the main library looking like the Capital Area Transit System main terminal on 22nd and Florida Streets." My comment is that we cannot become a truly great city if because of

fear or lack of compassion, and leave behind anyone even those we may see as we drive past the bus station on Florida at 22nd Street. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience) Thirty seconds, Ma'am.

Unidentified Female Patron

I moved to LSU. I taught journalism at LSU in the 80's. I worked for the Mayor's Office in the 70's when the Goodwood Library was built. I've been here since I was six years old, and I'm 54 now, and I love the city, I love my Library I miss the National Endowment for the Humanities courses we used to have at Goodwood. Lydia, I know you mean well, but you don't know this city, you really don't. We have all races and groups of ages at Goodwood, and I would like the library to remain there.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Harvey Landry, 12411 Langer Avenue

Harvey Landry, 12411 Langer Avenue. To address the crime issue, there is 2½ times more crime downtown than there is at Goodwood. The statistics bear that out. And, finally, I want to know, what would the Board have to observe here or later to have you change your collective minds about favoring or committing to the Goodwood or Independence Park site for the Main Library? And, also, are we just venting?

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Kyle Moppert, 2170 Terrace Avenue

Kyle Moppert, 2170 Terrace. I spoke a little while ago and after I spoke had somebody on the pro-library, going downtown library tell me that I was very passionate about it. Well, I know a lot of people are very passionate about it. With that statement I would like to suggest that today is an Election Day. People all over this city voted. Why can't we vote on this? If the division is so strong, (applause from the audience) let's vote.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Unidentified Male Patron

A quick reminder. Libraries are supposed to be about literacy and knowledge. For those of you who envision a beautiful library downtown, please also consider a beautiful library at our signature park. It's already family friendly; it's already got other activities for families to use, and hopefully, we can come out of this with a good answer.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience)

Beth Bingham, 7817 N. Jefferson Place Circle, #E

I'm Beth Bingham. I live at 7817 N. Jefferson Place Circle. I worked at the Library. I'm a library consultant. I travel all over the world. We don't need to lose sight of the vision and the honesty and the integrity of the Library system and the Library Board. They have the interest of Baton Rouge and the vision for the future. I work downtown and I've been on the fence. I just ask you to spend one hour in a brand-new library. I talked to Nancy Tessman from the Salt Lake City Library today. We have the beginnings of something great. Let's not take this division and make it bad.

Frances Smith

Thank you very much. (applause from the audience) Sir, you have thirty seconds.

John Rogers Smith, 7251 Palmetto Drive

(Poor audio quality) I don't think there is anyone in the parish who wouldn't want to see a state of the art, top of the line library. But to quote the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." I get that everyday. I hate to burst your bubble, but our legacy is not cultural, our legacy is illiteracy. We're at the bottom of the line in the nation with Mississippi with high school drop outs, and corrupt politics, and I don't know where this all fits in. But that's what we're famous for. Thank you.

Frances Smith

Thank you. (applause from the audience)

Jerry Davis, 1921 Rosace Drive

I'm Jerry Davis and I don't think I've moved in the last two hours. The Board cannot, legally cannot respond to these comments and questions on the Internet. That would be Board action and you cannot act in the absence of a public meeting. You have to have another meeting to give any response at all. Ms. Acosta can respond her opinion, but the Board cannot. We need more time to discuss this issue with you. We are entitled to time to say our peace. If you don't give it to us, you're tricking yourselves.

Frances Smith

Thank you, sir. (applause from the audience) I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for coming out tonight and we'll defer back to the Board President.

Georgia Brown

The Board will take that under consideration.

Dan Reed

I really don't want to spend a lot of time with this, but I do think that it's fair for us to speak to you tonight. I appreciate all of you coming out. Please understand that we didn't get stupid over the last six months. We are listening to what you're saying. We do want to do what is best for Baton Rouge. When we make the decision, there may be members of the Board that disagree. All we can do is vote; all we can do is have a majority. That's the American way. And when we make a decision, there will be people in the community who will disagree with us. But we are going to do our best to listen to

what you said to separate the facts from the fiction because there's some fiction out there as well. And we're going to do our best to decide. Please trust us to do that. We do know what we are doing. We do have a lot of post-graduate degrees. (Member of the audience shouted, "Let us vote.") And I just want you to bear with us. I don't think there's going to be any decision made tomorrow. So we're going to take this under consideration. That's my view. I don't want you to think we're brushing you aside. Lord knows, I drove here at 80 miles an hour from Houma to get here. We do think this is important, and we are listening. Thank you.

Member of the Audience

I take it you favored downtown, then?

Dan Reed

I actually abstained on that.

Georgia Brown

Again, I'd like to thank you for coming out tonight and we regret that each of you could not speak, but time constraints would not allow it. So, be patient with us.